



Parent and carer newsletter

December 2025

Welcome from the Head of College

Dear Families,

This terms newsletter is full of our students advocating for themselves both locally and nationally. Developing their skills on and off campus and thinking about their futures. We were proud to celebrate our alumni and all their achievements. We've had our local MP visit us and our students were challenging him to secure support for their needs both at Treloar's and in their home communities. Students were involved in the Natspec Power of Specialist FE campaign to celebrate why specialist colleges like Treloar's are a vital part of the education landscape.



I want to thank you all for your support and engagement with us we wish you all a fantastic Christmas and New Year and look forward to welcoming back students in January.

All the best,

Ben Bastin
Head of College



| <u>Dates for your diary</u> | Spring Term 2026 |
|------------------------------|---|
| Monday 5 – Tuesday 6 January | Professional development days for all staff (2 days) |
| Wednesday 7 January | Start of half term 3 ALTON COLLEGE students only Residential and day students return directly to college 9.00 am onwards |
| Friday 13 February | End of half term 3 (including ALTON COLLEGE) College closes 3.30 pm Houses close at 3.30 pm |
| Monday 16 – Fri 20 February | Half term holiday for staff and students (including ALTON COLLEGE) |
| Sunday 22 February | Weekend residential students return to houses 2.00 pm onwards |
| Monday 23 February | Start of half term 4 (including ALTON COLLEGE) Day students and weekday residential students return 9.00 am onwards |
| Friday 27 March | End of half term 4 (including ALTON COLLEGE) College closes 2.00 pm Houses close 3.30 pm |
| Mon 30 March – Fri 10 April | Easter Holidays |

Updates from Sally Nissen, Head of Nursing and Healthcare

NHS facing 'super flu' surge

The NHS is facing a "worst case scenario" for December due to a surge in flu cases, with an average of 2,660 patients per day in hospital beds with flu. This is the highest ever for this time of year.

- To protect others and prevent hospital admissions, we ask you keep your young person at home if they have a cough or cold.



Vaccinations

The children's flu vaccine is offered on the NHS every year in autumn or early winter.

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>

- We urge you to review your young person's immunisation records. Please seek advice from your GP if unsure.
- We need to keep accurate records of student and staff vaccination records so please contact Health Centre Admin team to update them. This helps us risk assess in the event of an outbreak.

Balloon gastrostomies

Our clinical assistant checks and replaces the water in student gastrostomy balloons each week. This helps reduce the risk of displacement, which can cause local trauma and interrupt routine medicines and feed.

- If your young person is not registered with our contracted medical practice, Farnham Dene, please send in a sufficient stock of 'water for injections'.

Updates from Sally Nissen, Head of Nursing and Healthcare

Health Centre has a new email address

The Health Centre administration team has a new email address:
HCAAdmin@treloar.org.uk

NHS teams may prefer to use our secure NHS email: treloar.admin@nhs.net

Season's greetings from the Health Centre Team: administration, nursing, dietitians and medicines management.



Student artwork showcased at a London event

We are so proud of our students who during the autumn term prepared their artwork for a special projection at Beyond the Frame, Treloar's new event that took place in November in Mansion House, London.

The event was a chance for the students to express their creativity and for their talents to shine outside Treloar's walls. During the evening, guests saw a 5-minute installation that featured approximately 50 pieces of artwork created by Treloar's students.

In addition to the immersive projections, guests took part in a live auction that offered one-of-a-kind pieces created by Treloar's students. Acclaimed artist, Treloar's Patron and former student Tom Yendell OBE was a special guest speaker during the evening, and talked about his experience of art at Treloar's.

Students tackling disability employment gap

Hosted by Treloar's, the Business without Barriers event at Mansion House brought together business leaders, educators, and advocates who explored practical solutions for improving access to meaningful careers for disabled young adults.

During the event, former Treloar College students and members of Let Me In spoke about the mission behind their student-led business that offers accessibility audits to local business, venues and community spaces.

Visit our website to find out more:
<https://www.treloar.org.uk/let-me-in>





Students interviewed by That's TV

On 5 November, a group of college students proudly represented Treloar's during an interview with That's TV Hampshire.

The students were joined by Treloar's former student and patron, Tom Yendell to talk about their artwork that was going to be displayed at an immersive event in London later that month.

Gemma Ellis, Treloar's Art Teacher, said in the interview that "Creativity is such an important thing to be able to do," highlighting how art benefits young people at Treloar's.

Double your money: Cookery class

Students from the College Employability and Vocational cohort took on the 'Double your money' challenge, baking mince pies and shortbread biscuits to sell to staff and students.





Celebrating National Occupational Therapy Week

At the start of November, Treloar's Occupational Therapy Team shared with us student quotes that showcased the life-changing impact of occupational therapy across the school and college.

