

DSPL7 Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 9th March 2021

Attendees: David Allen **DA** (HT Links Academy); Serena Baker **SB** (Parent); Helen Barton **HB** (HT St George's); Elaine Bridle **EB** (Primary SEND Lead, DSPL7 Manager); Victoria Burman (HT Mount Pleasant Lane); Kim Claridge-Taylor (Attendance manager for St Albans and Dacorum); Rebecca Foster (SEN manager for St Albans and Decorum); Sarah Hedges (HT Batford Nursery); Steven Hoult-Allen **SHA** (Collett, St Luke's & Forest House); Alex Lindley **AL** (HT Fleetville Infants); Steven Lloyd **SL** (HT Sauncey Wood); Androulla Peek **AP**, Chair, (CEO, Director of Business, Spiral Trust); Annie Thomson **AT** (HT Marlborough); Patricia Walker **PW** (ISL Area Manager); Gillian Warwick-Thompson **GWT** (Parent)

Apologies: Kate Bell **KB** (Trust Business Manager); Joe Gore **JG** (Oaklands College) and Angela Gaughan **AG** (Parent)

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

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>AP welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the board for attending despite time demands due to Covid-19 difficulties. Apologies have been received from Angela Gaughan and Joe Gore.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Minutes of January 19th accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RF's action points from the November 2020 board meeting will be discussed in the ISL update (section 7i). • VB has completed her conflict of interest. • AT sent EB the resource list of information on where professionals at secondary level can go for support. • PW sent SHe the updated ISL information leaflet. This has been uploaded to GovernorHub. • AT sent EB the new EHE adviser job descriptions. • DSPL7 funding and responsibility to EHE families will be discussed in the ISL update (section 7i). 	
3.	<p>Conflicts of interest</p> <p>None.</p>	
4.	<p>Budget monitoring inc. any potential underspend – docs distributed.</p> <p>13:12 – HB arrived.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget is on track. Some areas will be re-introduced now that schools are open. In the strategic meeting it was indicated that a similar carry-forward of 20% would be allowed due to services being suspended because of Covid-19 shut downs. • All salaries and the NESSie budget will be spent. The DS advisory teacher’s funding may be underspent as she has not been working this term due to health reasons. Visits will begin again in the summer term. • School communication friendly status – Sauncey Wood and STAGs need to be consulted about how to take this forward and what training can continue following delays. • CERTSEY training – going well and completed in 7 settings, with more continuing in each cohort. • Covid Sibs & Sibs group still haven’t yet begun and are unlikely to before half term when face-to-face group activities can resume. Sibs aims to start by June 29th. • ADD-vance – work has been delayed due to Covid-19 causing large numbers of referrals. None of the 20 allocated DSPL7 referrals have been picked up yet but should be soon as they have trained more coaches. Two DSPL7 referrals have been looked at this week. If they don’t have the capacity to pick up these families and there is demand then we can consider reallocating this funding. • Post 16 conference – this will not happen when originally planned but it may be re-scheduled to September. • £10 -12,000 is currently allocated to projects which may not go ahead (depending on how the lifting of lockdown restrictions progresses) but this fits within the allowed carry-forward. <p>Action: YC Herts are running Happy Easter and Happy Summer camps (4-day weeks) for secondary school aged children eligible for free school meals. To apply for this contact Karen Haswell. DA will forward information on these camps to DSPL7 to be circulated to the board.</p> <p>Action: Herts HCC are providing grants for organisations who can run sessions like those above (£17.00 per attendee) which should be targeted towards children on free school meals. The board should forward this information to any relevant organisations. AP to forward this information to SHe to be put on GovernorHub.</p> <p>Discussion about the need to consider previously advantaged children who have become disadvantaged through Covid-19, who aren’t necessarily eligible to receive available funding currently. This may need to be raised with other groups such as with local head teachers.</p>	<p>DA Action</p> <p>AP Action</p>		
