

LEARNER

NEWS

**NATIONAL
APPRENTICESHIP
WEEK 2026**

**Celebrating National
Apprenticeship Week!**

**Our Star Awards
are back for 2026!
Are you a Star learner?**



National Apprenticeship Week

This year, National Apprenticeship week takes place from 9th to 15th February.

Individuals are encouraged to share posts on social media with the hash tag **#NAW2026**. This could be your personal story on the impact of your apprenticeship on your career, or why you love your apprenticeship. Remember to tag Busy Bees Education and Training within your post, as we would love to see your stories!

NATIONAL
APPRENTICESHIP
WEEK 2026

Our star awards are back! We will be celebrating our apprentices during National Apprenticeship Week and the training team will be on the road visiting our winners to share their awards. We will also be sharing some myth busters around apprenticeships, learning about a day in the life of an apprentice and celebrating a catering challenge. Please look out for our posts on social media celebrating National Apprenticeship Week.



Toilet Training

DID YOU KNOW?



- In the 1970s and 1980s, 83% of children were out of nappies by 18 months
- Now 1 in 4 children start school not toilet trained
- Around 3 billion disposable nappies end up in UK landfill sites each year

Toilet training is a huge milestone for all children and should be seen as a process rather than an event. This is a skill that children need to learn. It is our role to support children and parents with toilet training to ensure the transition is a positive experience for the child.

All children develop differently, at their own pace, however, research shows that for bladder and bowel health, children should stop using nappies between 18 and 30 months. Toilet training can be introduced earlier than this, by slowly introducing sitting on potties or toilets when changing children's nappies, introducing relevant language to children, reading books and pretend play.

Delaying toilet training beyond 30 months can make learning harder.

Developing skills for toileting

To be able to independently use the toilet, children need to be able to:

- Sit on the toilet
- Wipe themselves
- Flush the toilet
- Pull underwear and clothing up and down
- Wash their hands

What activities could you do to help children develop these skills?

Barriers to early potty training

- Socioeconomic pressures such as poverty, financial stress, and lack of time. Fewer health visitors and trained professionals available to guide parents.
- Highly absorbent nappies reduce children's awareness of being wet
- Online advice and the emphasis on waiting for "readiness signs"
- Cultural shift in attitudes to toilet training



Partnership with Parents

Consistency between home and nursery is essential and provides a clear and consistent approach for children. Parents should be supported to understand the importance of toilet training and be provided with support and advice.

The Potty Training Guide is a government backed initiative to provide parents and carers with helpful advice and information, which you can find here <https://startingreception.co.uk/potty-training/> and support for settings can be found here <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/toilet-training>

Challenges

- Uncertainty of when and how to introduce toilet training
- Refusal or resistance
- Constipation
- Nighttime dryness
- Regression
- Children with SEND

Overcoming Challenges

Start focusing on skills needed and create predictable routines.

Offer children choice and control and praise their efforts.

Reassure children and parents when accidents happen and remember nighttime dryness usually takes a little while longer. Working towards being nappy free at nap time will help to work towards this.

Expect that setbacks can happen, especially at times of transition or changes in routine.

Work with parents and SENCO to support children with SEND and look at any adaptions which may need to be made to support the child i.e. offering ways of non-verbal communication such as pictures, developing small manageable steps and allow extra time.

ERIC - The Children's Bowel and Bladder Charity have lots of resources and information on supporting toilet training for children with additional needs <https://eric.org.uk/children-additional-needs/>

APPRENTICESHIP NEWS!

Celebrating your Success!

This month we have caught up with Kayleigh who told us about her progression with functional skills. Here's what she had to say...

“

Maths has never been an easy subject for me, but it has 100% become the most meaningful part of my learning. When I think back to when I first started, I remember feeling unsure of myself, second guessing every answer and believing that some people were simply “good at maths” and I definitely wasn’t one of them. Fractions, in particular, felt like a completely different language, just numbers split into pieces that I couldn’t put back together.

Something changed when I decided to myself that I wasn’t going to quit and I wasn’t going to avoid maths anymore. I really wanted to understand it and wanted to prove to myself that I could do it and I could be proud of myself. As I worked through questions slowly, bit by bit, the fog lifted each time and I began to understand.

Preparing for my exam became another turning point. Instead of panicking and rushing, I planned, I revised and I deliberately revisited topics that once made me want to give up. Every correct answer I received felt like I was moving forward, even mistakes helped me see what I needed to strengthen.

