

DSPL Area Groups Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

This document sets out the Terms of Reference for the nine DSPL area groups that will deliver the DSPL strategy 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

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

A Reference Group of heads of schools and settings oversees DSPL, with a parallel Parents' Group. The Reference Group has developed the delivery framework for DSPL and a key component is localism, whereby schools, settings, parents and partners in areas work together to take responsibility for their children and young people with SEND.

The local delivery arrangements bring together local partnerships (as agreed by schools) to create nine DSPL area groups. The groups are listed in the attached structure chart.
(Appendix 1)

One school in each of the nine areas will act as the lead school for DSPL for that area.

3. Objectives

Each DSPL area group will be accountable for producing a strategic delivery and commissioning plan for sign off by the County Reference Group from April 2012.

Particular measures of success for the DSPL area groups will be:

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

4. Scope

Each group will be able to develop the provision and services most appropriate to meet their local needs but they will need to work within agreed parameters and the overall strategic framework to ensure provision is developed coherently across the county. There will be regular opportunities for representatives of the 9 groups to meet together. There is a need for increased equity in SEND arrangements across Hertfordshire and schools and parents do not want a 'free for all'.

The full range and levels of SEND will be included in the scope of DSPL area groups:

- Learning difficulties
- Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties
- Autistic Spectrum Disorders
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs
- Sensory and/or physical needs

In order to inform their commissioning and delivery plan for the area each DSPL group will be provided with data about the expenditure on children and young people with SEND in their area and given a notional budget to manage based on agreed indicators of need.

The following budgets will be in scope:

- Local authority maintained special school budgets
- Mainstream units and resource base budgets
- Education Support Centre budgets
- Independent special school fees
- SEND support services budgets
- Exceptional Needs mainstream budgets
- Special Needs Transport Budgets (savings accrue to HCC)

Using the data provided each DSPL area group will be able to determine what local developments may be necessary to meet needs more locally.

The DSPL area groups will be supported to start develop their provision with a share of the DSPL budget which has been made available from reduced expenditure on out county placements. The amount for each group will be based on a lump sum and a proportion based on the needs based formula.

The 9 lead DSPL schools will be accountable for the leadership and administration of their area group. Approximately £22k per DSPL lead school is available for this purpose and each group can determine how best to use these funds. (For example -one head teacher seconded for a day a week with some admin support or 5 head teachers for half a day a month each with some admin support)

5. Constraints

The DSPL area groups will need to operate within the overall strategic framework for DSPL and they will be guided by a set of agreed parameters. These will assist the groups to ensure their plans develop provision and services in the direction of:

- ✓ 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

The membership of each DSPL area group will be:

- Up to 3 mainstream primary headteachers
- Up to 2 mainstream secondary head teachers (including *the Lead DSPL School*)
- 1 special school head teacher
- Area Manager, Integrated Services for Learning
- ESC Head or Behaviour and Attendance Team Manager
- SEN or EP Team Manager
- Early Years Provider
- 2 Parents
- Groups will be able to co-opt additional members if necessary

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All members will:

- Provide a perspective on local needs
- Contribute to the area strategic delivery plan
- Take collective responsibility for decision making
- Work within the strategic framework and agreed parameters

Lead School Head and other mainstream Heads

Act as commissioners of provision and services on behalf of their area
Fulfil role of Chair/Vice chair of group (may be Lead School)
Lead DSPL School to manage finance and administration of group
Lead School or Chair to sit on the County DSPL Reference Group

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
Identify possible constraints on developments

Early Years Provider

Provides early years perspective

Area Manager, ISL

Acts as lead local LA officer for DSPL
Provide enabling role, giving advice and support to DSPL area group
Assist the group to interpret the data and make informed decisions
Provide wider county perspective and links with other Areas

ESC Head/Behaviour and Attendance Team Manager

Provide overall perspective for behaviour in the area, how well needs are met locally and what developments might be required

EP Team Manager

Provide overall perspective for learning difficulties in the area, how well needs are met locally and what developments might be required

Parents

Provide broad perspective of parental experience

8. Frequency of Meetings

Half Termly

9. Reporting and Monitoring

- Minutes of meetings sent to identified stakeholders
- Termly progress report sent to County DSPL Manager, including financial report

10. Accountability

Group members will be accountable for following these Terms of Reference and ensuring their plan meets the needs of children and partners in their locality. DSPL functions within the County's collaborative structure (Appendix A of the Strategic Framework for Local Delivery) and members of the DSPL County Group will be available for advice and support should an area group be in difficulty.