

DSPL – Delivering Specialist Provision Locally

Delivering Special Provision Locally is a Hertfordshire-wide initiative, working to improve the range of provision and support services available for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, aged 0-25. DSPL is unique to Hertfordshire.

It aims to secure a range of provision, support services and resources in each area that:

- meets the needs of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 as close to home as possible
- improves outcomes for wellbeing and attainment
- widens choice for children and parents/carers
- removes barriers to learning
- uses resources effectively

For the purposes of DSPL, Hertfordshire is divided into nine geographical areas, each one has a lead school and a DSPL manager along with an annual budget of between approximately £120,000 and £240,000 (the amount depends on the size of the area) to be spent on SEND in the area. The lead school and the manager work with schools, early years and further education settings, parents and carers and professionals from other agencies to decide how to spend the budget. HPCI provides support and training to the parent representatives.

From April 2019 there will be a rationalisation of DSPL areas and systems with LSP (Local Schools Partnerships). This should facilitate joint working locally.

The funding for DSPL comes from the education high needs block. Every local authority in England has a system for distributing high needs funding to early years providers, schools, colleges and other support services.

Conceptually DSPL aims to involve local areas in delivering the SEND Strategy and to improve partnership working.

HPCI is aware that a significant majority of secondary school head teachers in Hertfordshire have no confidence in DSPL. They have made this view clear to HCC on several occasions since Autumn 2017. HPCI's view on DSPL is below and has also been shared with HCC.

HPCI considers that:

- DSPL has not delivered on its original design and intentions from 2009/10.
- There is insufficient evidence to show what impact DSPL has had on improving SEND provision in Herts or on its contribution to the SEND strategy.
- There is insufficient accountability and clarity about exactly how the funding is spent and to what benefit.
- The amount spent on the administration/organisation of DSPL is out of proportion to the funding available for projects.
- DSPL has increased the post code lottery nature of SEND provision in Herts and has not reduced it as was first envisaged.
- Some DSPL areas are much more effective than others at engaging and communicating with parents and carers in their area.