Now when I think back to where I started, I genuinely feel so proud of myself for how far I’ve come, this feels like a subject I have learned to navigate. What matters most is that I no longer define myself by what I can’t do, instead I measure myself by how willing I am to try. I appreciate everyone who has encouraged me through this, especially Rachel, my maths tutor, she has been a massive help, and I wouldn’t have been able to do it without her, so thank you so much Rachel.

This is my success story - not because I reached perfection but because I refused to stop trying, and that, more than anything, is what has taken me this far.

”

Simon Hart has sent a huge congratulations, celebrating Jacob's achievement.

Through hard work, dedication, and real commitment to development, Jacob has progressed from a Level 2 Production Chef and has now successfully entered gateway for Level 3 Senior Production Chef. To top it off, Jacob has recently been promoted to Head Chef. A fantastic example of what perseverance and ambition can achieve. We spoke to Jacob's Centre Director who told us what a great job Jacob is doing, not only in the kitchen, but also helping out in the rooms when needed, building great relationships with the children and being an all-round great member of the team.

— Well done, Jacob!



Building Your Functional Skills Toolkit

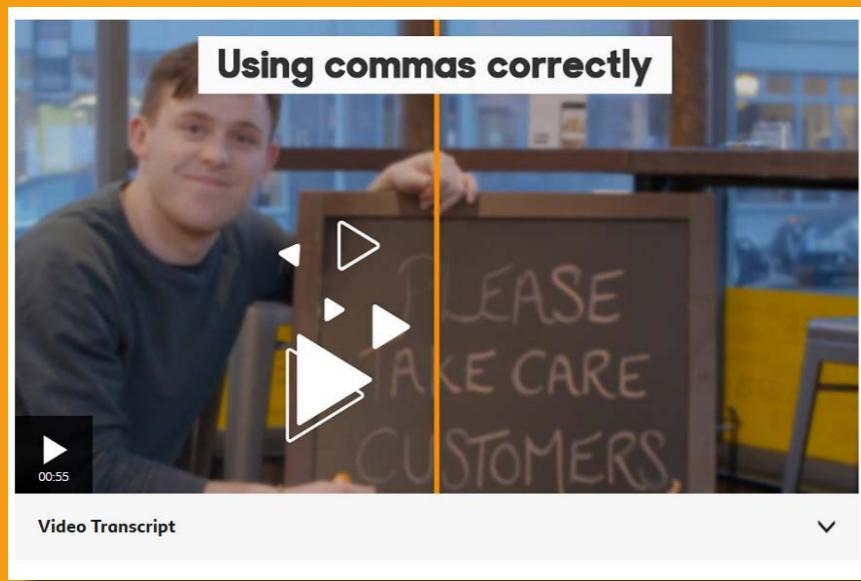
‘; Punctuation!?’

Developing your functional skills tool kit is a collection of Maths and English capabilities that supports safe, efficient, and professional practice across the nursery environment.

Next up in the functional skills toolkit comes punctuation polish.

This is a tool that elevates written communication from basic notes to professional, meaningful records. It supports the creation of clear handovers, accurate safeguarding information, and observations that colleagues, families, and external professionals can rely upon. Strong written communication is not just helpful – it is fundamental to high-quality practice.

Want to develop your punctuation? Try using BBC Bitesize to help you use punctuation to write better sentences <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zvgg4qt/articles/z8dqv9q>



Using commas correctly

00:55

Video Transcript



Are you getting the most out of your **off-the-job training?**

Your off-the-job training isn't just a tick-box – it's a big part of your apprenticeship journey. Recording it properly helps show all the learning you're doing, keeps everything on track, and makes sure nothing gets missed.



It's a chance to really reflect on what you've learned helping you see your progress and spot areas to improve. Keeping good records now makes preparing for your End Point Assessment so much easier – you'll have real examples ready to show what you can do!

It only takes a few minutes to keep your logs up to date, but it can make a huge difference. Future you will thank you for it!

Speak to your Development Coach if you are unsure of how to record off - the - job training hours on OneFile.

Health and Wellbeing

Contact Us

Need to speak with an IQA?
Advice on your apprenticeship?
Contact your IQA Team
trainingquality@busybees.com

In the event you have a
safeguarding concern that
impacts on your training please
contact our DSL team BBT.
Safeguarding@busybees.com



**Learning with us, you
can get your hands on
a TOTUM card!**

NUS Apprentice Extra is now TOTUM Apprentice! The only discount card for apprentices in the UK, TOTUM Apprentice has loads of new benefits with hundreds of new discounts, brand new app, new and improved website, PASS proof of age ID (available on renewal) and FREE taste card & Coffee Club!

