

**Dorset Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 10am, Microsoft Teams**

<p><b>1</b></p>	<p><b>Introductions and Apologies:</b></p> <p><b><u>Attendees:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ursula Murley</b> – Principal Teacher, Dorset Hearing Support Service (Chair)</li> <li>• <b>Ken Tucker</b> – Educational Audiologist, Dorset Hearing Support Service</li> <li>• <b>Simon Baird</b> – Clinical Scientist (Audiology)</li> <li>• <b>Lisa Nind</b> - Clinical lead for Paediatric Audiology</li> <li>• <b>Louise Viney</b> – Local Engagement Officer NDCS</li> <li>• <b>Heidi Watts</b> – Senior Rehabilitationist (Teacher of the Deaf) University of Southampton Auditory Implant Centre (USAIS)</li> <li>• <b>Shirley Sorbie</b> – DDCS (Dorset Deaf Children's Society) Trustee</li> <li>• <b>Sam Bealing</b> - Educational Audiologist with HSS</li> <li>• <b>Juliet Viney</b> – NDCS Trustee and CHSWG Parent Representative</li> <li>• <b>Gemma Hardman</b> - Speech and Language Therapy Service</li> <li>• <b>Eirwen Burgess</b> –</li> <li>• <b>Liz Jamieson</b> – Speech &amp; Language Therapist</li> <li>• <b>Katie Key</b> – Senior Specialist Audiologist (Paediatrics)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Apologies:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Helen Williams</b> - Service Manager for Dorset Audiology</li> <li>• <b>Sarah Morris</b> - Consultant Paediatrician (report received)</li> <li>• <b>Steven Frampton</b> – Consultant ENT Surgeon</li> <li>• <b>Jemma Buckler</b> – NHSP (Neonatal Hearing Screening Programme) Local Manager</li> <li>• <b>Rachel Beeby</b> – Clinical Scientist (Audiology)</li> <li>• <b>Kate Halsey</b> – Integrated Care Systems Senior Programme Lead Children and Young People's Team</li> <li>• <b>Jon Fox</b> –</li> <li>• <b>Charlotte Freeman-Laurence</b> -</li> <li>• <b>Deepa Shenoy</b> - Consultant Paediatrician</li> </ul>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Matters Arising:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of minutes from last meeting – agreed.</li> <li>• Review of actions from last meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ JV – no response from invitation on FB group for more parents. JV commented on the parent survey sent by HSS – would it be possible to send a quick 'survey' asking parents to raise any questions before each CHSWG meeting? It could be made anonymous.</li> <li>○ <b>Action: UM to send out parent questionnaire before next meeting.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LV – discussed what some other CHSWG are doing, e.g. run an event beforehand like Oxford. Harrow and Brent have a QR code on their local offer to ask a question of the CHSWG. LV commented that parental representation was challenging for all CHSWGs.</li> <li>○ SS – has spoken to a few parents. No takers yet. Parents have a lot to deal with and CHSWG is just one more thing.</li> <li>○ SS – asked about the HSS biennial parent questionnaire. She wondered if it not be better to have it yearly rather than two-yearly? UM mentioned ‘survey fatigue’. We get very few responses, and it fits in with what the commissioners are doing (2-yearly)</li> <li>○ Heidi – quite a lot of parents have difficulty reading a questionnaire. Could we make it easy read? UM – that would fit with Council Policy and inclusion.</li> <li>● School entry hearing screening – update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ See below under School Health</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Parent Information Evening – update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ UM/KT – it has been difficult to find a suitable venue, but now planned for <b>Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 6.00pm at Sturminster Marshall Village Hall</b>. Thanks to those who have attended the online working group for this. All CHSWG members will be invited to a meeting soon to plan the evening. Volunteers who would consider presenting a display, a workshop or who could just be present as the face of CHSWG would be very welcome.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Service Updates:</b></p> <p><b>Newborn Hearing Screening Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EB – Currently staffing is having an impact. One person is on maternity leave, and another has moved on. In a small team this makes a big difference. Two new screeners have now been recruited.</li> <li>○ Data and performance measured quarterly. 2023-24 Q3: Acceptable level met throughout. 1<sup>st</sup> KPI (key performance indicator) was only just acceptable, and this was because two patients declined, and one moved back overseas. Other KPIs – all acceptable.</li> <li>○ 100% of babies were offered an appointment in time but those attending dropped because a couple couldn’t attend within the deemed timeframe.</li> <li>○ The NHSP team has now taken on Neonatal unit screening because of stresses in neonatology and to reduce false positives by providing greater screening expertise. NHSP now has contracts with both hospital trusts.</li> <li>○ NHSP Survey: NHSP has included adjustments to the survey as a result diversity/inclusion (LGBTQ+)</li> <li>○ LN said she has noticed that there are a lower number of referrals (fewer false positives). This means they are getting more complex cases now. It does also mean that with fewer babies, there are fewer opportunities to fine tune their skills, but as a positive, there are lots of appointments that can be offered.</li> <li>○ JV - from personal experience, agreed that having expert NHSP screeners would be less stressful for the neonatology team.</li> </ul> <p><b>Paediatrics (East and West)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Apologies from SM for being unable to attend, but she did send a report. UM picked out highlights from the report and shared her screen to show SM’s tracking of aetiology.</li> </ul>

