

DSPL7 Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 11th May 2021

Attendees: Helen Barton **HB** (HT St George's); Elaine Bridle **EB** (Primary SEND Lead, DSPL7 Manager); Rebecca Foster (SEN manager for St Albans and Decorum); Joe Gore **JG** (Oaklands College); Sarah Hedges (HT Batford Nursery); Steven Houlton-Allen **SHA** (Collett, St Luke's & Forest House); Alex Lindley **AL** (HT Fleetville Infants); Androulla Peek **AP**, Chair, (CEO, Director of Business, Spiral Trust); Gillian Warwick-Thompson **GWT** (Parent).

Apologies: David Allen **DA** (HT Links Academy); Serena Baker **SB** (Parent); Kate Bell **KB** (Trust Business Manager); Angela Gaughan **AG** (Parent); Steven Lloyd **SL** (HT Sauncey Wood); Annie Thomson **AT** (HT Marlborough); Patricia Walker **PW** (ISL Area Manager).

No Apologies: Victoria Burman (HT Mount Pleasant Lane);

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

		Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies</p> <p>AP welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from David Allen, Serena Baker, Kate Bell, Angela Gaughan, Steven Lloyd, Annie Thomson and Patricia Walker.</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Minutes of March 2021 accepted. Amendment – Sibs group will now resume in September 2021 rather than June.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on the Easter and Summer camps was distributed and uploaded to GovernorHub. EB met with two senior EPs who clarified that the EMHP and ELSA roles were very different; there is unlikely to be any cross over. Data on the distribution of CYP with EHCPs across County was sent to EB. The communication piece on celebrating what children have achieved during this time rather than what they've lost was uploaded to GovernorHub. EB sent SB the new EP guidance around EBSA. 	
3.	<p>Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>None.</p>	
4.	<p>Budget Monitoring – docs distributed.</p> <p>Minimal variations to the budget.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget has been re-forecast – several projects were unable to be delivered due to Covid-19. Discussions need to be had about whether these should be postponed to next year. • Most services ran as usual. • Any underspend will be carried forward to next year (20% maximum) - this will be used to fund ELSA. • ADD-vance – There may be an overspend from this service due to outstanding invoices which have been carried forward. This reflects family support that was postponed last year and additional sessions that schools requested and received, which DSPL7 was not consulted about. All retrospective families have now received coaching and all invoices have been received. Three families are currently outstanding for this year. <p>Action: EB will share a more detailed budget breakdown on GovernorHub.</p>	
5.	<p>Updates</p> <p>i. Strategic plan update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal changes to the strategic plan from the last update as finances were mainly diverted to people delivering services this year. • There has been a shift away from the training model; HCC are commissioning a lot of the courses DSPL7 previously provided, so these have not been duplicated. A Summer Term Parent Training brochure outlining all of the courses in the area from all of the different providers has been created and distributed to pediatricians, GPs and schools; this can be forwarded on to parents. Consequently, no parent training has been run (other than the NESSie courses). • DSPL7 are now working more collaboratively with ISL. EB (SEN lead) has been regularly visiting schools to support SENCOs since they reopened on March 8th. The 'Team around School model' is being implemented: Sharon Coubrey (deputy of SEND SASS and Autism County lead) has been working with EB visiting schools, auditing and pulling in services as needed (without having to go through the referral process). <p>13:16 – SH arrived.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion needs to be had with STAGs and Sauncey Wood about whether it is worth continuing achieving Communication Friendly Status, as this has now been postponed for two years. • ADD-vance: all spaces have been allocated. Two families are on the waiting list and two have been put on hold. If more capacity/support is needed from ADD-vance then that is possible; families who cannot currently be seen by Clare or Mike due to long waitlists can be forwarded on to ADD-vance. • The transition workshop for year 6-7 (a speed dating event involving all primary and secondary SENCOs and ISL reps) has been cancelled due to Covid-19. Primary and secondary SENCOs are now instead conducting their own transition events. DSPL7 are collaborating with ISL and Links to develop online workshops for parents of children with SEN looking at year 6-7 transition, supporting with anxiety. St Albans Plus have also been requested to hold two online secondary transition workshops. • Part-Steps Funding – trends show less demand for this service so this money could be re-diverted into other areas. However, there may be a Steps re-launch as the number of schools who are not Steps trained is concerning. <p>ii. DSPL7 report</p>	EB Action

- School Family Support Worker – recently met with **EB** to triage cases. Her waiting list is down to 8/9 families who have all been contacted. She has a typical turnover of 6-8 weeks so will be working with new families by the end of the month. She is employed full-time so her hours cannot be increased.
- KS3 Mentor – has cleared his waiting list and is due to begin working with a new set of children after half term. 3 spaces are currently available.
- Post-16 Transition Coordinator – will start visiting colleges (Oaklands and West Herts) during half term with small groups of students. There have been some challenges with managing parent expectations of what students can achieve.