Find out more here <https://totum.com/campaigns/apprentice-extra-is-now-totum-apprentice>

THE DANGERS OF FROZEN WATER

TOP TIPS TO STAY SAFE

NEVER GO ON THE ICE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

This includes attempting to rescue another person or animal who may have fallen through the ice.

ONLY USE WELL LIT AREAS

Try to take walks in the daylight but if you must walk in the evening, only use well lit areas and avoid anywhere with water.

KEEP AWAY FROM THE EDGE OF THE WATER

Never go close to the edge or lean over to touch the ice. You may overbalance or trip and fall in.

ALWAYS WALK WITH AN ADULT OR A GROUP OF FRIENDS

Look out for each other and if someone does fall through the ice there will be others around to raise the alarm and get help.

Every year children are at risk when they are tempted to play on the ice formed on open waters and adults find themselves at risk as they attempt to save them. Over 50 % of ice related drowning involved an attempted rescue of another person or a dog.

Areas with frozen waters can be beautiful to look at but they are also extremely dangerous. Here are some useful tips to help you enjoy these areas safely.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FALL THROUGH THE ICE

Keep calm and shout 'help'

Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you

Try to kick your legs and pull yourself out of the water and on to the ice

Lie flat, spreading your weight across the surface and pull yourself to the bank. You may find it easier to roll

If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Keep your head above the water, press your arms by your side and keep your legs together

Once you are safe, it is important that you go to hospital immediately for a check up



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE FALL THROUGH THE ICE

Shout for 'HELP' and dial 999 or 112 if you can

DO NOT walk on to the ice to attempt a rescue

Shout to the person to 'KEEP STILL' and offer reassurance.

If they are close enough, **LIE DOWN TO AVOID OVERBALANCING** and falling onto the ice, and try to reach them with a tree branch clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach.

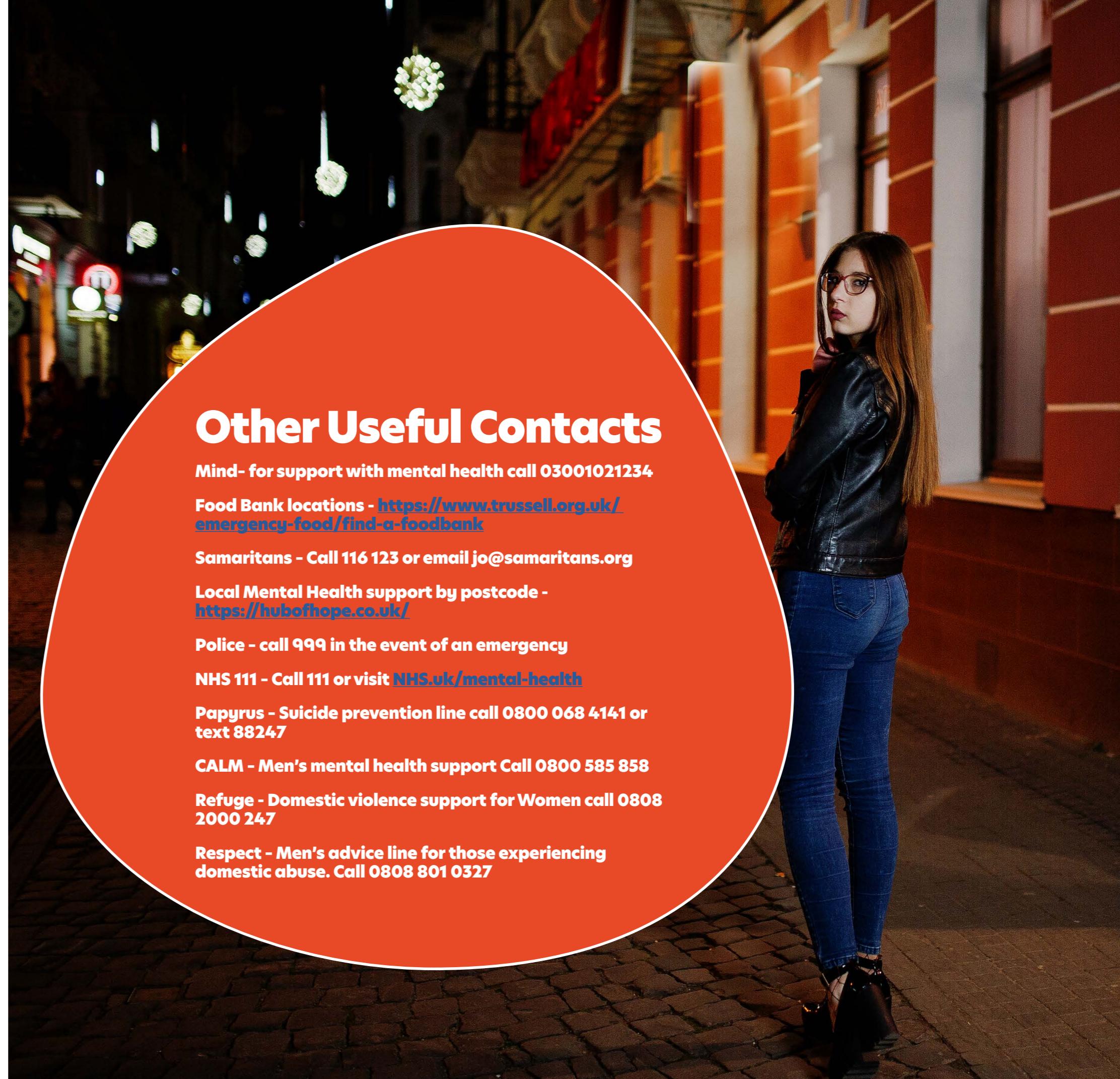
If you cannot reach them, **SLIDE SOMETHING** which floats across the ice, such as a plastic bottle or a football, so that they can hold on to it to stay afloat whilst help is on the way.

