

# Special Guardian Network

## News and information for Special Guardian families in Essex

Dear Special Guardian,

Spring is showing signs of arriving with spring flowers starting to bloom and the evenings staying lighter.

As always, we would like to keep you up to date with news and developments within the SGO Support Team. Please do contact us at any time, if you need guidance, advice, and support or to just share achievements of the children/young people with us.

Kind Regards  
SGO Support Team

### Special Guardianship Support (SGO) team staff update

Over the past few months, we have had a few staff changes within the team. The Special Guardianship Support team consists of the following staff :

#### **Management**

Corrie Castleman – SGO Service Manager  
Lize Markham – Team Manager

**Senior Practitioners** – Colleen Double and Nelida Techeres

**Social Workers** – Christina Minchin and Elijah Jiri

**Child and Family Support Workers** – Clair Prior, Sue Dakin, Gloria Jordan and Oscar Boaler-Hysett

**Benefits Project Officer** – Sally Egan

## Important - Welfare Benefits – Managed Migration to Universal Credit

The government has announced the latest timetable for managed migration whereby almost all existing benefit claimants are due to start being moved over to Universal Credit by the end of 2024/2025.

If you are currently in receipt of welfare benefits such as Income support, job seekers allowance, tax credits, housing benefit and some employment support allowance claims, you may be sent a 'Migration Notice Letter' from the Department of Work and Pensions advising you of when your current benefits are ending and what you need to do next. Not all people who are claiming Employment and support allowance will be moved over to Universal Credit in this time frame.

This may be a worry for some people having to claim Universal Credit and you may be worried that your benefit entitlement may reduce but there is protection in place so if your Universal Credit entitlement is less than your current benefit entitlement a transitional amount will be paid to top up your Universal credit award.

If you receive a Migration Notice letter and need any advice or support on what to do and how to claim Universal Credit, then please contact Sally Egan, the Benefits Project Officer in the SGO team on 07740 180395 or [sally.egan@essex.gov.uk](mailto:sally.egan@essex.gov.uk)

For further information on migration to Universal credit, please follow this link <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tax-credits-and-some-benefits-are-ending-move-to-universal-credit>

## Teen workshop

**Do you want to understand your teens better? Do you want to increase your confidence with adolescents?**

If the answer is yes, then this workshop is for you ! There are a few places left if you would like to attend.

**Day 1: Thursday 29 February 2024 10am-1pm**

**Day 2: Thursday 14 March 2024 10am-1pm**

**(It is expected that you will attend both days)**

This will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams. A link will be sent to you.

Please let Clair know if you are interested by contacting:  
clair.prior@essex.gov.uk or 07827840800

**Autism Central for Parents and Carers**

<https://www.autismcentral.org.uk/hubs/east-england-delivered-essex-county-council>

The East of England Autism Central Hubs offer guidance to families, carers and personal assistants of autistic people. All of our sessions are run by Peer Educators. These are parents or carers of autistic people, who are happy to share their knowledge and experience with you. They offer group and one-to-one sessions to help you and other parents and carers find the information and services available in your area. Hubs may also run events such as workshops, drop-in sessions, coffee mornings or virtual meet-ups.

Please see attached flyer for further information.

**Upcoming coffee mornings**

While caring for a traumatized child, you may have a lot of worries and anxieties, especially around how this may impact *your* wellbeing. The life changes associated with this may also bring on feelings of exhaustion and depletion. You may also want a space to celebrate some of the victories you are achieving at home with your child/ren. You are not alone, and many are feeling the same way. The space of the Special Guardians’ support groups may give you an opportunity to connect, share, and hopefully feel more supported by people going through a similar experience while creating a sense of community.

***Please be reminded that it is not appropriate for children to attend our coffee mornings, due to the adult content of some of the discussions.***

Area	Venue	Date and Time
Basildon	The Place, Pitsea Leisure Centre, Pitsea, Basildon Essex, SS13 3DU	Thursday 29 February and 21 March and 25 April 2024  9.30am to 11.30am

Clacton	Weeley Village Hall, Clacton Rd, Weeley, Weeley Heath, Clacton-on-Sea, CO16 9DH	Friday 8 March and 19 April 2024 <i>10am to noon</i>
Canvey Island	Leigh Beck Infant School, Point Road, Canvey Island, Essex, SS8 7TD	Thursday 14 March 18 April 2024 <i>9.30am to 11.30am</i>
Cressing	St. Barnabas Church Hall, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing, Essex, CM77 8HG	Friday 15 March and 26 April 2024 <i>10am to noon</i>
Harlow	Woodlands Family Centre, 9 Peterswood, Harlow CM18 7RJ	Wednesday 6 March and 17 April 2024 <i>10am to noon</i>
Virtual	Via Teams – link sent out the day before	Tuesday 5 March and 16 April 2024 10am to noon

## Training opportunities

We have several training opportunities in the coming months that may be of interest to you. There are still a few places on the following course. If you would like to attend, please let me as soon as possible.

## Therapeutic Nurturing Attachment Group

Working in partnership with Families Empowered we can provide our Nurturing Attachment Groups.

A Nurturing Attachment Group is a therapeutic programme designed to provide support, guidance and insight for parents, guardians and carers of children who have experienced early life trauma and loss. Group members can share experiences and ideas in a safe, non-judgemental space with others who understand what they are going through – often in a way that family and friends are not always able to do. Groups normally have between 6-10 members and once formed are a closed group. There are 18 sessions (3 modules of 6 sessions), held in term time only from 10am-1pm or 6.30pm-9.30pm for evening groups and once formed are closed groups.

Online groups use Zoom-Pro and we provide an electronic and hard copy of the module handbook. This is a great opportunity for families who have been keen to access support and additional learning around therapeutic ways of parenting.

The next groups commence:

**Wednesday Daytime Face to Face 10am to 1pm – Colchester** – Module One commences 17<sup>th</sup> April, Module Two commences 5<sup>th</sup> June and Module Three 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

**Wednesday Evening Online 6.30pm to 9.30pm** – Module one commences 17<sup>th</sup> April, Module Two 5<sup>th</sup> June and Module Three 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

If you would like more information or book a place, please email Clair on [Clair.Prior@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Clair.Prior@essex.gov.uk)



## Contact details

[sgo.support@essex.gov.uk](mailto:sgo.support@essex.gov.uk)

Tel: 03330139860

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/special-guardianship>

**Children & Families Hub: 0345 603 7627**

**After hours - Emergency Duty Team: 0345 606 1212**

Mon - Thurs 5.00pm - 8.45am and Fri 4.30pm - Mon 8.45am inc. Bank holidays

If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please let us know by emailing [sgo.support@essex.gov.uk](mailto:sgo.support@essex.gov.uk) and we will remove you from our mailing list.