


7<sup>th</sup> June 2018

## Autism Review Group Minutes

**Present:** Margot Nichols (Chair); Elaine Bridle (Fleetville); Tracey Elliott-Brown (STAGS); Tara Fletcher (STAGS); Penny Baker (Townsend); Ruth Clinton (Aboyne Lodge); Anna Baillie-Lane (Crabtree); Rachel Andrew (St Luke's); Gwynne Ralph (Samuel Ryder)

**Apologies:** Gemma Wishart (Lead Practitioner for Autism ISL); Melanie Flay (Educational Psychology Team Manager ISL); Sue Bramley (Lead Practitioner for ESMA ISL); Silvia Hundal (SEND Lead 0-25 ISL); Stephanie Nunn (LINKS Outreach); Sharon Swinson (The Lea Primary and Nursery); Finola McManus (Parent Representative); Claire Lord (SENCO St Alban City)

**Minutes taken by:** Janet McPherson (DSPL7 Admin)

1. **MN Welcome & Apologies:** welcome and thank you to all for attending this meeting. Apologies were received from Gemma Wishart (unwell), Melanie Flay, Sue Bramley, Silvia Hundal, Stephanie Nunn, Sharon Swinson, Finola McManus, Claire Lord.
2. **The ISL Autism Improvement Plan:** the purpose of the group is to see that the aims of the ISL Improvement Plan are implemented locally. It is important for Senco's and ASD Leads to share in the implementation of the plan and help shape local provision. Gemma Wishart has recently taken over as County Autism Lead. It is essential that each within every DSPL area every school has an ADS lead. The names of the ASD leads will be sent to Gemma at the end of June. The new Autism Quality Offer is being rolled out now. ARG meetings will be held termly to review progress against the aims. Half termly meetings will be held for the ASD leads, priorities for each meeting were identified.
3. **Topic suggested for ASD Leads Meetings:**
  1. **Mental health** issues for students with ASD – there is currently a 2-year waiting list for a PALMS referral. (possibly ask for advice from staff from Forest House).
  2. **Exam stress and Anxiety** -strategies for autistic students – (possibly ask a young person who has been through it and has achieved well to contribute).
  3. **Transition** – into Reception/Yr6 to Yr7/Yr8 to Yr9/ - any ideas for practical strategies, especially with little or no budget. ( Rachel Andrew from St Luke's and Gwynne Ralph from Samuel Ryder both offered to provide input here).
  4. **How to manage with reduced resources-** (Ask Sue Camp from Forres School to speak).
  5. **Communication** - with parents of Autistic children and awareness-raising of other parents: consider approaching **Families in Focus**  (highly recommended) to provide training to address this issue.
  6. **Engagement with teachers** - to take on board strategies and put into daily good practice. "Spotlight on SEN Support", ½ -day training (Val Hazel) recommended To include differentiation for PE – support and practical strategies needed

Margot to action

#### 4. The DSPL7 Autism Improvement Plan:

##### Planned activities

**Funding for schools** – Funding is being cut and this is having negative impact on providing support in classrooms. What do teachers actually do when there is just themselves and one TA in a class and sometimes a number of ASD and other needs to be addressed? St Albans has the highest incidence of Autism in the County.

**County Priorities** – AET Standards; Level 1, Train the Trainer & Level 2, good take-up; Level 3 for HT's and Governors being rolled out soon. County Steps training also highly recommended.

**ASD Bid** – funding will be £750 per school for purchasing school resources this year. Speech and Language can also be targeted this time.

Rachel Andrew - recommended [The Selective Mutism Resource Manual: 2nd Edition](#) by Maggie Johnson and Alison Wintgens (£39.99 at Amazon UK)

Tracey Elliott-Brown – recommended [Sue Camp](#) (Head of Forres School) excellent speaker for strategies and tried & tested tips for supporting ASD children in school.

**FaceBook** – suggest setting up Behaviour /ASD closed group within the DSPL7 Facebook page. Potentially link to DSPL website. Teachers to share resources, e.g. social stories

**Elaine Bridle to action**

**Autism Action Plan** – is to be created. Input from all is encouraged. Set up dates for meetings next year. **Margot Nichols to action**

**Initiative for next year:** DSPL7 is funding **WellComm** pack. 0-5 Assessment tool for identifying Speech and Language needs early. On-line assessment available. (£150 to schools.) **Margot Nichols to send out email**

**Communication-Friendly schools:** plan to have 1 Primary & 1 Secondary school by next year. DSPL7 part-funds Elkan Training (10-weeks). Pauline Hickey, County Speech & Language Advisor and Gemma Wishart, Lead Practitioner for Autism could be approached to come in and present to the group **Margot Nichols to email details**

**SPACE:** parent-support provided by this very active and well-regarded group. Conference planned this year for Behaviour & Autism.

**Family Support Worker:** funding for Charlotte at the LINKS is to carry on. Charlotte runs the very popular Superstars programme – a 7 week course for 4-6 year olds focusing on development of social communication skills

**SIBS Group:** monthly group for siblings (Yr 3 to Yr7) of SEND children – to continue

**Holiday Play Schemes** – these are also continuing

**ADD-Vance** training and mentoring courses, coming soon

**5. AOB**

**Highly Recommended:**

**Ready, Steady, Roll Café** [readysteadyroll.co.uk](http://readysteadyroll.co.uk) near Bedford, Board Game **Cafe** where you can play any games from their Games Library while enjoying drinks and cakes. Excellent for communication skills. Has 5-star rating on Trip Advisor. Investigate further.

**Slam-Balls & Peanut Balls** – suggested for purchasing for the Resource Library

The meeting ended at 12.30pm

Date of next meeting - TBA