If they are too far away, **WAIT FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES** and reassure the casualty from the safety of the bank.

StayWise



Strut Safe is a volunteer -operate a nonjudgmental support line who you can contact if you are going home alone until you are safe. The organization offer a safe space for individuals and their overall goal is to make sure people get home safely. You can call strut safe if you are worried about making a journey alone, and the call handler is there to keep you company from travelling from one point to another. Calls to Sturt Safe are almost always free if you have inclusive minutes within your phone package. Calls to 03 numbers are charged at normal calls rates depending on your mobile provider. Take a look at the information for contact details and opening times of Sturt Safe here - Strutsafe.org



Other Useful Contacts

Mind- for support with mental health call 03001021234

Food Bank locations - <https://www.trussell.org.uk/emergency-food/find-a-foodbank>

Samaritans - Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

Local Mental Health support by postcode - <https://hubofhope.co.uk/>

Police - call 999 in the event of an emergency

NHS 111 - Call 111 or visit NHS.uk/mental-health

Papyrus - Suicide prevention line call 0800 068 4141 or text 88247

CALM - Men's mental health support Call 0800 585 858

Refuge - Domestic violence support for Women call 0808 2000 247

Respect - Men's advice line for those experiencing domestic abuse. Call 0808 801 0327

Functional Skills and Early Years L2 and L3 Teaching Sessions

Functional Skills

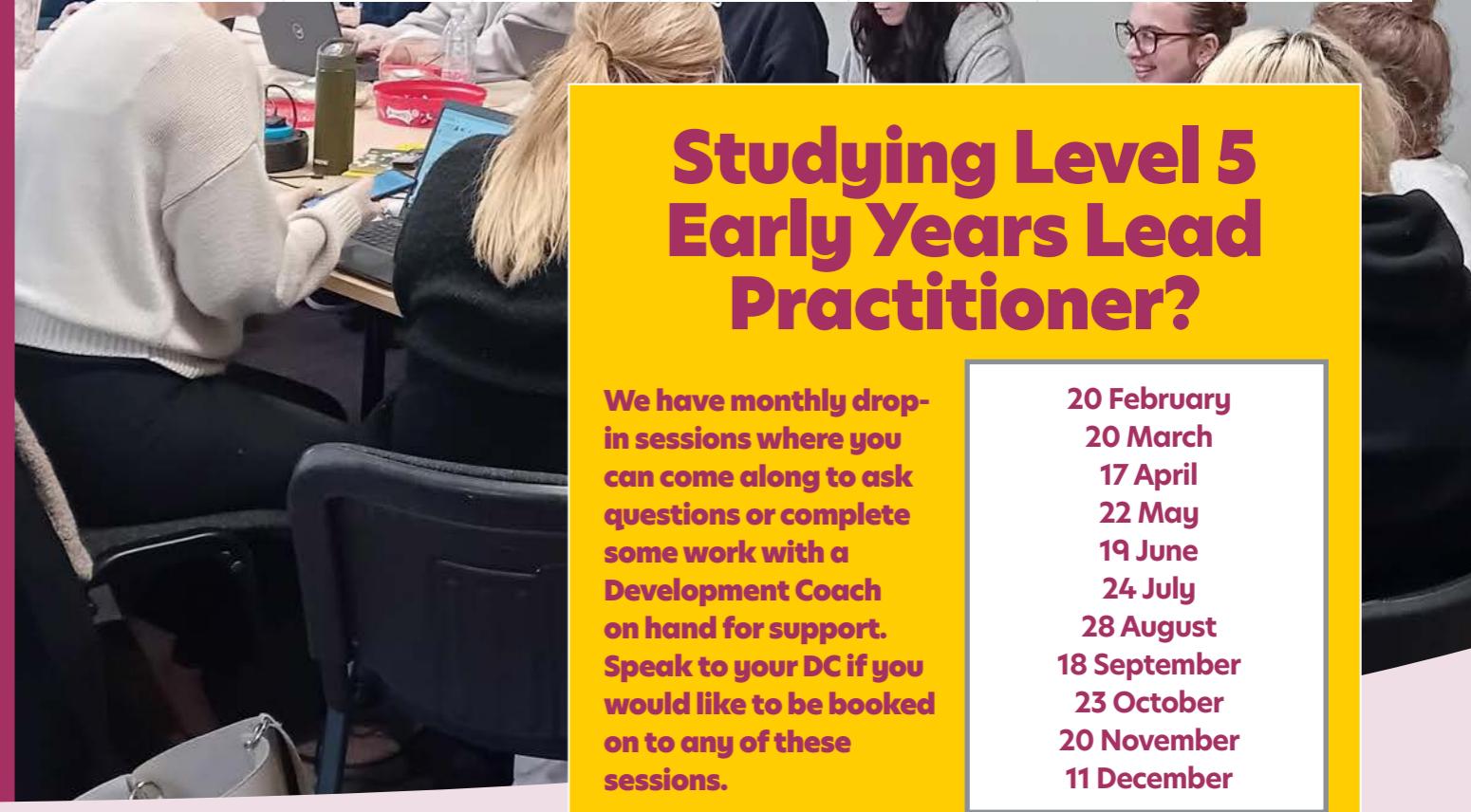
