



## Network Newsletter

Issue 5 Autumn 1 2021

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[www.suffolktanetwork.co.uk](http://www.suffolktanetwork.co.uk) (coming soon)

## Coordinator's Comments

### Imposter Syndrome – Don't let it hold you back

The last six months has been a series of firsts. I have found myself chairing meetings, delivering training courses, supporting senior leaders, collaboratively writing a case study with a headteacher, managing projects and staff and being invited to speak at national conferences to name a few!

I feel so privileged to be on this journey and to be able to have these experiences, but sometimes I question myself. I have always lacked confidence and shied away from responsibility so it has all been quite a challenge.

As a teaching assistant, I think we can sometimes feel like we are not as important as others or that our opinions don't count. I want to encourage you all to speak up, contribute your thoughts and ideas and to never feel like you are not good enough. You have passion, skills and experience – take all opportunities with both hands!



### Join Us

If you are not already a member of the Suffolk TA Network, please join via the following link:

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=UyUudcf3sEGK8GkwZaFwVhZAzV7zulGsO\\_6uPBfMz5UQkZBNOJRR0hUMehYMzFHOTdYTENHRIFDSi4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=UyUudcf3sEGK8GkwZaFwVhZAzV7zulGsO_6uPBfMz5UQkZBNOJRR0hUMehYMzFHOTdYTENHRIFDSi4u)

Simply click on this link or copy it into the URL bar on your browser and complete the Microsoft Forms document. You will then receive the half-termly newsletter and other correspondence.

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# Celebrate National TA Day on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September



I am so proud to be able to work with such a talented team of teaching assistants across Suffolk and wanted to be able to celebrate your amazing work for National TA Day. I asked schools to let me know what TAs mean to them and why you are such an important part of the educational workforce. It has been so lovely to read all the wonderful comments staff sent in and here is a small snapshot of why your schools could not function without you. Enjoy!

Our TAs are absolutely integral to everything we do! I don't know what we would do without them!	Our TAs (LaPs) are invaluable members of our team. They are skilled at developing positive relationships with our students.	TAs do the invaluable job of allowing all students to access the curriculum and to play a part in lessons.
TAs are worth their weight in gold. The trust and rapport that they build up with students can make a remarkable difference.	They provide positive support and guidance to all of our SEN learners and make a huge contribution to aiding progress and supporting students' confidence.	Where do I start?! If we could have a TA in every lesson we would. Thank you to all the TAs who work tirelessly every day to help the students.
Their hard work enables so many vulnerable students to access education and realise their true potential.	The TAs in our school are a highly skilled and dedicated team...They are invaluable!	They build strong bonds with the pupils and are life savers for our teachers!



You are all superstars!



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## Impact Summary: Lots to Love and Lots to Learn...

As we approached the summer term, I began to reflect on the extraordinary journey we have made as an organisation over our first six months and how we could grow and develop going forward. With this in mind, I commissioned Steve Allman to review and report on the impact of the Suffolk TA Network so far.



Here is what you love...

- Increased access to training
- Increased contact with other TAs/HLTAs
- Increased confidence/self-esteem
- Increased skills and knowledge

“BEING PART OF THE NETWORK HAS MADE ME  
FEEL SEEN AND HEARD.” (NETWORK MEMBER)

Here is what we've learnt...

- Make training sessions more accessible by offering a range of times and formats, and recording training, where possible
- Offering face-to-face training and networking opportunities
- Improving the awareness of the Suffolk TA Network amongst TAs and school leadership



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# Meet the Team

Find out more about our two new assistant coordinators...



Hello, my name is Carolyn Love, and I am currently working as a Teaching Assistant at Springfield Junior School. Over the last 21 years I have worked across all age groups from two to eleven years. Early in my career I worked with pre-school children and then I moved through into primary schools. I have recently worked more in years five and six and enjoy supporting the children as they start to get ready for high school and gain a little more independence. I began working at

Springfield in January as a Remote Learning Support Assistant working with the Ipswich Opportunity Area to help and support children and families working from home during lockdown. As we came out of lockdown my role in school went back to a classroom teaching assistant and it is great to work with children face-to-face once more.