The DSPL7 team meet regularly so there is an opportunity to discuss families across more than one work stream. Some families are receiving support from multiple members of the team, in different areas.

iii. **NESSie Spring term update**

- NESSie have received a huge amount of referrals (40 in the last two weeks). These referrals will be triaged and those who are most urgent provided support as soon as possible. Some of these are not appropriate and reflect year 6 transition anxiety, so will be referred onto Fiona Haynes at Links; it doesn't seem appropriate for NESSie (who only work in Primary schools) to begin working with year 6's as they would only be able to support them for a few weeks.
- A NESSie mental health drop-in surgery is beginning on May 28th – this is for SENCos and teachers to discuss any students they are concerned about and see whether a referral is appropriate.
- Engaging with students online has allowed the therapists to increase the number of children they are supporting due to time gains from lack of travel; therefore, for now, online support will continue for those students who responded well to this, with Natasha and Tim only visiting schools with children who need face-to-face support.

Currently there has been no evidence of the Mental and Emotional Health team at ISL picking up some of this work with families, which may partly explain this increase in referrals.

Secondary School MH Update

HB – there has been a huge increase in mental health issues regarding suicidal ideation and general anxiety, as well as disclosures over historic events. Year groups approaching transition (year 11 & 13) are experiencing anxiety about the future. Pupils reported enjoying the flexibility of home learning and are struggling with transitioning back into a more restricted world.

iv. **Collett outreach**

- CAPPs training which had to be cancelled last year has been booked for June.
- Karen has been restricted in Outreach work this term due to Covid-19 and commitments with the Collett. She hopes to resume this work by May half term at the latest. Karen was previously completing 5 days of Outreach work; sessions have now been reduced from 400 to 219. Karen is completing Covid-19 testing in school. She has been conducting online visits but is hoping to resume work in schools shortly.

Discussion about concerns that mainstream schools are now aware of all the traditional Outreach support and that the pressures and needs are now greater than the interventions provided in an Outreach session. There is now greater pressure on EHCP applications and are often four or five different presenting needs rather than just one, showing an overlap in complications. **SHA** would like to discuss with Adam Haynes having closer alignment with all

	<p>services (e.g. the advisory systems and Outreach) for a more targeted approach. Currently, the system dictates that individuals have to take certain routes which aren't necessarily appropriate before particular specialists can be accessed.</p> <p>13: 16 – RF arrived.</p> <p>v. DSPL/LSP review update - DSPL7 have received the data, but not the actual review – re-scheduled to May 20th</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no change for 21/22. DSPLs will exist but be rebranded. • There is an ongoing discussion about whether the manager and SEN lead roles should be separate, and whether LSPs and DSPLs will be joined or should remain separate. <p>Suggestions for next year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EYs behaviour support should be implemented - Links Outreach currently only begin work with year 1. Reception children are therefore lacking support. • NESSie support that should be continued. • ELSA - all DSPLs will fund 50% of the secondary school ELSA role out. DSPL7 will fund 15 ELSA's at 50% - approximately £1500 per ELSA. 10 individuals can be trained in person at once, and 8 individuals online. Currently NESSie is available for primary schools and ELSA will be available for secondary schools. • Understanding the complexity of primary school needs – often there are several issues present rather than just one. • Ensuring mainstream schools have access to the right settings, materials and resources. • Not creating the wrong provision within a setting. • Early intervention is necessary – having clear and consistent guidance. • SLCN - Lack of early SaLT intervention 	
<p>6.</p>	<p>ISL Updates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN services review underway. A summary of results has just been produced which may lead to service updates in future. • SLCA team are updating their training offer. • The advice line will continue. • The EY autism staff have now joined the SLCA team. • They recently looked into reviewing and improving the referrals process. Any concerns should be brought up with Rebecca or passed to Sharon. • Eps and the SEN SASS service are continuing to try and support the LHNF Panels where possible, but this is difficult due to staff vacancies; the EP service are struggling with recruitment retention – this is a problem both nationally and locally. <p><u>Staffing Updates</u></p> <p>SEND SAS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Keech is still currently off work due to health reasons. Deena Wolworth (EY specialism lead) is covering this role. • There is currently a vacancy for the lead teacher in the SLCA role as Rhona MacDonald has moved to the SpLD team. Sharon Coubrey (Specialist lead for SLCA and for the St Albans and Decorum area) is currently overseeing this role. <p>SEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacancies within the SEND team have been recently recruited. • There has been an increase in funding for the AROs team (Annual Reviews team) to double capacity in updating annual reviews. 	

7.	AOB St Luke's now have a horsebox café which has recently opened - information about this will be sent to all schools. Action: EB and GWT to discuss including a stakeholder survey for parents.	EB & GWT Action
----	--	--------------------------------

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 6th July

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