What occupational therapy means to our students (in their own words):

"OT have been really helpful. I have been able to get different foot rests on my shower chair so they are more comfortable for me. I have been working with Lou on my community skills so I can go out on my own safely in the local town. I have been on some community skill sessions with my friend Thomas. We have been to Alton Town Centre and we have been on a train to Aldershot. With Lou's assistance I phoned up (National Rail Enquiries) about train assistance for wheelchair users."

"Our OT group on Thursday is amazing!"

"I like when my OT goes with me on community skills because she talks with me and last time we had a good time choosing X-box games."

Christmas fun at BrendonCare

College students from the Skills for Independence Pathway were invited to join residents at BrendonCare in Alton for Christmas activities and nibbles.

The residents received Christmas cards and crackers, all hand-made by Treloar's students.

All students joined in with the activities, making Christmas pictures together and showing the residents how they communicate using their AAC devices.





Remembrance Day

On Remembrance Day, our students and staff came together to learn about the significance of the day, the symbolism of the poppy, and to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of those who have served for the freedoms we enjoy today.

A member of staff who served in the armed forces shared their memories and reflections in short film clips shown in our Immersive Learning Zone helping to make these important stories accessible to everyone, giving us all a moment to pause and remember.



Supporting local wildlife

On 11 November, college students from the Employability and Vocational Pathway and Sixth Form students welcomed volunteers from Exclusive Networks and Jenny Griffiths from AVLAN (Alton and Villages Local Action For Nature) for a day dedicated to supporting local wildlife.

The day began with an inspiring presentation from Jenny, who spoke about the work of AVLAN and the importance of creating habitats for insects and pollinators. After the talk, the volunteers headed outdoors to put their new knowledge into practice, building bug hotels across the campus.



The Power of Specialist FE

In the first week of December, Treloar's, together with other specialist colleges nationwide, took part in The Power of Specialist FE Awareness Week, a powerful campaign raising awareness of the transformative role that specialist further education has in the lives of young people with SEND.

Ahead of the campaign, Ben Bastin, Head of Treloar College and Chair of Natspec, gave an interview about the importance of specialist colleges and the need for recognition, understanding and celebration about what specialist FE achieves for individuals, their families and society.

During the awareness week, we shared stories of how the Power of Specialist FE has unlocked education, transformed lives and created lasting impact for our students. You can read all the stories on our website:

<https://www.treloar.org.uk/news/2025/12/02/treloars-celebrates-power-specialist-further-education>

Damian Hinds, MP for East Hampshire, visits Treloar College

To launch The Power of Specialist Further Education (FE) Awareness Week, Treloar College students invited Damian Hinds to visit college and take part in a Q&A session.

The students prepared some thoughts and questions to share with Damian Hinds to demonstrate how specialist FE provision has helped them to explore their potential.

College students were keen to show Damian Hinds how Treloar's programmes have helped them to increase their independence and gain the confidence and skills they need to thrive in life, contribute to their communities and gain employment. Find out more about the visit on our website: <https://www.treloar.org.uk/news/2025/12/01/treloars-welcomes-damian-hinds-mp-east-hampshire-qa-college-students>



When disability is no barrier to exceptional music-making

On Friday, 14 November, in the beautiful Chawton House, Treloar's former student Alessandro Vazzana performed with the Clarion Trio: Oscar Abbott on piano, Georgina Spray on French horn, and Alessandro on Clarion.

The programme featured modern works which were perfectly suited for a lunchtime audience in Jane Austen's home village. This talented trio demonstrated that disability is no barrier to exceptional music-making. Their timing, dynamic sensitivity, and focus were evident in every note, leaving the audience spellbound.

Jocelyn Watkins said: "As a music teacher of children and young people with disabilities, a trustee of Open Up Music (the creators of Clarion), and a musician myself, this felt like the beginning of a new era—where traditional and modern instruments coexist without boundaries. These musicians have faced significant prejudice along their journey, and I listened with immense pride. This was not an audience hearing 'disabled musicians'; this was an audience just listening to beautifully played music."



Future Fest

For over 25 years now the Future Fest transition event has provided a very successful and vital information service so that students can begin to investigate options available to them for when they leave Treloar's.

On 13 February 2026, we will host the event on site. Service providers are invited to Treloar's for the day to participate in an exhibition during which students, their families and the staff are all able to access the people and resources the exhibition provides.

<https://www.treloar.org.uk/events/future-fest-2026>





Introduction to switches

Our Assistive Technology Team has recommended websites for parents and carers who would like to practice some Switch access and have fun with their young person over Christmas break:

<https://www.shinylearning.co.uk/freegames/>

<https://www.eyegazegames.com/onboarding>

A switch is a device for controlling assistive technology for people who have difficulty with touch screen, mice or keyboards.

Switches can be activated with:

- head or chin,
- finger(s), arm or hand,
- knee or foot,
- voice
- eye-blink, etc.

In the context of access, a switch can be used by a person with complex disabilities to control a computer or tablet device. A switch, coupled with appropriate software and hardware, can also be used to control an individual's environment (environmental control), e.g. to close and open curtains, turn a TV on and off etc.