### **Dorset Hearing Support Service**

- UM - presented HSS report.
- JV – asked about the 77 extra children since the last report. UM explained that there were a small number of babies referred but more older children, often with temporary conductive deafness (glue ear); this causes seasonal fluctuations in the number of children with hearing aids. As the academic year progresses the number of children goes up with additional new referrals added. Then at the end of the summer term, older students leave education, and the number reduces.
- LN commented on the large number of temporary conductive cases now being fitted with hearing aids. The number of permanent and late diagnosed cases is staying consistent.
- LV commented that it is fantastic that HSS offer radio aids to preschoolers and allow home use as this is not always done in other areas.
- LV enquired about children who choose not to wear hearing aids. UM explained that these are usually older students who reject wearing hearing aids and don't want HSS input. HSS always offers to be there as 'light touch' support, and we have an open door.
- LV recently became aware of the importance of "Social Capital" (connections that children make between themselves). There was a discussion with examples of non-wearers meeting peers and deciding to wear hearing aids again and there was agreement that peer support was important. UM mentioned examples of HSS bringing children together, e.g. A Healthy Minds group and a focus on bringing students together ahead of transition to secondary school. A lot of work goes on around that.
- SS enquired about unilateral hearing losses not being aided. LN explained that many unilateral losses are aided but that it depends on several factors including level of hearing loss, school progress, suitability of having a hearing aid etc. Hearing aids are offered but not always seen as beneficial/not always taken up. These children are still monitored at least annually in Audiology.
- UM children with an unaided diagnosed hearing loss have an annual letter sent to the school with advice.

### **Dorset Paediatric Audiology**

- LN – Paediatric Audiology has really been under the spotlight with NHS England recently with the NHS England Paediatric Hearing Improvement Programme. This has involved a lot of extra work. All audiologists working with babies were required to attend two workshops. Six audiologists from the team did so and found it very useful and good links were formed.
- The Care Quality Commission is now involved to ensure safety, quality and accessibility and Dorset Paediatric Audiology is working towards Improving Quality in Physiological Services (IQIPS) accreditation.
- The new paediatric clinic room in Weymouth is up and running. Currently, the 6-week waiting list for older children is not being met.
- There continues to be a problem with non-attendance- currently the families are called beforehand, but text reminders will also be introduced soon.
- There have been four instances of tamperproof battery drawer failing recently. Investigation by Oticon of two of these cases found that the battery drawers had been damaged by use of the incorrect tool.
- **Action: KT to emphasise use of correct tool in staff meeting.**
- LV asked if Phonak hearing aids were being used predominantly and if there was an App associated with the hearing aids being given? LN explained that

Oticon aids are now the main brand provided in Dorset and that there is an App (Oticon Companion).

