

Area Group Terms of Reference



Achieving quality outcomes

1. Purpose

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the nine DSPL Area Groups that will deliver the SEND Strategy 2018-23 in each part of the county. These small strategic groups will have real scope for influencing the shape and form of SEND provision and services that they need in their areas.

2. Background

In 2010, the strategic framework for DSPL and its components were developed and then agreed by HCC Cabinet. The overarching intention of DSPL is that the needs of children and young people with SEND are met as locally as possible with parents, schools, settings and services working flexibly together to make more effective use of available resources.

The DSPL framework enables schools, settings, parent carers and other partners to work together to take responsibility for children and young people with SEND in their areas.

The local delivery arrangement is through nine DSPL Area Groups where one school in each of the nine areas acts as the lead school for DSPL for that area.

A SEND Executive Group decides and directs the strategic focus dependent upon Statutory Duty, national and local objectives, and available budgets.

A DSPL Strategic Planning Group of officers, DSPL Managers and Lead Schools provides a regular opportunity for agreeing how the strategic priorities should be reflected in local plans and for peer support in sharing best practice.

3. Aims and Outcomes of the SEND Strategy and DSPL

The key outcomes are:

- Local schools, early years settings, colleges and services provide quality provision that meets the needs of children and young people with SEN and disabilities
- Short and long term outcomes for children and young people with SEN and disabilities are improved and there is evidence of their achievements and progress socially, emotionally and academically

- Communication between parents, children and young people, and schools, early years settings and colleges is good, engendering trust, confidence, respect and constructive partnership working
- Available resources for SEN are managed through a transparent approach that is fair, meets local needs and achieves best value for money
- The local authority works proactively and collaboratively with parents, young people, schools and other stakeholders through co-production to increase participation in service planning, delivery and review

4. Scope

Each DSPL Area Group will be able to develop the provision and services in the way that is most appropriate to meet their local needs, but they must work within the overall SEND Strategy and outcomes of the various workstreams.

There will be regular opportunities for representatives of the nine DSPL Area Groups to meet together.

The full range and levels of SEND will be included in the scope of DSPL Area Groups although priorities may vary from year to year:

- Communication and interaction: SCLN (speech language and communication needs), ASD including Asperger's and Autism
- Cognition and learning: moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and specific learning difficulties (SpLD)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH);
- Sensory and/or physical needs: visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI), multi-sensory impairment (MSI), physical disability (PD)

In the context of the SEND Strategy each DSPL Area Group is accountable for producing and implementing an annual strategic development plan that demonstrates:

- Good partnership working and collective responsibility across all local stakeholders
- High confidence levels of parents in local provision and services
- Effective use of data and evidence to inform planning and developments
- Increased capacity of schools and settings to meet needs locally
- Efficient use of resources and value for money

A number of proxy indicators have been identified and agreed and will provide evidence to measure progress towards achieving quality outcomes. These can be found in the Strategic Framework for Local Delivery document.

In order to inform their strategic development plans each DSPL Area Group will be provided with a profile showing the local picture based on a variety of data and compared to the agreed model indicator, as well as information on current expenditure on children and young people with SEND in their area.

Using the data provided, each DSPL Area Group will be able to determine what developments may be necessary to meet needs better and more locally.

A Data and Information Sharing Protocol is in place to clarify when and what data can be shared through a commonly understood set of agreed principles and process, and this should be followed for data requests.

The DSPL Area Groups will be supported in developing their provision with a share of the DSPL budget that is available from 'high needs block' Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The amount for each Area Group is based on equal lump sums and a small proportion based on the agreed needs-based model indicator.

Each of the nine DSPL lead schools is accountable for the leadership and administration of their Area Group and their allocation of the budget includes a sum to cover leadership and management costs.

Each group will produce an annual summary report of their activity and achievements on the agreed template.