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	02/02/2026	03/02/2026	04/02/2026	05/02/2026	06/02/2026
10:15 - 11:45	Maths: Fractions (1)	English Writing: Sentence, Paragraphs & Planning		Maths: Averages & Range (1)	Maths: Units & Measures (1)
12:00 - 13:30		Maths: Percentages (1)	Maths: Non Calculator (1)		English Writing: Formatting Texts
13:45 - 15:15	Maths: Probability (1)		English Reading: Writing Styles & Organisational Features	Maths: Ratio & Scales (1)	
19:00 - 20:30	English Reading: Comparing Texts & Bias		Maths: Shapes (Perimeter, Area & Volume) (1)		

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	09/02/2026	10/02/2026	11/02/2026	12/02/2026	13/02/2026
10:15 - 11:45	Maths: Angles & Bearings (2)	English Writing: Formatting Texts		English Writing: Grammar & Punctuation	Maths: Probability (2)
12:00 - 13:30		Maths: Graphs & Tables (2)	Maths: Decimals (2)	Maths: Nets & Elevations (2)	Maths: Fractions (2)
13:45 - 15:15	English Writing: Sentence, Paragraphs & Planning		Maths: Interest (2)		
19:00 - 20:30	Maths: BIDMAS (2)		English Reading: Purpose, Language, Facts & Opinions		

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	16/02/2026	17/02/2026	18/02/2026	19/02/2026	20/02/2026
10:15 - 11:45	Maths: Shapes (Perimeter, Area & Volume) (3)	English Reading: Writing Styles & Organisational Features		Maths: Probability (3)	English Reading: Purpose, Language, Facts & Opinions
12:00 - 13:30		Maths: Units & Measures (3)	English Reading: Comparing Texts & Bias		Maths: Ratio & Scales (3)
13:45 - 15:15	Maths: Decimals (3)		Maths: Percentages (3)	Maths: Non Calculator (3)	
19:00 - 20:30	English Writing: Grammar & Punctuation		Maths: Averages & Range (3)		