<p>5.</p>	<p>LHNF panel / ATF Update</p> <p>Three panels have taken place already in November, January and February. The next is March 16th. So far 48 applications & two re-submissions have been received. 33/68 of our settings have applied. Heavily male dominant – 38 boys and 10 girls. Heavily biased towards EY and KS1 – received very few applications from secondary schools. They mainly concern C&A or SEMH needs, with some for C&L. Several applications had 3 or 4 presenting needs. Of the 48, 18 are planning to apply for an EHCP, 30 are not currently. Most funding has been allocated to PVI nursery and reception – they do not get the initial £6000 notional SEN budget, meaning they are receiving £10,000 for a band 3 child.</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Funding requested:</p> <p>Band 3: 5</p> <p>Band 4: 30</p> <p>Band 5: 12</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Funding allocated:</p> <p>Band 3: 13</p> <p>Band 4: 14</p> <p>Band 5: 0</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Funding requested:</p> <p>Band 3: 5</p> <p>Band 4: 30</p> <p>Band 5: 12</p>	<p>Funding allocated:</p> <p>Band 3: 13</p> <p>Band 4: 14</p> <p>Band 5: 0</p>	
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	<p>There are very few EHCPs in Herts with Band 5 funding which is primarily for those with SLD needs whose parents requested they stay in mainstream settings. Band 4 funding allocated was considered carefully given the knock on effect at LMAG.</p> <p>13:32 – SH and VB arrived.</p> <p>Conditions for a successful application were considered and this information shared with SENCOs. Examples of unsuccessful applications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settings not thinking children needed an EHCP, yet putting needs at Band 5 • Settings applying for LHNH when an EHCP had been granted – you can't have HNF and LHNH • Quoting the banding tool without relating it to the child's needs <p>The budget was originally £78,000 but after the first panel it became clear across DSPL areas that panels had overspent (in some cases by 128%) so an extra £28,000 was allocated in January – this will be taken back if not spent. So far DSPL7 have spent just under £78,000 and £28,000 is remaining for the next panel. £60,000 has been committed for next year (funding given for 2 terms which stops at Christmas) and £54,000 is remaining for 2021/22.</p> <p>Application numbers are reducing (this is thought to be because the first panel coincided with ENF stopping):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel 1 – 33 applications Panel 2 – 10 applications Panel 3 – 5 applications Panel 4 – 8 applications (currently) <p>Additional Targeted Funding (funding for schools with a disproportionate number of CYP with High Needs): due to come online from April. School business managers have already been given some training on this through HfL.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Strategic management group feedback – docs. distributed.</p> <p>The January Strategic Planning group resources are available on GovernorHub. The February ones have not yet been released but mainly concerned confirming funding for 2021/22 with a 20% carry-forward. The inclusion team will be focussed on returning to school and all the needs schools might have once they are fully re-opened to all pupils.</p> <p>i. ELSA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) – EPs would like to introduce these across schools – this needs to be consistent across all DSPLs. A flyer will be distributed and a presentation on ELSA is in the strategic planning document folder on GovernorHub. • They would work across primary and secondary schools. Their role is to support CYP who struggle with emotional regulation to develop resilience. Post-Covid this is probably necessary. They would receive 6 days of training. • The training cost per ELSA is £1050.00. EPs are aiming to have two in every school and want funding from DSPLs. This is currently being discussed to see how much of the DSPL budget can be allocated, e.g. subsidising 25–50% of the cost, but will likely take a large amount of the budget. The board were positive about ELSA but suggested schools should buy-in so DSPL7 shouldn't pay more than 50%. • This will be rolled out rather than all schools being trained at once – approximately 12 schools would be trained every 2 terms. Discussion about concerns regarding roll out to ensure school commitment. 	

