

MINUTES

Dorset Children's Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

Thursday 14th May 2026, 10.00am - 12.00pm, via Microsoft Teams

1	<p><u>Introductions and apologies:</u></p> <p><u>Attendees:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ken Tucker – Principal Teacher and Educational Audiologist, Dorset Hearing Support Service (Interim Chair)• Sam Bealing - Educational Audiologist, Dorset Hearing Support Service• Helen Williams - Service Manager for Dorset Audiology• Lisa Nind - Clinical lead for Paediatric Audiology• Rachel Lachlan - Consultant Paediatrician – taken over from Sarah Morris• Steven Frampton – Consultant ENT Surgeon• Jemma Buckler – Local Manager NHSP <p><u>Apologies Received:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shirley Sorbie – DDCS (Dorset Deaf Children's Society) Trustee• Gemma Hardman – Deafness Lead, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist• Katie Key – Senior Specialist Audiologist (Paediatrics)• Simon Baird – Clinical Scientist (Audiology)• Holly Gomori – NDCS (National Deaf Children's Society) Advice and Guidance Officer• Charlotte Freeman Lawrence – head and neck• Heidi Watts – USAIS• Elaine Okopski – Dorset Parent Carer Council• Chloe Morley – Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) for SEND, Nursing and Quality.• Jill Warn – Lead Families First Partnership Programme
2	<p><u>Matters arising:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Review of minutes from last meeting➤ Dorset Audiology Service moved up the agenda➤ Need to record – agreed with all present.➤ Service Updates➤ Review of actions from last meeting. Two items for further discussion today given their own item on the agenda:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Terms of Reference○ Change of Chairperson

5 **Service Updates:**

➤ **Newborn Hearing Screening Programme**

- All going well, Eirwenn has now retired. Jemma very stretched as overseeing training. Staffing levels good, 2 in training but once completed will be fully staffed.
- Shared Data for quarter 3 of 25/26, a couple of categories in the red but skewed by small numbers and addressed within the service.

➤ **Dorset Audiology Service**

- IQIPS – national accreditation award – inspected in March. Lots of good outcomes and hoping to get award soon.
- Tamperproof battery drawer – concerns over reliability of current Oticon design – new improved model now available and being changed over at appointments. It looks very similar and opens the same way so not a big change to deal with.
- Katie Key will be returning from maternity leave later this year
- A senior paediatric audiologist leaving is in June, recruitment for a new member of the team is in process
- Meeting of teams supporting CYP with deafness and using amplification established, allowing for confidential sharing of specific cases raising concerns. First meeting very helpful, next meeting next week.
- Recent inspection means now much better links with other services in surrounding counties and liaising
- SW been attending regional meetings of ENT specialists– interesting to see different approaches across area, asked if Audiology have felt there have been any useful outcomes with increased liaison.
- LN – recent liaison has shown Dorset are a strong service for babies / NHSP and this will be improved by the inter-area liaison. Discussed a scheme for early referral once permanent HL diagnosed to get scans sooner.
- KT – relationships with Audiology very strong, always good to see when discussing working patterns with other areas.
- RL – again regional meetings very helpful with sharing and comparing strategies, although can create lots of questions.
- HW – improvements with development of new CDC in Poole – hoping for 3 clinic rooms to allow for more testing
- JB asked if here were any facilities for an ABR testing facility for families struggling to get to Boscombe. LN not sure as they have Canford Heath clinic, and some families can choose to attend Boscombe or Dorchester. HW also added that they might not have the staff to fulfil it, but it is being considered.

➤ **ENT (East and West)**

- UHD – phase 3 move where ENT and Paediatrics will be based more at Royal Bournemouth Hospital has been delayed by building readiness – likely to be December so still working at current places. ENT currently at PGS and DCH.
- Trying to triage to get urgent patients (eg. wax removal for moulds) seen quickly – template has been quite helpful for some cases but if urgent maybe make referrals without form to highlight key details to aid with speed with triage. LN has shared this with her team, and also commented that SF's new secretary is very efficient and helpful!

➤ **Paediatrics (East and West)**

- RL – waiting for guidance update regarding Aetiological investigations. Looking at improving processes for getting scans done earlier, especially those referred to

USAIS. Also looking at how to ensure testing for CMV is done within the 30 days. RL has appropriate clinic 1 day a fortnight so should be able to see referrals within 2 months. From September RL will be seeing all CYP for aetiology. Working on CMV monitoring and testing with NICU and microbiology.

- LN – when child picked up on NHSP they are usually re-tested 4 weeks later in case of nerve maturation, but possibly need to refer at first test to get process moving sooner?