When I applied for the role of assistant co-ordinator, I was really excited about the potential benefits that will arise from the Suffolk TA network. I recently joined the network myself and have benefitted from training provided by them in the last few months. I am really looking forward to my new role as assistant coordinator as it is an important and exciting opportunity to help to bring TAs together to support each other, especially now as we are all living through some difficult times. In my experience, teaching assistants have so much knowledge and experience to give and the network is a vital tool to enable sharing of good practice, training and experience. I am also really looking forward to working with and hopefully meeting up with teaching assistants from other schools and hearing all about different ways of working towards the best outcomes for the education of our children.



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Hello, my name is Julie Clegg and I am currently working as a teaching assistant at Morland Primary School. I am a Mental Health Champion, specialise in teaching phonics and have a passion for adapting and delivering lessons to children with Thrive needs

During lockdown, an amazing opportunity arose for myself to become involved in developing the induction training package as part of the working group.

The meetings so far have been a real success and things are moving on thanks to our other dedicated members and leader Abi.

I have really enjoyed getting involved in the TA Network (using my previous & existing skills) and I was so taken by how friendly the other team members were that I decided to apply for the Assistant Coordinator job and got it!

This week I was thrilled to meet up face-to-face with Abi and Carolyn to get the ball rolling. I was delighted to be chosen to initiate the 'Peer Buddying Scheme'. This will allow skilled and like-minded TAs to buddy up from different schools to enhance a particular skill.

I am also looking forward to initiating with Carolyn, a questionnaire for members within the primary sector to see what additional training needs to be met through our CPD programme.

Overall, being part of the TA Suffolk Network team has so far been a wonderful and memorable experience and I hope to be able to contribute more this year!!!

“...TEACHING ASSISTANTS HAVE SO MUCH KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE TO GIVE...”

(CAROLYN LOVE)

“I HAVE REALLY ENJOYED GETTING INVOLVED IN THE TA NETWORK.” (JULIE CLEGG)



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# Join the Team

An exciting opportunity for three experienced TAs or HLTAs to become Suffolk TA Network Champions to promote, support and develop our work with teaching assistants across the county.

## We are looking for:

- A Suffolk TA Network Champion for each of North Suffolk, West Suffolk and South Suffolk

## Champions will:

- Raise the profile of the Suffolk TA Network in the local area
- Engage local schools and increase TA membership
- Organise and host local face-to-face training and networking opportunities at their setting for members in their area of Suffolk
- Attend a team day on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 at Westbourne Academy in Ipswich
- Attend five one-hour online team meetings throughout the academic year 2021-22
- Be released for eight further days (or equivalent hours) across 2021-22 to carry out the Champion role

## In return you will receive:

- A £1,000 grant for your school (£500 grant to compensate for release time and £500 to facilitate the work of the Champion)
- Ongoing support and guidance from the Suffolk TA Network and the chance to shape our future direction
- Experience to develop your own career and enhance your CV
- A 'champion' badge, Suffolk TA Network bag and a certificate

If you are interested in one of these roles, please complete an expression of interest form by following this link by **Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021**:

<https://forms.office.com/r/dh0zRQY7ZB>

Email: [abigail.joachim@westbourne.atrust.org.uk](mailto:abigail.joachim@westbourne.atrust.org.uk) for more information



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## Gambling Awareness Training for Professionals

- Gambling related harm is an area of significant safeguarding and mental health concern for young people.
- Learn how to recognise the risk factors, signs and symptoms of a gambling related harm and the links between gambling and gaming.
- Find out how to talk to young people about gambling related harm and advise where to seek help if they need it.

GamCare provides education, information and support to young people (11-18) throughout the UK, who are worried about their own or someone else's gambling. GamCare is the leading national provider of free information, advice and support for anyone affected by gambling related harm.

GamCare are delivering three training sessions for members of the Suffolk TA Network: **Tuesday 5th October 9.30-11.00, Wednesday 6th October 13.30-15.00** and **Thursday 7th October 16.30-18.00**. Unfortunately, these sessions cannot be recorded.

To find out more information and to sign up for one of these sessions please email me: [suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk](mailto:suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk)

### NETWORK INFORMATION SESSIONS

Come and listen to a range of speakers provide bite-sized introductions to their work and how it is relevant to TAs in Suffolk, while sharing experiences with staff from other schools. Speakers will be confirmed soon, but topics will include sensory and physical and eating disorders.

<u>Morning</u>	<u>Afternoon</u>	<u>Twilight</u>
<b>Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 9.30-10.30</b>	<b>Monday 18<sup>th</sup> October 13.30-14.30</b>	<b>Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 16.30-17.30</b>

To find out more and to book a place on one of these sessions, email me: [suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk](mailto:suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk)



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## ADHD Training Sessions

- Want to learn more about ADHD?
- Want to understand how to effectively support students with ADHD?
- Want to develop practical strategies to use in the classroom?