	<p>Action: EB to enquire as to the cross-over between the EMHP programme and ELSA. EMHPs are not available in all areas, unlike ELSAs which would be all across Herts. EB to check if this would be applicable for EYs/nurseries as well.</p>	EB Action
7.	<p>Monitoring and review of local need, inc. any post COVID lockdown response</p> <p>i. ISL Teams</p> <p>EHCP Distribution RF fed back and showed the board data on the distribution of CYP with EHCPs across County in mainstream settings. Although this data is a good overview, it is not exact. These numbers don't always reflect the need, rather the ability of parental guidance to <i>communicate</i> the need.</p> <p>Action: This data on the distribution of CYP with EHCPs across County in mainstream settings is to be sent to EB.</p> <p>School inclusivity issues RF fed back on school inclusivity issues regarding children with SEN which she has discussed with Sally Glossop. This is a focus from Jenny Newman and Jo Fisher who are aware of it and understand the different reasons why some schools may be less able to cater for children with additional needs. The LA have a responsibility to encourage this acceptance and senior management are committed to pushing this inclusivity across the County. This drive needs to be coming from the top down but it may take some time.</p> <p>Tribunal Data RF analysed the tribunals' data to establish trends. Currently 22 active appeals in STA and Decorum (highest across the 4 areas but not significantly so).</p> <p>Reasons for appeal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTA (refusal to assess) – 2 RTI (refusal to issue) – 2 Combination of B, F & I – 13 Ceasing the plan – 2 in STA 3 are currently under national trial <p>Trends (particularly in STA but also across County):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The primary area of need for children at the centre of those appeals is ASD followed by LD and SEMH. • In STA & Decorum specifically there are a lot of requests for ERSchool. • Some requests for EOTAS (Education other than at School); parents request a home package that they implement – this is a new development in terms of appeals. The LA would only consider naming it EOTAS if there is not a school nationally that can meet need. <p>Discussion about tribunal outcomes; it was confirmed that the majority of appeals are found in favour of the parent, often in part with some compromise. SHA suggested increased investment in mainstream schools could increase inclusivity and avoid placing children in out of County private provision which is very expensive.</p> <p>EHE The LA currently have 1854 CYP registered as EHE; these are just the children we know of. In the STA and Dacorum ISL area (covering DSPL7) there are 496. These figures don't take into account CYP who have been put back into school and whose data have been closed.</p>	RF Action

EHE numbers divided into key stages:

- KS1 – 210
- KS2 – 495
- KS3 – 571
- KS4 – 578

Numbers of EHE CYP have increased:

September 2015 - 521
September 2020 - 1736

It normally rises by a couple of hundred every year, but this year there has been a steep curve – probably due to Covid-19. Staff are contacting parents to gauge the rationale around that decision.

Reasons for EHE:

- High levels are 'unrecorded' or linked to Covid-19
- Dissatisfaction with school system (182)
- Educational Philosophy (174)
- Health issues (80)
- Mental Health issues (98)

Board members should contact **KCT** if they would like this data broken down into further categories.

- The EHE team's priority is to work with schools and support parents to ideally prevent them moving to EHE where possible, and to encourage children to return to school. Suitability of home provision is examined and school attendance orders considered if necessary.
- It was highlighted that it might be worth considering how many families are turning to EHE as a last resort in response to their child being unable to access the necessary provision in Herts.
- **DA** pointed out that some Headteachers are encouraging EHE to avoid permanent exclusion.
- Whilst DSPL money can be used to support children remaining in school, once parents have decided to EHE they are no longer able to benefit from any County or DSPL funding streams.
- It was suggested that more ESMA support would help reduce EHE numbers.
- Herts Grid for Learning now has an EHE page for Headteachers which includes helpful resources as well as advice and guidance about Flexi-school.

SEND SAS Update

PW gave an update and overview on SEND SAS which went through a major restructure and now works in 4 specialist areas. A PowerPoint outlining this is available on GovernorHub.

ii. Education

Schools fed back that they had found the recent DSPL7 and EP training courses very beneficial. Leadership groups predicted that Covid-19 impacts will last for up to 18 months, with SEMH needs being particularly high in the next 6 months. The current focus is getting children back to school and feeling positive.

iii. Parents

Parent reps fed back that parents have found this lockdown more difficult than the last and there is now a lot of anxiety about children returning to school; there are likely to be increases in school refusers because of Covid-19. Schools may need to consider how they can support these families to stop it becoming a long-term entrenched problem. Flexible schooling options could be helpful for those who worked well at home. Schools also need to be supportive of the difficulties around mask wearing and lateral flow testing for children with SEND.

	<p>There are concerns about access to mental health support and worries about the rhetoric concerning the 'catch up' agenda; most parents are more concerned about children's broader well-being and missed social opportunities.</p> <p>14:43 - GWT left</p> <p>Action: AP will distribute a communication piece about celebrating what children have achieved during this time, not what they've lost.</p> <p>Action: EB to send SB the new EP guidance around Emotional Based School Avoidance - this is also available on the DSLP7 website under 'resources'.</p>	<p>AP Action</p> <p>EB Action</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>Sarah Hedges (HT Batford Nursery, new EY representative) was welcomed as a new member of the board and introductions were made.</p>	

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 11th May 2021

Venue – Board meetings may continue on Zoom, or resume in The Hub depending on circumstance.