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	23/02/2026	24/02/2026	25/02/2026	26/02/2026	27/02/2026
10:15 - 11:45	English Reading: Comparing Texts & Bias	Maths: Angles & Bearings (4)	Maths: Nets & Elevations (4)	Maths: BIDMAS	Maths: Averages & Range (4)
12:00 - 13:30	Maths: Shapes (Perimeter, Area & Volume) (4)		Maths: Fractions (4)		Maths: Graphs & Tables (4)
13:45 - 15:15		Maths: Interest (4)		English Writing: Grammar & Punctuation	
19:00 - 20:30	Maths: Percentages (4)		English Writing: Formatting Texts		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
10:00-12:00 Safeguarding 9:30-10:30 Leading in an Early Years setting	9:30-10:30 Health well-being & resilience	1:00-2:00 EPA support session EYP 2	2:00-3:00 Working in partnership with others			8
2:00-3:00 Off The Job Support session	11:30-1:00 Equality and Diversity 10:00-11:00 Using technology in early years 11:30-12:30 EPA support session EYE 3 post April 2024	9:30-11:30 Development Assessment Play & pedagogy 9:30-11:00 Development Assessment Play & Pedagogy 2:00-3:00 The reflective practitioner	9:30-10:30 EPA support session EYLP 5	9:30-11:30 Health & Safety		15
			9:30-10:30 Working in partnership with others			22
10:00-11:30 Development Assessment Play & Pedagogy 10:00-12:00 Safeguarding						28



Studying Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner?

We have monthly drop-in sessions where you can come along to ask questions or complete some work with a Development Coach on hand for support. Speak to your DC if you would like to be booked on to any of these sessions.

20 February
20 March
17 April
22 May
19 June
24 July
28 August
18 September
23 October
20 November
11 December

Please take a look at the Functional Skills and Teaching session calendars to select the sessions you would like to attend. Remember to contact your development coach to ask to be booked onto these.

Pest Control: Keeping Settings Safe



Having effective pest control is important to protect children's, staff and others health and hygiene and to meet legal requirements. Pests could be rodents, insects or birds which can contaminate food and spread infection.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, everyone is responsible for working safely and reporting hazards. Food Hygiene Regulations require safe food storage, thorough cleaning and good waste management to reduce pest risks in kitchen areas. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements state that premises must be clean, safe, and suitable for children, with measures in place to prevent the risk of infection.

What can I do to reduce the risk?

- Ensure rooms are kept tidy
- Clean after mealtimes, make sure no food is left out and store food in sealed containers
- Notice signs of pests, such as droppings or gnaw marks
- Carry out regular checks and make sure records are kept
- Check deliveries for signs of damage or pests
- Follow daily and deep-cleaning procedures in all areas
- Dispose of food waste correctly
- Ensure bins have lids and are emptied daily

What can I do if I am concerned?

- Follow policies and procedures in place for reporting health and safety concerns
- Ensure professional pest control services are used when necessary.



Safety Alert!



The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has recently issued a safety alert for the use of Baby Sleep Pillows due to serious concerns around risks to babies, including suffocation, over-heating and increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

You can read the safety alert here, <https://www.gov.uk/product-safety-alerts-reports-recalls/product-safety-alert-baby-sleep-pillows-psa8>, which includes advised action for consumers, childcare and education settings.

SAFETY FIRST

Screen time for under 5's

Due to increasing concerns about the impact of screen time on children's language, attention and general wellbeing, the UK Government has recently announced a review into screen time for children under five and official guidance for parents is expected in April 2026.

Research shows:

- At 2 years, 98% of children watched television, videos or other digital content on a screen on a typical day
- 19% of children played computer games at age 2.
- Children with higher screen time used fewer words.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends no more than 1 hour a day of sedentary screen time for children between 2 and 4 years.

Screen time isn't "bad", but it is important to balance children's usage. Some content is very fast and highly stimulating which can make it harder for children to focus, whereas slower, story-based, language-rich content, supported by adults is more supportive of learning.

Screen use in settings

Screen use in setting could relate to the use of:

- Tablets or iPads
- Interactive White Boards
- Computers or laptops
- Cameras or recording devices

Many early years settings use screens as a means of record keeping, sharing information, observation and assessment and to support learning and development.