Then join Autism & ADHD for one of the following training sessions:

**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 13.30-14.30**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 9.30-10.30**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> November 16.30-17.30.**

To find out more and to receive a link to register for one of these sessions, email me: [suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk](mailto:suffolktan@westbourne.attrust.org.uk) (a recording will be sent to those who register and will be available for 14 days)



Psychology and  
Therapeutic Services  
Supporting Children and  
Young People with Loss  
and Bereavement



The Psychology and Therapeutic Services are pleased to be able to offer a half day training for adults who support children experiencing loss and bereavement.

**Date/Time: Thursday 25 November 2021 - 09.30 start to 12.30 close. You are able to join the meeting from 09.00 to allow any set up issues to be resolved and to start at 9.30. Online (Microsoft Teams) - invitation sent once the booking is confirmed.**

The aims of this conference are to:

- Raise awareness of the extent of loss and bereavement in children's lives
- Consider the grieving process
- Understand the developmental nature of children's responses to death
- Increase confidence in supporting bereaved children and discuss ways to support

<https://www.suffolkcpsd.co.uk/cpd/> click on the Schools Choice tab on the side and search course code: **LIS 22/002** (or by the date 25/11/21)

Visit [Psychology&TherapeuticServices@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Psychology&TherapeuticServices@suffolk.gov.uk) for more information.



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Free Training Opportunity

- Are you a TA working in a Suffolk Setting?
- Do you want to develop your existing knowledge and skills around Speech, Language and Communication?
- Would you like to explore strategies for supporting children and young people with communication difficulties?
- How would you like the opportunity to join other TAs across Suffolk?
- Could you take your skills back to your setting and share them with others?

NHS Speech and Language Therapy and Education Outreach SLCN would like to offer you six VIRTUAL sessions of CPD across the academic year 2021-2022. This training is a collaboration with the Suffolk TA Network and is absolutely free of charge. Sessions will be delivered via Microsoft Teams. We are a friendly team of NHS Speech Therapists and Specialist Teachers looking forward to working with you. To book your place contact [caroline.wells2@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.wells2@suffolk.gov.uk)

Session 1 16.00-17.30	Monday September 27th 2021	What do we mean by Speech, Language and Communication? This will also provide an overview of the 5 further sessions.
Session 2 16.00-17.30	Monday November 15th 2021	Social Communication
Session 3 16.00-17.30	Monday January 24th 2022	Receptive Language
Session 4 16.00-17.30	Monday March 14th 2022	Expressive Language
Session 5 16.00-17.30	Monday May 9th 2022	Speech Production and Phonological Awareness
Session 6 16.00-17.30	Monday June 13th 2022	Vocabulary, including the language of emotions and feelings







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# One TA's Journey: TA of the Year to MBE

By Aimee Durning MBE

You may remember Aimee Durning from a previous edition of our newsletter. She works as Lead Learning Coach (teaching assistant) at the University of Cambridge Primary School and was awarded the TES Classroom Support Assistant of the Year award in 2019. This year her tireless work for TAs and young people with SEND has been recognised with an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Aimee tells the story of the moment she found out and the work that led up to this amazing achievement.

What a total surprise it was to open an email from the cabinet office on a grey Thursday afternoon in May whilst I was covering year 6 PPA. 'This must be a mistake', I thought to myself. As soon as possible, I took my open laptop to the Executive Head's office to enquire whether he knew anything about the contents of the email. Of course, he was fully aware and had been waiting for me to visit to discuss my honorary award!

My MBE was awarded for services to education, especially for my work involving children with special educational needs. 'Isn't this what all TAs do?' you may think to yourself. Someone pointed out to me last weekend that they were a teaching assistant doing a similar job to me and hadn't be recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. Another person less charitably suggested that I had received my award because I work for Cambridge University (which I don't!). Still on a daily basis, I myself question too how an MBE could be possible and imposter syndrome creeps back in once again!

