

Dorset Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

MINUTES

Wednesday 8th Nov 2023, 10am, Microsoft Teams

1	<p>Introductions and Apologies:</p> <p><u>Present:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ursula Murley – Principal Teacher, Dorset Hearing Support Service • Ken Tucker – Educational Audiologist, Dorset Hearing Support Service • Simon Baird – Clinical Scientist (Audiology) • Lisa Nind - Clinical lead for Paediatric Audiology • Helen Williams - Service Manager for Dorset Audiology • Sarah Morris - Consultant Paediatrician • Louise Viney – Local Engagement Officer NDCS (National Deaf Children's Society) • Steven Frampton – Consultant ENT Surgeon • Heidi Watts – Senior Rehabilitationist (Teacher of the Deaf) University of Southampton Auditory Implant Centre (USAIS) • Cheryl Wellington – School Nursing Clinical Lead (Lead for Audiology) • Jemma Buckler – NHSP (Neonatal Hearing Screening Programme) Local Manager • Shirley Sorbie – DDCS (Dorset Deaf Children's Society) Trustee <p><u>Apologies received from:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gemma Hardman - Speech and Language Therapy Service - report submitted. • Rachel Beeby – Clinical Scientist (Audiology) • Kate Halsey – Integrated Care Systems Senior Programme Lead Children and Young People's Team • Sam Bealing - Educational Audiologist with HSS • Dorothy Goodall - (no longer working in CHSWG) • Katie Key – Senior Specialist Audiologist (Paediatrics) • Erica Davies - (no longer working in CHSWG) • Jill Warn – NHSP Manager and 0-19 Public Health Service • Kate Lloyd-Hatchard – (no longer working in CHSWG) • Deepa Shenoy – Consultant Paediatrician • Juliet Viney – NDCS Trustee and CHSWG Parent Representative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Suggestion to invite Deaf CAHMS to join Dorset CHSWG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action: UM/KT – Social Care/CWAD - UM has emailed but has had no response. SM reported that, historically, a representative rarely attended. Agreed to pursue again. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action: UM
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2

Matters arising:

Review of minutes and actions from last meeting

- UM reported no responses from any parents wishing to attend this CHSWG meeting – details and invite were in HSS Summer Newsletter.
- LV suggested ideas for ways in which parents can ask questions ahead of CHSWG meetings:
 - a parent/carers WhatsApp group.
 - a link for questions to be raised on the Local Offer page.
- LV is happy to support parents in attending.
- SS includes CHSWG meeting details in the DDCS newsletters, on the DDCS website and in the parents' (private) Facebook group. SS suggested a more in-depth article in the DDCS newsletter might help to engage parents.
- UM suggested a working party to plan for parent evening event next year.
- Dorset CHSWG Annual Report - discussion about the production of an Annual Report at the end of the calendar year. Distribution could be directly to parent/carers via HSS. LV has sent some information and examples to UM. An annual summary report could be more accessible compared to reading meeting minutes.

3

Service Updates:

Newborn Hearing Screening Programme

- NHS Standards and KPI data provided and attached to the minutes.
- The only recent change is an additional standard. This is related to the four community NHSP sites nationally.
- Dorset NHSP is meeting targets and the service is working well.

Paediatrics (East and West)

- East paediatrics is currently based at Poole Hospital – not sure when the move to Bournemouth will happen.
- Good contact from Audiology – referrals from NHSP; PCHI diagnoses in older children; link for sedated ABRs (good links with nursing staff); also receive reports 'as information'.
- Service provides clinical review of pre-school children with PCHI, and support for colleagues who see the older children.
- Paediatrics now a member of new regional group set up by Jenny Laglands in Taunton.
- Paediatrics maintain a database of children referred with PCHI – regular audit of pathway, specifically thinking about investigations and any underlying diagnosis.
- Currently supporting trainee who is looking at the sedation protocol in use at UHD.
- Points from last meeting – no-one locally testing saliva for CMV; all agree S4H Aetiology database is not user-friendly and most don't use it; contact given for results of genetic tests at GOSH if there is a need to chase any results.
- Discussion about genetics testing - although the results take a while to come back, when they are received, SM tends to call and speak to parents almost immediately. An appointment with a geneticist would take considerably longer, but SM is confident in discussing inheritance risk etc. A referral to a

geneticist can be arranged if necessary and SM has good links to genetics specialist in Southampton. Agreement that parents (and older children) like to know a cause for deafness if possible.

