

## DSPL7 Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Attendees:** Serena Baker **SB** (Parent); Helen Barton **HB** (HT St George's); Elaine Bridle **EB** (Primary SEND Lead, DSPL7 Manager); Alex Lindley **AL** (HT Fleetville Infants); Margot Nichols **MN** (Secondary SEND & ASD and DSPL7 Manager); Androulla Peek **AP**, Chair, (CEO, Director of Business, Spiral Trust); Patricia Walker **PW** (ISL); Gillian Warwick-Thompson **GWT** (Parent)

**Apologies:** David Allen **DA** (HT Links Academy); Kate Bell **KB** (Trust Business Manager); Sharon Coubray (ISL Speech, Language and Autism lead) Angela Gaughan **AG** (Parent); Steven Hoult-Allen **SHA** (Collett, St Luke's & Forest House); Damien Johnston **DJ** (HT Margaret Wix); Joe Gore **JG** (Oaklands College); Steven Lloyd **SL** (HT Sauncey Wood);

**No Apologies:** Annie Thomson (HT Marlborough)

**Minutes taken by:** Sophie Heselton **SHe** (DSPL7 Administration Assistant)

		Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome and Apologies</b></p> <p>Apologies have been received from David Allen, Kate Bell, Sharon Coubray, Angela Gaughan, Steven Hoult-Allen, Damien Johnston, Joe Gore and Steven Lloyd.</p> <p><b>AP</b> welcomed everyone to the meeting, which took place over Zoom due to Covid-19. Several members were missing due to prior work commitments.</p>	
2.	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>Minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> March accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>PW</b> has been invited to GovernorHub</li> <li><b>EB</b> did not receive the names of schools with children who received extra support from Silvia Hundel to establish if they'd had audits from NESSie. <b>SH</b> now has a new role and is no longer part of the DSPL7 board.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Sharon Coubray is one of four new Specialist Leads at ISL, based at St Albans and Dacorum, working as the Speech, Language and Autism lead in the County. She is also taking forward some of the local delivery that <b>SH</b> used to provide. She will be invited to join the DSPL7 board.</p> <p>1:13: <b>HB</b> and <b>MN</b> arrived</p>	<p><b>DSPL7 Action</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EB</b> will contact schools explaining that they need to provide a room for therapy to be effective when schools return after lockdown.</li> <li>• <b>PW</b> confirmed she has no current conflict of interests.</li> <li>• <b>EB</b> was unable to attend the last board meeting to give the strategic management group update – see section 5 (vi) for a summary.</li> <li>• Reviewing outcomes data and identifying areas for future development – discussed in section 6 (ii).</li> <li>• <b>SB</b> enquired about the costs and availability of Professor Faith Orchard’s sleep, teenagers and mental health talk and has passed on this information to <b>EB</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action carried forward:</b> <b>AP</b> will produce a hiring package for professionals who want to rent a room - this is not currently a priority because no one is renting the building at the moment. An overall hiring package and lettings policy across the Trust is being developed and will be available by the time schools are re-opened.</p> <p><b>Action carried forward:</b> <b>AT</b> will contact Oaklands about the post-16 transition worker and ask how the potentially high demand would be managed, to move this action forward.</p> <p><b>Action carried forward:</b> <b>SHA</b> raised that the number of government permanent exclusions is incorrect. <b>AP</b> to query this.</p> <p><b>Action carried forward:</b> <b>PW</b> to circulate details of the new SAS restructure to DSPL7. This went live on 20<sup>th</sup> April. All essential posts have now been listed.</p> <p><b>Action carried forward:</b> <b>SHA</b> to provide DSPL7 with an estimation of how many Outreach sessions this additional money (approximately £4000) would buy. No Outreach sessions will be taking place this term due to COVID-19. DSPL7 will still need an estimation of how much how much each Outreach session costs to inform budgeting for next year.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Conflicts of interest</b></p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Budget monitoring</b> – documents distributed</p> <p>i. <b>Discussion re carry forward and underspend</b></p> <p>This budget lasts until the end of the current financial year. There are some underspends - this money will be used elsewhere. Activities which haven’t happened by the end of the year will be identified as continuing into the next financial year and the accruals will be transferred into the next budget. Only 10% of any unallocated budget can be carried forward into the next financial year (1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 onwards). Due to COVID-19, spending is currently lower than anticipated, but there are still outstanding bills and income to be processed. 100% income is expected by the end of this term.</p> <p><i>Expenditure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and management is expected to be as budgeted.</li> </ul> <p><i>SEMH and Behaviour</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 20 ADD-vance places were allocated, however invoices have not yet been billed.</li> <li>• NESSie provision is continuing. DSPL7 are satisfied they are providing a good service - see section 5 (v).</li> <li>• All DSPL7 training has been cancelled between now and September due to COVID-19 disruptions. The £2500 budget for professionals will be deemed work in progress and carried over to next year. Most parent training had already been completed and the budget spent; outstanding courses are being held remotely if possible. The overall spend of this budget is being reviewed.</li> </ul> <p>13:22 – <b>SB</b> arrived</p>	