5. Constraints

The DSPL Area Groups must operate within these Terms of Reference and the SEND Strategy 2018-23. These will assist the Area Groups to ensure their plans develop provision and services that enable:

- ✓ Improved local capacity to meet needs
- ✓ Broader curriculum opportunities
- ✓ Greater involvement of local schools in overseeing provision and services
- ✓ Regular contact for all children with SEND with a broad range of peers
- ✓ More equitable provision and services in relation to need
- ✓ Broader range of local facilities/resources that meet individual needs
- ✓ Improved progress and outcomes for children through good quality, effective local provision

- ✓ High levels of parental confidence in local provision/services
- ✓ Improved value for money for the type/level of need

The groups must also operate within statutory regulations and within the budgets available to them.

6. Membership

In addition to the DSPL Area Group Lead School (Chair)* and DSPL Area Group Manager, the membership of each DSPL Area Group will be:

- Up to 4 mainstream primary headteachers or their representatives*
- Up to 2 mainstream secondary headteachers or their representatives*
(*including the Area Group Lead School (Chair))
- 1 special school headteacher
- Area Manager, Integrated Services for Learning
- Behaviour provider
- Other ISL staff
- Early Years provider
- Up to 3 parent carers
- Post-16 representative
- Groups will be able to co-opt additional members if necessary

A set of principles and an evaluation framework for co-production in DSPL has been developed.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All members will:

- Work within the SEND Strategy
- Work in partnership within the specific principles of co-production
- Attend DSPL Area Group meetings at least twice a term
- Provide a perspective on local needs
- Contribute to the area strategic development plan
- Take collective responsibility for decision making and financial monitoring
- Identify possible constraints on developments
- Promote communication with the wider stakeholder group.

Conflict of Interest

All members are there to act on behalf of the local area and children and young people with SEND overall. Members should perform their role in good faith, honestly and impartially and avoid situations that might compromise their integrity or otherwise lead to a conflict of interest. If a member feels they have a conflict of

interest regarding an issue they must declare it to the chair and withdraw from the discussion.

Lead School Headteacher (must be from a mainstream primary or secondary school)

- Be accountable for leading the strategic development and implementation in their DSPL Area in line with the SEND Strategy and strategic outcomes
- Act as the commissioner of provision and services on behalf of the DSPL area as appropriate.
- Fulfil role of Chair of Area Group
- Be accountable for finance and administration of the Area Group
- Attend countywide DSPL/SEND meetings as required.

Other mainstream Headteachers

- Represent the mainstream school sector as a whole
- Provide perspective on opportunities for developing flexible local provision.

Special School Head

- Represent the special school sector as a whole
- Participate as a service provider
- Provide perspective on opportunities for developing flexible local provision

Early Years Provider

- Provide an early years perspective
- Provide perspective on opportunities for developing flexible local provision.

Area Manager, ISL

- Work in partnership with the DSPL Lead and the DSPL Area Group to draft and implement a Strategic Development Plan for provision and services to children and young people with SEND, working within the Hertfordshire SEND Strategy and the workstream outcomes
- Act as lead local LA officer for DSPL; acting as a critical friend and providing an enabling role; giving advice, support and challenge to DSPL Area Groups
- Assist the group to interpret the data and make informed decisions
- Provide wider county perspective and links with other DSPL Areas
- Ensure integrated working locally between ISL and DSPL.

Behaviour Provision Lead

- Provide an overall perspective for behaviour in the area..

ISL Team Managers

- Provide an overall perspective for how well needs are met locally and what developments might be required.

Parent carers

- Provide broad perspective of parental experience.
- Provide perspective on opportunities for developing flexible local provision.

8. Frequency of Meetings

Half Termly

9. Reporting and Monitoring (see monitoring cycle [here](#))

- Annual Strategic Plan including appendices and in-year updates sent to Business Manager, ISL
- Minutes of meetings sent to all identified stakeholders
- Termly Monitoring Form including outcomes and impact, and a financial report, sent to Business Manager, ISL
- Annual financial summary sent to Business Manager, ISL
- Annual DSPL Area report
- Area newsletters and DSPL website

10. Accountability

DSPL Area Group members are accountable for following these Terms of Reference and ensuring the strategic development plan meets the needs of children, young people and partners in their local area and aligns with the SEND.