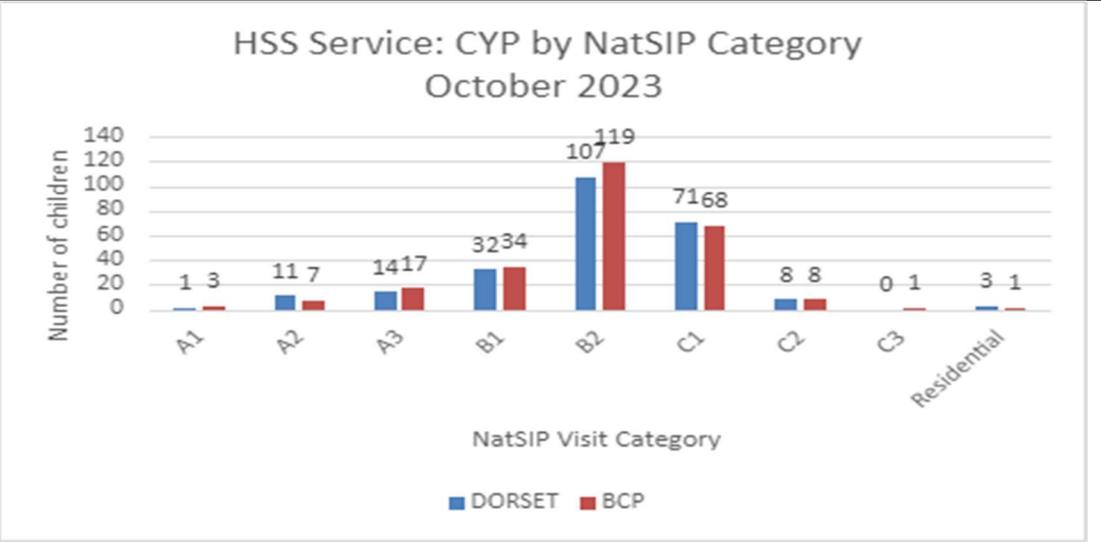
- There is good information on genetic causes of deafness on the NDCS website. NDCS booklets used to be readily available and would be welcome again. LV will let this be known to NDCS publications department. There are QR codes which can easily be shared to link directly to the online publications.
- LN noted at a recent British Academy of Audiology conference she attended, other attendees reported they do not have the same access to sedated ABR which we have in Dorset, and therefore we are very fortunate.
- Suggested improvement would be to reduce the waiting time in hospital once the patient arrives to be seen by the doctor for consent before the nurse can organise sedation. This is often unavoidable because of emergencies etc., but it affects the working day of the audiologist and is difficult for families/children. LN felt that communication was key and would welcome updates while waiting if possible. In addition, if parents cancel the appointment with the hospital, the audiologists may not be told and will turn up and waste time. SM agreed that this has happened to her too.

Dorset Hearing Support Service

- UM reported that there are currently **505** children and young people supported by HSS Advisory Teachers and specialist staff as detailed in Table A below.
- In addition,
- **282** pupils are currently under Audiology Clinic Review; these are pupils referred to HSS who are supported within the graduated approach (145 Dorset, 133 BCP, 4 out-county).
- **199** pupils have an unaided hearing loss, e.g., a hearing loss in one ear. An annual letter of advice is sent to each pupil's school (101 Dorset, 94 BCP and 4 out-county).
- In total, **986** children and young people are currently known to HSS.
- Five of the students attend a specialist school/college for deaf children. Three students from Dorset and one student from BCP are residential borders. One Dorset student is non-residential and attends twice a week.

TABLE A: Number of CYP by Local Authority, showing the number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Home Council	HSS Active Support	No EHCP	EHCP
BCP	258	190	69
Dorset	234	151	82
Non-JOG	13	8	5
Total	505	349	156



- There are currently 13 members of staff working for the Hearing Support Service, providing 11.9 FTE hours. In addition, HSS shares a Team Administrator (0.5 FTE each) with the Vision Support Service:
- 1 Principal Advisory Teacher = 1.0 FTE
- 8 Advisory Teachers, Qualified Teachers of the Deaf = 7.7 FTE
- 2 Educational Audiologists (job share of Audiology workload)
 - (0.6 Audiology) plus HSS support work (0.3) = 0.9 FTE
 - (0.4 Audiology) plus HSS support work (0.6) = 1.0 FTE
- 1 Specialist Teaching Assistant (0.4) who also does Audiology Technician role (0.4) = 0.8 FTE
- 1 Sign Language Support Worker = 0.5 FTE
- 1 Team Administrator = 0.5 FTE for HSS

- HSS has recently appointed a new staff member who is joining us as a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf and Educational Audiologist.
- From January 2024, a Qualified Teacher of the Deaf will join the team for two terms to help with increased workload for children with complex educational and communication needs.
- UM showed the HSS Local Offer first draft which is now live on the Dorset Council's website; this needs some further information and editing: [Hearing Support Service - Dorset Council](#) Feedback is welcome from CHSWG members, children and young people and their families.
- In June 2023, HSS and the VSS held a joint event for KS2 pupils (age 7 to 11) supported by a few older students who were helpers and role-models on the day. This event proved to be very popular, and we are planning a further activity day next summer. UM showed a short video of the day which will be posted on the Local Offer when finalised.
- UM reported that HSS is currently undergoing an audit which is reviewing all aspects of the service's structure, management and key performance indicators.

