



6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of SASC Ltd  
Minutes 10 September 2020

- 1) Apologies: Anwen Jones, there were 47 attendees
- 2) Minutes of 2019 AGM: approved
- 3) Matters Arising: none

4) Chair's Report

The chair reviewed the history of the development of SASC and its continuing work as a collaborative group of professionals working in a similar field to agree standards of practice.

Key assessment guidance and practice updates over the past year: (All these this can be found on the website downloads page)

Recent Updated Guidance

1. **Guidance on the assessment of individuals for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and / or where there is a complex linguistic history. (May 2020)** The aim of this guidance is to highlight important issues in this area and to provide pointers to good practice, rather than be a comprehensive manual of how to assess individuals with EAL or complex linguistic histories. Assessment in this area requires normal good assessment practice as well as an extra emphasis on knowledge and understanding of how a first language or languages might affect performance in tests of literacy attainment and cognitive processing in a second language, English for example.
2. **Guidance on the assessment of individuals with suspected Developmental Coordination Disorder /dyspraxia. (May 2020).** Developed in association with professors Anna Barnett, Elisabeth Hill and Amanda Kirby, this updated guidance provides the most recent consensus definition of DCD/dyspraxia, underpinned by research evidence, and offers key diagnostic criteria, alongside advice on screening and assessment.
3. **Reading and writing speeds. (June 2020)** From current research it is clear assessment reports should note the type and content of the task set when commenting on performance. Best practice will draw conclusions from a range of reading and writing tasks administered, depending on the age of the

person assessed and their study/work or other needs, alongside the nature of the difficulties being investigated. The paper provides excellent references to underpin considerations.

4. **In 2019, SASC** produced guidance on the assessment of dyscalculia, SpLDs and maths learning difficulties to provide assessors with updated, evidence based, operationally effective definitions and procedures which will enable them to differentiate between three categories of mathematics learning difficulties: i.e.

- **Dyscalculia** – a SpLD whose core feature is a problem with sense of number
- **Other SpLDs** which do not include a problem with sense of number, but which may have an impact upon mathematics learning
- **Maths learning difficulties** arising from lack of appropriate teaching, environmental factors or other medical conditions.

In 2020 this work was followed up by STEC by a critical comparison of tests investigating a key diagnostic criteria for dyscalculia, i.e. difficulties in sense of number as well as the two new Test Lists for children and adults produced by STEC during the year.

### **Trainees Writing Diagnostic Assessment Reports**

To support the development of trainees working toward a qualification in writing diagnostic assessment reports for specific learning difficulties SASC has issued an updated policy, following substantial review and consultation with relevant bodies and organisations.

Recognising the different pathways to assessment qualification, this policy clarifies the circumstances in which trainees on accredited courses can gain experience within their training environment in writing diagnostic assessments for those with possible specific learning difficulties (SpLDs). Individuals are recognised as trainees only when they are on a formal accredited course leading to either HCPC registration or a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate\*.

*Graduates, e.g. individuals with a level 5 psychology degree or SpLD teaching qualification, must not carry out diagnostic assessments for students with possible specific learning difficulties unless they are currently undergoing formal accredited training leading to either HCPC registration or a SpLD Assessment Practising Certificate.*

### **COVID and ramifications**

COVID -19 has been an enormous obstacle for young people and those who support them. SASC rapidly acknowledged that with limitations around in-person assessment resulting from the COVID-19 situation, there would still be individuals who might require evidence of need to access immediate support. SASC, working with the DfE, the Student Loans Company and test publishers, responded with Evaluations of Need to be a temporary interim measure so that individuals would not be prevented from applying for access to immediate support, DSA and funding for places at universities this autumn.

Key to this guidance has been:

- Assessments that can wait, should wait.
- An interim evaluation of need may nevertheless be possible.
- Any report produced for possible application for the DSA should contain the SASC statement clarifying the limitations of the evidence collected.

We noted that there were some types of clinical and psychological assessments /evaluations which can and do take place online. However, in the particular area of the assessment of SpLDs there were a number of important issues that needed to be considered and evaluated.