You can use a switch to:

- Operate a toy to help develop an understanding of 'cause and effect'
- Access a communication aid or control a computer, tablet or phone
- Control devices at home in conjunction with an environmental control system
- Drive a power wheelchair
- Play video games

3D printing to enhance educational access

Our Assistive Technologist, Dean Hall, attended the TechAbility Conference in Nottingham in November where he delivered a session on how 3D printing is used at Treloar's to enhance educational access of our students.

At TechAbility25, attended by practitioners in assistive technology, Dean showcased 4 case studies that demonstrate how 3D-printed solutions are helping students at Treloar School and College to:

- Improve mobility
- Access and play musical instruments
- Take active part in lessons and activities

Read all about it on our website: <https://www.treloar.org.uk/news/2025/11/19/3d-printing-enhance-educational-access>





Annual Leavers' Tea celebration

In December, we welcomed back the class of 2025 together with their families and carers for a Leavers' Tea during which they received their certificates.

International Volunteer Day

Every year on 5 December Treloar's community recognises international volunteers who help us transform lives of children and young people at Treloar School and College.

Since 2014, Treloar's has been welcoming international volunteers who join our school and college across various departments. Thanks to the partnership with International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE), we are able to offer work experience and support volunteers from all walks of life.

Being a volunteer at Treloar's offers the opportunity for practical experience of living with, and caring for young people who, because of disability or illness, require the very special support available onsite. Moreover, all volunteers have access to professional training which helps them prepare and gain experience within their roles.

Thank you to our volunteers for all your hard work!



Employer Encounters

In December, college students had a chance to attend a series of sessions with local employers. Highwood Group and Special Effect talked about employment opportunities at their companies.

In January, we will be visited by other companies who will join our students for some workshops in gaming and creative writing.



Treloar's joins SONY's educational programme

In December, we welcomed Joe Clark-Jones, Ceri Cannon, and Hannah Wilson from SONY Europe Limited who joined our school students during their music lesson.

From exploring assistive technology like eye gaze and bespoke 3D-printed solutions to stepping inside immersive learning spaces and enjoying a festive music performance with accessible instruments, the day highlighted and showcased the ways Treloar's empowers students to achieve their full potential.

We also shared exciting plans for Sony's Kids in Focus workshop focussing on inspiring young people through photography. The workshop will be available to students from the Employability and Vocational Pathway.

We are looking forward to working together with SONY to create inclusive experiences for our students in 2026.





Open for nominations: Commitment to Excellence Awards

Did you know that you can nominate a member of staff, or a whole team, for a Commitment to Excellence (CTE) Award? These valued awards recognise staff for the hard work and contribution that they make towards Treloar's, our students and their families.

There are two ways of voting:

1. When you visit reception, there will be a red box with leaflets for you to complete and drop in.
2. Send an email to quality@treloar.org.uk, provide the full name, including surname, of the member of staff you would like to nominate with a short description why you feel that member of staff has demonstrated our values or has excelled in their work.

Staff can be nominated through the year.

All staff nominated are personally thanked by the CEO and receive a certificate under one of Treloar's core values, described below.

Treloar's core values:

- **Inclusive:** e.g. staff who model inclusive behaviours, may actively promote an inclusive culture, or work to remove barriers for our students and others.
- **Integrity and Respect:** e.g. staff who listen to students' views, or support them to make age-appropriate choices; they may treat everyone with mutual respect, or support a culture of openness and honesty.
- **Striving for Excellence:** e.g. staff who provide students and families with outstanding care and support, who actively challenge others to ensure quality improvement, or innovate to ensure students receive the cutting-edge, excellent support they deserve.

Internet filtering to student iPads

Please remember that any Internet filtering that is applied to student classroom iPads on site at Treloar's is not replicated if the iPad is used at home.

Please make sure that appropriate parental controls are switched on if available from your Internet service provider, or your young person is supervised in their use of the iPad.

InternetMatters.org have a guided parental controls tool to support creating a safer online experience.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>



Visit the new Let Me In page

Let Me In is a student-led business that offers accessibility audits to local business premises to help them improve access and improve employment opportunities for disabled people.

To learn more about their mission, visit their new page:

<https://www.treloar.org.uk/let-me-in>

Disability History Month

Disability History Month 2025 takes place from November 20 to December 20.

As part of it, our college student Alex, interviewed Treloar's Speech and Language Therapist, Caroline Casula, for The Knights Foundation, a trust that offers gifts and help to carers and families managing disabilities.

In the video, Alex explores the impact technology has had on her development. She demonstrates how she uses Eyegaze in order to communicate, and Caroline explains the technology in more detail.

You can watch the interview on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmqW2cifags>





Christmas Fair

On Friday 12 December, Treloar's parents, carers and the local community attended the annual Christmas Fair held on the campus in Holybourne.

Visitors had a good time browsing through a number of stalls with Christmas items hand-made by students and Treloar's staff. There was also the famous annual hamper raffle, offering a chance to win from an assortment of hampers.