- JV asked about follow-up for those who don't attend and the reasons why. LN explained that there is a complex follow-up pathway for non-attenders. If it the reason seems to be straightforward, parents are sent a letter to rebook. If there are medical or safeguarding concerns, then they are pursued more persistently, especially if they already have hearing aids. Persistent non-attenders are referred to the safeguarding team.

### **University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service**

- HW – USAIS currently has 1078 users in total (including adults). There have been 30 new children in the last year (13 non-surgical children for Bone-Conduction Hearing Instruments BCHI). There are currently 77 (adults and children) waiting for surgery. There is currently a bottleneck in getting scans.
- There are currently some job vacancies within the service. There has been a recent appointment of a new ear health nurse.
- HW is trying to set up a habilitation group. This would be like a mini-Elisabeth Foundation Group for children who don't wear their devices as much as they could do. The aim would be to help them to wear and to listen.
- Alison Anning-Strevens is available for any questions about BCHI. She can be emailed on [a.m.anning-strevens@soton.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.anning-strevens@soton.ac.uk)
- There was general support of the idea of a habilitation group for reluctant wearers. UM confirmed that HSS would support this as a joint project and possibly link to the HSS Parent Support Group. GH also commented that SALT would be happy to fit in with such targeted support.
- GH asked if there was a plan to improve the wait for scans (it can take 15 weeks – impacting on critical language window). HW reported that senior staff are looking at how to improve this.

### **ENT (East and West)**

- There were no representatives in attendance from ENT.

### **School Health**

- UM raised the email sent from Sarah Boynton concerning the cessation of school-entry hearing assessment screening. LN explained: School nursing team were asked to a meeting with audiology. There were several concerns – ongoing training (outsourced at a cost), peer-reviewing (how can we be sure it is being done as it should be?). Following that meeting there was discussion with commissioners and it was decided to stop for those reasons.
- Parents who are concerned about their child's hearing should seek a referral to Audiology. In this way, we know that children will be seen by a peer-reviewed clinician.
- All reception age children will be sent a letter explaining this although LN was not sure if this would be just for this year or done annually. LV confirmed that it has been stopped in several areas of the country. It is important that families understand how to tap into audiology.
- UM – local offer needs updating with info that came from School Nursing with details of how to get referred. Currently council freeze on updating the website.
- **Action: UM to update local offer when this is possible.**
- JV asked what number of children are picked up by school entry screening. LN confirmed that it identifies very few Permanent Childhood Hearing Impairments (PCHIs), perhaps just 1 or 2 per year.

- EJ wondered if there could be some information in the school staffroom telling teachers what to do if there are hearing concerns. There was general agreement that this might be useful.

### **Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy**

- GH and LJ – Staffing is an issue. GH is going on maternity leave soon. Her post has been advertised and there will be interviews in the next few weeks.
- Children are currently seen on either specialist or community caseloads. Specialist is currently 30-40 children. It is not possible to pull the data on Community caseload for deaf children.
- Development of the Balanced System for Speech, Language and Communication as an online resource with 26 projects involved.  
<https://pathway.thebalancedsystem.org/>
- One project for deaf children is to target early years. There are videos to train the community team as well as more specific training for the community team to develop specialism in working with deaf children. Also looking at website, literature, leaflets etc.
- UM mentioned that it has been very helpful to work with GH to consider what Advisory Teachers do as standard and what SALT do as specialist.
- LV asked if the training videos can be shared. GH – no permission right now as they are for therapists. GH is looking at producing different videos with correct branding for parents to use to support them. Watch this space.
- LV – are you linked into RCSLT Centres of Excellence? GH belongs to SW clinical excellence group. RCSLT looking at a project with BATOD. Lucy has also joined.