I am fortunate to work for a visionary leader, Dr James Biddulph, who views the educational landscape as a place where not only children can flourish and grow but so too can his team. Opportunities and possibilities are endless for anyone who has a thirst for social justice and education for all children, everywhere. A relentless pursuit for excellence on the positive side leaves little time for imposter syndrome to raise its ugly head. And this has meant that my own personal learning journey at UCPS has been phenomenal, allowing me to seize every opportunity with both hands. For example, my knowledge has deepened about Reading for Pleasure and this has had a personal impact on



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individual children's reading journeys across the school. Last year, I co-wrote a chapter with Professor Teresa Cremin from The Open University. Personally, I worked tirelessly to promote and develop a Reading for Pleasure culture at the school and at one stage was the only Teaching Assistant leading a Teachers' Reading for Pleasure group in the country. Professor Cremin emailed me this week to let me know that a Teaching Assistant, Ann Baker, from Gloucestershire has recently contributed to the examples of practice on the Open University's Reading for Pleasure Website: <https://ourfp.org/>. It was great to read about another Teaching Assistant who had considered robust research and then influenced classroom practice.

There are so many Teaching Assistants who are doing absolutely amazing work in schools across the country. Teaching Assistants such as Abi Joachim (Suffolk TA Network), Becky Marie Williams (TES Classroom Assistant of the Year 2021) and of course Ann Baker. A Guardian headline on the 1st April celebrated the work of TAs, 'Teaching assistants' unsung heroes' of the pandemic, study shows. Together, over the past 18 months, Teaching Assistants have done a sterling job in supporting all children during a once in a lifetime event.

Reflecting back about my job so far at the University of Cambridge Primary School, I can think of many highs and of course lows but I can think of three standalone moments, where I think to myself, Wow!

1. Attending the Maximising the Impact of Teaching Assistants course in London 2016. This totally changed my practice and the team at UCPS.
2. UCPS receiving a 'highly commended' Egmont Reading for Pleasure School award in 2019 and being the first Teaching Assistant to be nominated for an award.
3. Many Individual children's success stories (possible because of our research informed teaching assistant support)

In June, my MBE was celebrated by the Learning Coach (teaching assistant) team at UCPS. We are all grateful to be working at a school where Teaching Assistants are valued and their work is appreciated. My hope is that with my MBE 'status' and with my supportive Headteacher, we will be able to influence how leaders, teachers and teaching assistants could consider a new vision for supporting children in all schools. Of course, on the journey we will need a little help from others. Watch this space; we may be calling on you along the way.

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/apr/01/teaching-assistants-unsung-heroes-of-pandemic-study-shows>



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## Research Corner

### New Guidance Report: Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning

By Eileen Allpress

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) have published a new guidance report, Teacher Feedback to Improve Pupil Learning.

The guidance in this report has been drawn from a systematic review of the best available international evidence, in addition to a review of current practice, and refined in consultation with a panel of expert practitioners and academics.

The guidance is aimed at class teachers who provide feedback to pupils, as well as senior leaders who devise and implement school feedback policies. It targets all subjects, providing principles to suit all, along with examples to demonstrate feedback provision in particular subject and phase contexts. Additional audiences who may find the guidance relevant include governors, parents, programme developers, policy makers and education researchers. The report is free to access and available at: <http://eef.li/feedback>

This latest guidance report reviews the best available research to offer schools and teachers six recommendations to support teachers in delivering feedback effectively. Done well, feedback is a crucial component of high-quality teaching, capable of supporting pupil progress, building learning and addressing misunderstandings.

The first three recommendations focus on principles which underpin successful feedback, such as its being based on strong foundations and ensuring that it is designed to move learning forward.

A useful read if your school is planning to change its feedback policy and to help you to effectively support teachers and pupils during feedback activities.

**Eileen Allpress - Ipswich Associate Research School**

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# Website Coming Soon

Keep checking this link to view our new website and keep up with our latest news and events:

[www.suffolktanetwork.co.uk](http://www.suffolktanetwork.co.uk)



Resource Review by Lynne Percival

**The British Educational Research Association (BERA) blog**  
<https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog>



The BERA blog is a really accessible and interesting resource for teaching assistants who are interested in a range of research informed topics.

You can use the search function to look for an area of interest or explore blogs by 'latest' or 'A-Z'. The blog posts are short but engaging and whet your appetite to read more widely around key educational issues. Each blog ends with a series of references to allow you to explore related research.

I have found the blog posts on 'Wellbeing and being outdoors' and 'Researching education and mental health: From 'Where are we now?' to 'What next?' particularly interesting and relevant to my role in school.

**Content: 8/10**

**Accessibility: 8/10**

**Overall: 8/10**

Do you have something to share?

Email me with your idea and you could be in the next edition.



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