	<p><i>Early Years</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EY’s practitioner has not been employed since October. The board is awaiting clarification from <b>DA</b> about whether this budget should be put towards an Outreach worker employed by Links. This could not begin until next term due to the COVID-19 disruptions. Some of the remaining £21,127 has been re-directed to the EY team who have requested extra resources, and may be distributed to other services.</li> <li>• DSPL7 are going to start an EY’s subgroup to which Deena Walworth (the EY’s Specialism Lead for County) will be invited, to develop her understanding of St Albans and Dacorum’s EY’s needs. <b>GWT</b> also offered to join as she is on the County-wide EY group.</li> </ul> <p><i>Expenditure plan for underspend B/F</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part-funding of Steps training is to be reviewed internally to establish if this will continue.</li> <li>• All funding for DS advisory services will be spent by the end of the year.</li> </ul> <p><u>Budget overall</u></p> <p>This year’s objectives will be met despite COVID-19. Some things have had to stall but are carrying on remotely if possible. Anything identified as important in this year’s budget will continue into next year so outstanding actions aren’t lost.</p> <p><b>ii. Indicative budget for 20-21</b></p> <p>An indicative budget is not available as DSPL7 haven’t yet received funding details but it is anticipated to be the same as this year, with a small percentage inflation increase and more guidance on staffing levels, expenditure and management costs – see section 6 (i).</p>	
5.	<p><b>Updates</b></p> <p><b>i. Impact of COVID-19 on delivery of services</b></p> <p>DSPL7 are trying to implement work business as usual (although adapted). Admin have been updating the website and organising resources. Most services have carried on via phone or Zoom. SPACE meetings have continued. Add-vance coaching which wasn’t yet complete has been finished over the phone or online with parents.</p> <p><b>ii. Feedback from the board members re impact of COVID-19</b></p> <p><u>Parents</u></p> <p>Families require more support under lockdown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADD-vance are offering an online parent course – DSPL7 looking to fund additional sessions for those on the waiting list.</li> <li>• ADD-vance coaching will be considered when reforecasting the budget (cost approx. £500 per family).</li> <li>• Any budget from cancelled parenting courses has been allocated to remote training.</li> <li>• Deborah Shepherd has been working on providing bereavement support to children affected by COVID-19, which is being distributed to parents through funeral homes and undertakers.</li> </ul> <p>The transition back into school for children will be challenging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A questionnaire for schools is being distributed this week asking them to identify children who will struggle to return to school. They will be triaged to identify support required from NESSie, plus additional group and online support.</li> </ul> <p><u>Schools</u></p> <p>There is likely to be a mental health crisis when returning to school. Discussion about challenges schools are experiencing with supporting children’s mental health. Suggested that group support</p>	