When using screens in settings, it is important that we model safe and considerate use to children, use as a tool to support learning and development and ensure that any screen time with children is monitored, supervised, ensure that filtering and monitoring systems are in place and policies and procedures are followed.

Online Safety

What are the 4 Cs of online safety?

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 describes this as...

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying).

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

When accessing information online make sure you R.E.V.I.E.W

Is the information **Reputable**? Has it come from a reliable source?

Is there **Evidence** to support this? Can you find any supporting evidence?

Can the information be **Verified**? Check the facts!

What is the **Intent** of the information?

Consider your **Emotions** - How does the information make you feel?

Weigh up the information - Is it likely to be true?



What are your thoughts?

- Do children have too much screen time?
- What impact do you think screen time can have?
- Can screen usage be used to support learning?
- Should children under 5 have screen time?

Safer Internet Day 2026 | Tuesday 10 February
Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre
[saferinternetday.org.uk](https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2026/top-tips-for-young-people)

 Cyber Scotland Week

Cyber Scotland Week takes place 23 to 28 February 2026, which aims to keep everyone cyber aware and resilient.

You will find information and events here <https://www.cyberscotland.com/cyberscotlandweek/>

What's going on in February

- 1st - 9th February National Story Telling Week
- 1st - 28th February National Heart Month
- 2nd February Candlemas
- 6th February Number Day
- 9th - 15th Children's Mental Health Week
- 12th February Tu Bishvat
- 14th February Valentines Day
- 17th February Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 17th February Luna New Year
- 18th February - 4th April Lent
- 18th February Ash Wednesday
- 24th February- 2nd March Eating Disorder Awareness Week
- 26th February Maha Shivratri.
- 28th February - 29th March Ramadan



Focus on theory: The Pikler Approach

The Pikler Approach was developed by Dr. Emmi Pikler (1902-1984) and is a model of caregiving which is respectful and places emphasis on secure attachments, freedom of movement and sees children as active participants in their own development and care is given with the child, rather than something which is done to the child. Pikler believed that caregiving moments, such as feeding and changing are opportunities for building trust and emotional security. The idea of respectful care supports independent use of motor skills, develops self-control and confidence and builds emotionally secure relationships.



Features of the Pikler Approach

- The carer is fully present and gives the child their full attention
- Remove distractions
- Follow the child's interests and adapt to the child's movements
- Language rich interaction

To find out more

<https://www.teachearlyyears.com/under-2s/view/the-pikler-approach-part-1>



Safeguarding

What's happening in your area?



North West

Child safeguarding review starts after BBC Panorama probe into school

[Click here to read more](#)