Dorset Paediatric Audiology

- LN described the recent Paediatric Hearing Services Improvement Plan (a nationwide review) as very thorough and shared a presentation of the process and outcomes.
- Audiology services in the South-West have also recently been asked to complete a desktop review and provide evidence of practice including case

studies for South West NHS England. HWi (Service Manager for Audiology and ENT) reported that Dorset Paediatric Audiology has come out as one of the top services in the Southwest, with reviewers commenting some areas were outstanding.

- Congratulations were given by all in appreciation of the work Audiology does to support deaf children and their families.
- East and West Audiology Services were fully merged in April 2023. The IT system change started in July for the East service and is currently ongoing in the West, when finished this will allow East and West to be fully integrated.
- A new audiologist has been employed and another has returned from maternity leave.
- 6 PCHI have been diagnosed in the East plus 6 which are temporary conductive.
- There are currently huge pressures on the department with the IT review/upgrade.
- All agreed that Audiology services across Dorset is a strength.

University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service

- HWa – introduced herself as the new USAIS Dorset CHSWG representative.
- There will be a new surgeon starting at USAIS in January.
- Stuart Whyte, assistive listening technology/radio aids specialist, at USAIS presented a webinar on “The future of assistive listening technology” which is available to view on demand:
<https://www.workcast.com/register?cpak=3587613061403066>
- UM welcomed HWa to the Dorset CHSWG team.

ENT (East and West)

- SF led a detailed discussion about ENT services and interaction with other departments and Audiology. This was very well received and led to a better understanding of some of the issues.
- ENT waiting list had grown due to increased referrals post-covid. This situation is now improving. The importance of clinical intervention is now being prioritised.
- Currently auditing waiting time for grommets.
- Discussion about how Audiology support for ENT will look in the future. There has been an increase in backlog of waits for hearing assessments. There used to be Audiology clinics running alongside ENT clinics; this doesn't happen so much now. Consequently, hearing assessments need to be requested and there can be a disjunction because of the different waiting lists. This can result in tympanometry and hearing assessments being out of date by the time they are seen by ENT. There will be discussion with management about how best to move forward with running parallel ENT and Audiology clinics.
- SF suggested that ongoing audiological assessment might be beneficial while waiting to be seen.
- LN confirmed that audiologists are aware that a further assessment appointment won't be offered by ENT, and that Audiology offers monitoring for children waiting for grommets.
- SB agreed that the situation was very similar in the west of the county due to ENT waiting lists.
- HWi suggested that waiting times and clinical pathways between the two services need to be revised as a consistent approach across Dorset is needed. Extra clinics may be needed to address waiting lists although this is limited by

physical space available. Suggestion that the Audiology facility at Poole could be used again if needed.

- Extra funding for outsourcing from ENT to Audiology was previously in place but not currently.
- The Audiology teams need to understand what ENT's needs are so they can plan and support them accordingly for this to be resolved.
- There are two ENT pathways for children:
 1. Children known to Audiology who are referred to ENT.
 2. Children known to ENT who are not referred to Audiology but need a hearing assessment audiogram.
- LN highlighted one main concern: aided children needing wax removal by ENT as they cannot wear their hearing aids. SF provided contact details for admin referral.
- SF asked about safeguarding policies: when children are not brought to appointments, who is informed?
- LN – Audiology has quite a detailed policy. Is there a social worker involved? What is their situation? If there are safeguarding concerns, then a lot of effort is made to contact parents and the child is not discharged. If there are no concerns, child will be discharged back to GP.
- SM explained that there was a very similar safeguarding process for paediatrics.
- KT explained that HSS can support with safeguarding concerns, and that Audiology do email HSS with queries as appropriate.
- SF – will copy in Audiology for information, as appropriate, for any safeguarding concerns.
- KT explained that HSS needs a Parental Agreement Form (PAF) to be completed if HSS is to be involved (GDPR requirement).
- **Action: KT to email SF with PAF and e-PAF link.**

School Health

- CW – School nursing currently offers the school-entry hearing screen and random requests for one-off assessments. Thousands of children are screened every year (inc. private schools and Electively Home Educated).
- Currently reviewing 0-19 school health offer and there are likely to be changes. This year's screening will continue as usual, and CW will let everyone know of any changes. School Health is not currently commissioned to provide audiology but feel that it's important.
- UM highlighted that the Local Offer on the Council website mentions the school health/nursing team under "What to do if you are concerned".
- **Action: CW to check details on the Local Offer website and let UM know if any amendments are needed.**
- LN reported an interesting article researching the effectiveness of the school entry screen. It was very positive, and LN has sent this to School Health.

Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy

GH was unable to attend and submitted a report:

- GH has now returned to work and is the clinical lead for the Deafness Specialist Service. She will be replacing ED as the CHSWG representative.
- **Ready STEADI Chat!** is a new easy-access pathway for Early Years 0-5 children, that launched in April 2023. This new service offers regular NHS Speech and

Language Early Advice sessions for children under 5 years of age across the county (Dorset and BCP) at a variety of locations. Further information can be found here: [Dorset HealthCare :: Ready S.T.E.A.D.I. Chat!](#)

- SaLT will also continue to receive direct referrals into the Deafness Specialist Service for children aged 0-5, as previously, from Audiology and the HSS.
- SaLT has recently launched a new Early Years **Communication Champion Programme**. This encourages EY providers to identify a 'communication champion' to act as a key advocate for children with SLCN within their setting. They will receive additional training and encouragement from the communication champion network and the CYP SLT service to fulfil this role. Further information can be found here: [Dorset HealthCare :: Early Years Communication Champion Programme](#)
- SS raised a concern that the new referral pathway for 0–5-year-olds may not be accessible to some parent/carers.

Children's Social Care

Not represented and no response to invitation.

- **Action: UM to escalate with line manager.**

Dorset Deaf Children's Society

- So far this year DDCS has organised nine events.
- Since the last CHSWG meeting, the DDCS has visited Snowtrax, held the annual Family Fun Day and Hog Roast with 244 members enjoying the day, attended two shows of Circus Starr and recently visited Rock Reef climbing centre.
- DDCS were also able to finally organise a family activity weekend at PGL Osmington, completing all the parents' DBS Checks needed for the weekend to take place. It was a great success with 54 members having an amazing weekend making friends and having fun.
- This month DDCS is organising the first event for babies and pre-school children only which will be at a much smaller venue than we usually book and for a small group of families.
- DDCS is also getting things ready for our second biggest event of our year, the Christmas Party.
- All these events are on the DDCS website www.dorsetdcs.co.uk if anyone would like to see them. Holding these events and enabling children to meet other children like themselves and for families to meet each other is so important for all our members.
- We have had some wonderful people fundraise for us and we have received donations and grants from different organisations which we are very grateful for. Without them we would not be able to hold our events and support the children and families.
- We currently have 200 families and individuals within our membership: 140 are families with a hearing-impaired child or children and we are currently supporting 149 children and young people.
- We currently have 12 trustees including two youth trustees and we also have a Youth Volunteer who had to wait until she is 18 to be a trustee.
- We currently have a vacancy for a secretary which we will hopefully be able to fill soon.
- We are all volunteers and DDCS would not exist or be as successful without the time the trustees give.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our website has been kept up to date and the CHSWG page has the minutes and information about the group for parents and carers to see. There is also a section on this page for the NDCS CHSWG updates as these include a lot of information that would be helpful for parents and carers. • UM – children and families greatly value the DDCS, and we aim to encourage more parents to join. DDCS enriches lives of Dorset’s deaf children and their families and is hugely appreciated by the HSS team. • LN confirmed that DDCS/NDCS leaflets can now go on display in waiting rooms in the Audiology departments. • HWa offered to help at a DDCS event and invited anyone who would like to visit USAIS. <p>National Deaf Children’s Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LV provided feedback from the ‘Moving On’ survey conducted by the NDCS with older pupils and students – 3 responses received from Dorset students (47 young people nationally) • The 3 young people in Dorset all had cochlear implants and were in their early twenties and no longer in education. • Deaf awareness for schoolteachers was highlighted as an area for development by the young adults. • Preparation for Adulthood was identified as an area for development as young people want more information about support and benefits when leaving education. • The NDCS CHSWG Update will be sent out soon – this report can be shared with parents. • UM reported that Preparation for Adulthood is on the HSS Service Development Plan and details of support and benefits are on the Local Offer website. <p>NHS Clinical Commissioning Group Not represented at today’s meeting and no report received.</p>
4	<p><u>Any Other Business:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ UM/KT will email everyone a couple of weeks before the next meeting with a reminder of the date and to request any reports. ➤ Action: UM will email CHSWG members about establishing a working group to organise a parent information evening.

Date of next meeting:

- Thursday 9th May 2024, 10.00am – 12.00pm
 - Meeting invite will be emailed to CHSWG members.
 - A separate email will be sent with the minutes.