	<p>might be more effective than individual, and that Helen Long might be helpful for assisting children returning to school. Discussion about particular difficulties of year 6 pupils transitioning back to school and progressing into secondary settings. <b>AP</b> suggested the board send out information to schools about the need to carry out risk assessments for SEN children returning to school under the current circumstances.</p> <p><u>ISL</u>  <b>Action:</b> ISL have developed an operational protocol for supporting schools and families transitioning back to school. <b>PW</b> to share this with the board.</p> <p>The EP service are also supporting staff in schools and families with emotional wellbeing. The Speech, Language and Autism team and specialist advisory teachers are working to support the most vulnerable children and their families in STA and Dacorum.</p> <p><b>iii. Monitoring updates for Spring term</b>  There is a full motoring meeting with Sue Sheffield next Thursday (19<sup>th</sup> May).</p> <p><b>iv. LSP Family worker</b>  The Behaviour Support Worker is currently working to capacity (with 17 families from St Albans and 12 from Harpenden). She is contacting family cases and the schools where those children are still attending via phone/video, with appropriate permissions. Schools have provided good feedback about this service and confirmed that they feel supported. As she is not having to go into schools, she's been able to pick up some of the families on the waiting list.</p> <p><b>v. NESSie – documents distributed</b>  Nessie data has been hugely positive. They are continuing all sessions online and have contacted everybody on the waiting list, as well as all the children they have previously supported. The Parent forum course will be delivered online (Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May) - 52 parents are currently registered.</p> <p><b>vi. ISL strategic group and managers' group feedback</b>  Each of the ISL leads is contacting vulnerable children. Monitoring visits were going ahead. Each DSPL area reported doing similar things, e.g. updating their website and communicating with SENCOs. <b>EB</b> is doing SEN updates fortnightly.</p> <p><b>vii. Course evaluations and DSPL admin report – documents distributed</b>  Administrators are busy, with a good uptake of courses until COVID-19. DSPL7's SPACE contract ended at Easter – continuing this will be reviewed as other DSPL areas do not fund this and the aim is to achieve parity across all DSPL's. The new building has given DSPL7 a good presence and created a new dynamic with a nice flow of courses, resources and advice. <b>GWT</b> reported positive feedback from SENCOs about DSPL7 funding hard copies of the SEND Toolkits.</p>	<p><b>PW Action</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Staffing update and ideas for 20-21 strategic plan</b></p> <p><b>i. Staffing updates</b>  <b>MN</b> is retiring at the end of the year. <b>EB</b> will be taking on the fulltime post of manager and SEND lead. There will be a transition period until Christmas while <b>EB</b> is extracted from Fleetville Junior school (spending up to a day and a half each week helping transition to a new deputy head), although she will technically have resigned from September. During this time extra admin support will be needed. Admin is currently overstaffed – the model put forward is 15 hours a week. DSPL7 currently have 30 hours across both posts. It needs to be considered if DSPL7 continue to deliberately overspend on admin or reduce this amount after Christmas.</p> <p><b>ii. Strategic plan ideas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Years – this is being discussed and developed.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-sixteen work – awaiting feedback from <b>AT</b> and Oaklands. Simon Frazer’s potential projects will be explored and proposed at the next meeting. A post-16 event was being planned with DSPL5 &amp; 6, however this has been postponed to next year due to COVID-19.</li> <li>• Continued funding of NESSie and ADD-vance sessions.</li> <li>• Speech and Language - the therapy service stopped in March due to COVID-19 redeployment; however might be remobilising. Sharon Coubray has been invited to the next board meeting to ensure she is aware of challenges in this area and can offer some strategic support.</li> <li>• The Collett will continue to be DSPL7’s specialist Outreach.</li> <li>• SEMH - high priority. COVID-19 issues will likely extend into next year. Year 10 pupils will probably struggle with exams having been out of school for an extended period of time.</li> </ul> <p>Potential support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- individual bespoke support for families</li> <li>- funding existing family engagement practitioner who works through the local partnerships (however this is a limited and expensive resource)</li> <li>- schools prioritising mental health needs in training</li> </ul> <p>Nessie have online bereavement training for SENCOs planned for later this term. Suggested that level one mental health training be re-promoted to schools and settings, as it provides good coverage of early mental health warning signs (which is particularly relevant in the COVID-19 crisis).</p> <p><b>Action: EB</b> will find out if there is an equivalent level one mental health training course for parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmarking - <b>MN</b> has been helping schools carry out an audit review of their SEMH provision and aiding with action planning. 13 school responses so far. Areas schools require extra support with include transition (particularly years 6 - 7) and continued training (particularly regarding new funding processes and how to apply for plans). Mental health is now the highest area of need (246/700 children with SEN’s primary need was SEMH). ASD has reduced to 106/700. <b>MN</b> will continue contacting schools to gather this data.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: EB</b> to meet with <b>PW</b>, Jane Keech, Sharon Coubray, Rhona Macdonald and Melanie Flay to look at DSPL7 needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion about helping families spot warning signs of school refusal before children become chronic, and establishing issues impacting this. Difficulties include long waiting lists for support and issues often being multi-faceted and hard to identify. Education Mental Health Practitioners offer a CBT approach to support parents working with school refusers, however this has been temporarily stopped due to COVID-19. <b>EB</b> to provide detailed document on support available for school refusers to enable a website page to be created as a resource for parents.</li> <li>• Training in online safety and vulnerable children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EB Action</b></p> <p><b>EB &amp; PW Action</b></p>
9.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Next meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> June. This meeting will still take place over Zoom even if schools are open, to avoid large gatherings.</p>	

**Date of next meeting** – 30<sup>th</sup> June

**Venue** – Over Zoom due to COVID-19