➤ **Dorset Hearing Support Service**

- Currently 542 CYP on active caseload, glue ear cases easing (weather, or getting grommets earlier?)
- Currently fully staffed but had some sickness in the team so lots of covering. New member of the team is SEN teacher and SaLT and will be starting ToD course this September.
- Ursula is officially retiring at the end of the year.
- KT is stepping down from principal teacher to previous role as Ed Aud / ToD but likely to happen in January, as recruitment is in hand for a new Principal Teacher but likely to take a while. KT's new line manager is Lisa Grey, who comes from a background as a teacher and her daughter had OME, so knows our service.
- Parent survey – 95% said good or very good, lots of positive comments. Only main concern regarding visit reports being sent. Some investigation suggested this could be due to emails going to junk mail or encryption not allowing opening of email.
- Deaflympics event – Sports event at BMth Uni. Led to football taster day and hoping to establish a regular deaf football event.
- Parent Support Group still running west and east, so do encourage pre school families to attend – west event not so well attended. SS (DDCS) and GH (SaLT) usually there too to offer support.
- SEND reform white paper – wholesale change of support but likely to take several years to roll out. HSS has given feedback to Dorset Council. Concerns as HVSS funded through High Needs budget, which may be given directly to schools. Services like SaLT and Ed Psych were listed as *Experts at Hand*, but not HVSS so we are trying to get ourselves recognised!
- Good links with Audiology for referrals, receiving positive feedback from parents regarding speed of contact
- Staff BSL skills continuing to improve – the demand for BSL is also increasing, we are trying to get more Communication Support Workers, but funding is difficult.
- Feedback on Dorset Audiology reports excellent – now have a lot of detail required by IQIPs but also have lots of relevant details

➤ **University of Southampton Auditory Implant Service**

No one available today

➤ **School Health**

No one available today

➤ **Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy**

GH sent apologies and shared an update;

- The service is continuing to work within the balanced system framework. This is working well and is allowing the specialist SLT to provide joint visits, second opinions and supervision to community therapists in addition to managing a caseload of CYP who are deaf. As part of this service, SLT are now able to attend universal services

such as the monthly parent support groups (East and West) run by the HSS.

- There are currently approximately 187 CYP with a hearing loss who are open to the Dorset CYP SLT service. 46 children have a sensorineural hearing loss, 8 children have a mixed hearing loss and 133 children have a conductive hearing loss. *These figures are based on information inputted by therapists into the system database and therefore may not be entirely accurate.*
- We have recently completed some joint projects with the HSS. This includes a Deafness specific 'Communication Friendly Environment' tool and training video filmed by both services. This will be live on the SALT website here: [Communication-friendly environment tool :: Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust](#) shortly for early years settings and schools to access.
- We are also completing a project to develop early years 'communication checklists' for babies and young children who are deaf, as an additional identification tool. These checklists have now been drafted and are being trialled by the specialist teachers.

➤ **Children's Social Care**

No one available today

➤ **Dorset Deaf Children's Society**

No-one available due to illness

➤ **National Deaf Children's Society**

No-one available today.

- KT outlined role of new Community Connectors. One has been appointed for Dorset but not announced / introduced. KT suggested arranging a meeting with HSS, Audiology etc so they know who we all are – LN agreed this would be a good idea.

➤ **NHS Clinical Commissioning Group**

No one available today

3 **Terms of Reference Discussion** – members were asked to review and update these.

SaLT Gemma Hardman has provided;

- Change "Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service, Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust" to 'Dorset Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy'. (Done)
- Change - 'child or young person with hearing loss' to 'child or young person who is deaf' (done)

Also

Helen Williams –

- Dorset Audiology Service is the name. (Done)
- And should we reference Kingdon and Lothian reports (done)
- and The NHS England (2019), The Long-Term Plan is replaced with [Fit for the future: 10 Year Health Plan for England - executive summary \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#) (done)

When draft revision is sent out, please can all members check their relevant documents referenced and ensure they share the updated or new relevant versions. SB will add web links.

Conversation around regular attendees and reps of different services

Issues around Social Care being stretched and not having anyone to attend

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KT to contact some and ask those not attended for a while to see if anyone can attend / send updates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deepa Shenoy (West Paediatrics) ○ John Fox (ENT service manager) and DCH ENT consultants re west representation (emails below). LN will also mention at upcoming meeting. ○ Social Care ○ Parent reps (SS to publicise?) ○ Dorset Parent Carer Council ○ Add NDCS Community Connector once known • RL will investigate re Health Visitor and School Nurse teams
4	<p><u>Chairperson vacancy</u> – KT is stepping down as lots of changes going on within HSS team. Will continue for next meeting (Nov 2026) and then members from the Audiology team will take over in 2027. Thanks!</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Any Other Business:</u> LN – asked RL if any Soc Worker involved can name and contact details be shared, particularly LAC. RL will also share SW admin address for overall contact. <p>KT thanked everyone for attending and contributing.</p>

Date of next meeting: Monday 16th November 10.00