West Midlands

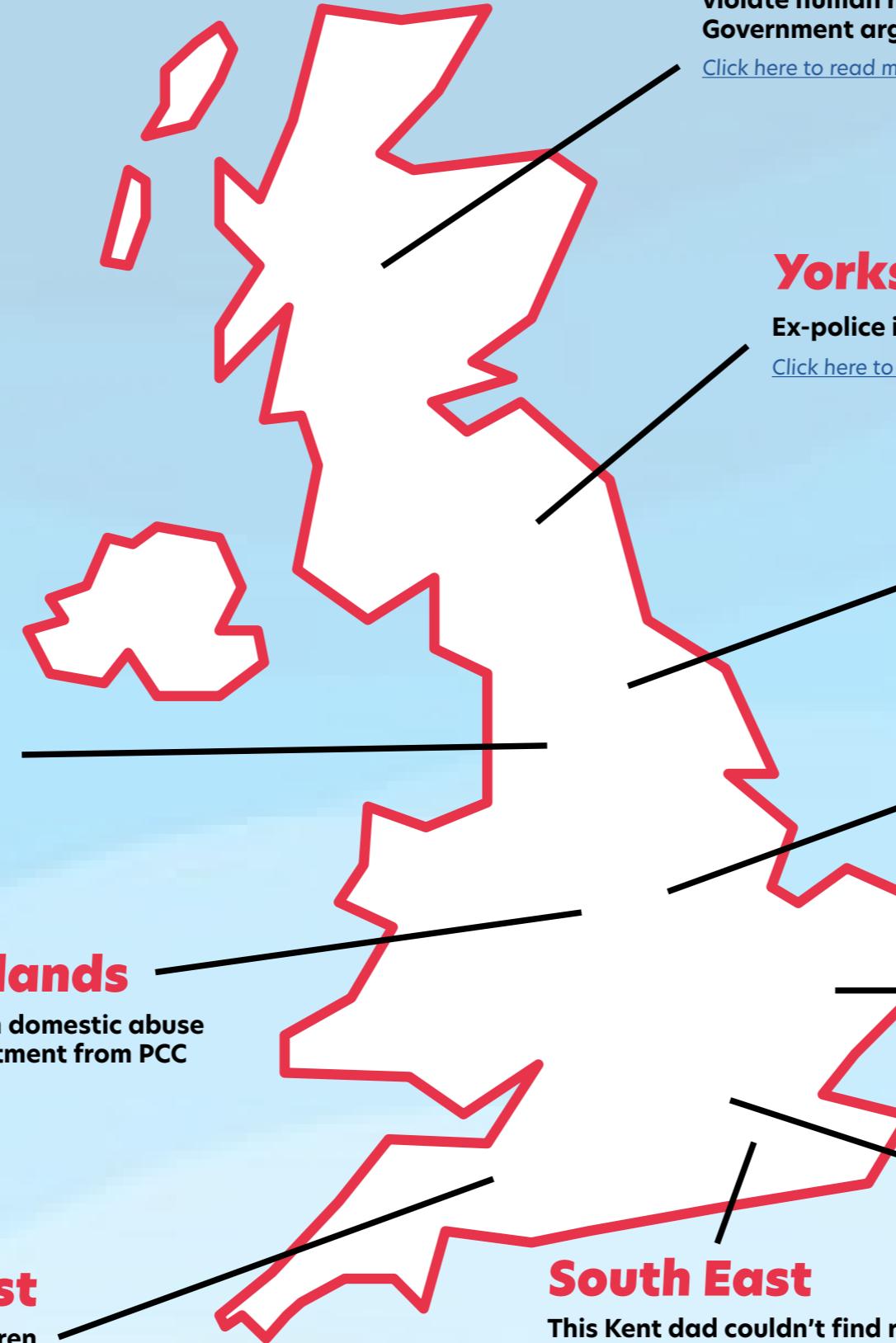
Services focused on domestic abuse receive £1.5m investment from PCC

[Click here to read more](#)

South West

Volunteers needed to help children report abuse

[Click here to read more](#)



Scotland

Trans prison ban would violate human rights, Scottish Government argues

[Click here to read more](#)



Yorkshire and the Humber

Ex-police inspector sentenced for child sex images

[Click here to read more](#)

North East

Darlington charity urges early help for young drug users

[Click here to read more](#)

East Midlands

Boy arrested for attempted murder after man stabbed

[Click here to read more](#)



East of England

Support for new parents offered closer to home

[Click here to read more](#)

London

CCTV proposal for nurseries after abuse case

[Click here to read more](#)



South East

This Kent dad couldn't find representation for his daughter - so he created it

[Click here to read more](#)

Have you ever wondered what next?

Thinking about your next steps in your career?

A midwife supports throughout pregnancy, birth, and the early postnatal period.

Midwives provide care, advice and emotional support during pregnancy, including antenatal appointments, screening and parenting classes. During labour, they monitor the health of both parent and baby, helping to ensure a safe birth. After birth, midwives offer guidance on feeding, caring for, and bathing babies.

Good communication skills, empathy, and emotional intelligence are essential, as midwives work closely with people during very important and emotional moments in their lives.

An early years apprenticeship can be a great first step towards a career in midwifery. By working with children and families, you're already building valuable skills such as communication, safeguarding, observation, teamwork, professionalism, and understanding child development - all of which are important in healthcare roles.

Midwifery also requires adaptability, organisation, resilience, and a willingness to keep learning, as no two days are ever the same.

If you'd like to find out more about this career <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/roles-midwifery/midwife>



Spotlight on The Role of a Midwife

Building Self Skills for Employability

Essential employability skills such as self-skills including adaptability, resilience, organisation and time management are valued by employers across different employers and sectors.

Being adaptable shows that you can manage change, take on new opportunities or adjust to a new environment.

Having resilience helps you stay focused when faced with challenges or experiencing setbacks.

Good organisational and time management skills show your ability to meet deadlines, manage priorities and manage your time effectively.

**We would love to
hear your ideas
and suggestion of
content you would
like to be included in
our future editions.
Please scan the QR
code to share your
thoughts and ideas:**



**Busy
Bees.**
Education and Training