### **Children's Social Care**

- No representative in attendance - UM explained that there have been some internal SEN team structure changes.
- **Action: UM to investigate means of better contact with Social Care for CHSWG involvement.**

### **Dorset Deaf Children's Society**

- SS – report sent to CHSWG members prior to today's meeting.
- Christmas party – excellent response, about 190 attended.
- Have held three events for babies and preschool children since last CHSWG, which have been well attended.
- Children turning 18 can now become 'supporters' of CHSWG.
- Welcomed 10 new families so far this year.
- SS attended NDCS meeting in London for local groups and it was useful. DDCS website was shown as an example of what can be achieved to support families.
- SS has been to East Dorset Audiology and restocked the waiting room with literature and provided deaf-related books. LN – gave thanks for making the waiting room so lovely and informative.
- SS is starting a WhatsApp group for older children (13+) to encourage and facilitate peer-to-peer contact.
- **Action: SB to mention at HSS Staff Meeting.**
- UM gave thanks and praise for what the DDCS has achieved e.g. the early years group which has reached more families due to being held at the weekends/holidays.
- LV – echo praise from UM. Social Capital, again! LV uses DDCS when talking to other local groups and it's useful that it visibly supports CHSWG.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ JV – could Advisory Teachers promote the DDCS more actively e.g. mention upcoming meetings when visiting children?</li> </ul> <p><b>National Deaf Children’s Society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ LV – NDCS CHSWG update sent out in the spring. Hoping to improve that as it did hit firewalls.</li> <li>○ There have been changes to the NDCS website: “Deafness and me toolkits” is about deaf identity and has some lovely resources:</li> <li>○ <a href="https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/professionals/education/early-years/deafness-and-me-a-toolkit-for-early-years-practitioners/">https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/professionals/education/early-years/deafness-and-me-a-toolkit-for-early-years-practitioners/</a></li> <li>○ The NDCS Young People’s website pages have been updated.</li> <li>○ Very informative presentation given at the end of BATOD the conference regarding emotional wellbeing of deaf children and linking emotional health and wellbeing to the rights of deaf children.</li> <li>○ Good news that there will be more BSL training for HSS staff. Important to keep this on the agenda and provide BSL input to children who want it. BSL should be available to all deaf children and there are national and local resource links online that professionals could link to.</li> <li>○ It’s also important to increase young people’s knowledge of the technology available to them. For example, do they know what a palantypist is? Do they know how they can use phone technology to support them etc.?</li> <li>○ SS – NDCS CHSWG newsletter will be uploaded to the DDCS website, but not received recently. Were they blocked by SPAM filters? LV – to pass this on and seek solutions.</li> </ul> <p><b>NHS Clinical Commissioning Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No representatives at the meeting.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Any Other Business:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ JV – working with audiologists at Manchester University on a research study - there are professional surveys and young person’s surveys which will produce a top 10 of research priorities:</li> <li>○ <a href="https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/professionals/research-and-data/research/priority-setting-partnership-in-childhood-deafness-and-hearing-loss/">https://www.ndcs.org.uk/information-and-support/professionals/research-and-data/research/priority-setting-partnership-in-childhood-deafness-and-hearing-loss/</a></li> <li>○ <a href="https://www.ndcs.org.uk/get-involved/share-your-views-on-research-into-childhood-deafness-and-hearing-loss/">https://www.ndcs.org.uk/get-involved/share-your-views-on-research-into-childhood-deafness-and-hearing-loss/</a></li> <li>○ SS – On the CHSWG glossary there is some missing information.</li> <li>○ <b>Action: SS to email list of missing terms</b></li> <li>○ Parents Info Evening – working group set-up for planning.</li> <li>○ <b>Action: UM we will send an update email to all CHSWG members for Sturminster Marshall Village Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> June.</b></li> </ul>

**Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 10.00 – 12.00 via Microsoft Teams Video.**