SASC produced guidance papers to provide useful information on these considerations and further updated information as working with main publishers in the field and practitioners to inform these papers. Throughout the year SASC constantly reviewed the changing situation and worked with colleagues across practices to provide best practice guidance.

#### **Resumption of face-to-face assessments:**

As children and young people come back to school opportunities will be opening to provide face-to-face assessments. We continued to advise all to take heed of current government guidance to schools and education settings. We advised practitioners in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to follow their relevant government guidance, carefully consider risks and risk mitigation for themselves and their clients and make their own evaluation on that basis. And these are being constantly reviewed and updated.

#### **SASC Membership**

With the change in the age range for acceptance of diagnostic report evidence for Disabled Student Allowances, we have seen many more assessors working with younger learners registering for APCs. This will help to underpin diagnostic assessment practice through the age ranges.

SASC Webinars – Given that the AGM took place in September the chair's report also looked back on the 2020 conference and activities from June.

We were unable to present our Annual Conference face to face. Driven like everyone else to assure another way to update members we provided 4 webinars – these were very well received with an average of 120 attendees for each of the 4 webinars. They were all made available twice to maximise opportunities for access.

The work of SASC and STEC is carried out on a purely voluntary basis by committee members and the scope and amount of the work carried out has increased markedly during the year.

The chair thanked all members of the SASC board, STEC and our Cross-Standardisation committee as well as all the advisors who have contributed to our consultations and policy development. They have given so generously of their time, and expertise, and our members, who through their communications bring issues to be explored. Working together we strengthen guidance and standards in assessment practice and training.

## **5) Treasurer's report & presentation of annual accounts:**

Current assets as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 increased from  
£8,533 in 2019 to £37,686 in 2020.

Taking into account monies falling due there were reserves of £34,108 at the financial year end.

- Increased income from £18,630 to £42,619,
- Admin expenses increased from £15,117 to £16,466

SASC was therefore in a much stronger financial position than the previous year due to several factors. There was an increase in attendees at the annual conference, fees from training events, an increase in APC assessor listing and an increase in course registration fees.

SASC is grateful for the provision of a meeting room for SASC board gatherings during 2019-2020 at the Real Training offices in London at no cost and this has allowed us to keep board meeting costs at a reasonable level. There was an increase in other meeting costs which include SASC consultation meetings, the regular meetings of the STEC committee and additional STEC meetings in connection with the compilation and revisions to the pre and post 16 test lists.

SASC admin has been provided by PATOSS at very low cost and were the range of these administrative tasks to be provided at market rates considerable additional costs would be incurred. The rates have remained the same for a number of years as funds available did not permit any increase but this issue has been addressed in new financial year 2020-2021. The SASC website is in need of revisions and an update and this will also be addressed this year 2020 -2021.

## **6) STEC Report**

### **1. Aims for 2019--2020**

- Complete and launch 2 new Test Lists
- Develop and expand the Mathematics sections of the lists
- Review new tests as they emerge

## Test Lists

In June 2020 STEC launched the *Pre-16 List of Suitable Tests for the Assessment of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)*. We also launched a new version of the *Post-16 List of Suitable Tests for the Assessment of SpLDs*.

Both lists follow a simplified format. It is intended that the Lists be used in conjunction with SASC's New Report Formats, SASC Guidance documents (such as the guidance on Visual Difficulties, Dyscalculia, or DCD/Dyspraxia), and any available SASC/STEC Guidance on individual tests. All of these documents can be accessed via the SpLD Assessment Tools page on the SASC website.

A new feature of both lists was the inclusion of a FAQ section which seeks to answer many of the most common queries that STEC/SASC receive with regard to tests and their use within assessments.

The two lists were launched at the SASC (Virtual) Annual Conference in June and seem so far to have been well received.

### **1. Maths Test Lists**

Following on from the publication last year of SASC's Guidance on assessment of Dyscalculia and Maths Difficulties within other Specific Learning Difficulties, STEC has been systematically reviewing the available range of tests of mathematics and number sense, to provide a comprehensive overview of tests suitable for assessing difficulties with mathematics (for children and adults). Guidance has been produced comparing the advantages and disadvantages of the various tests of sense of number, and the various tests of maths attainment.

## Test reviews

Four meetings and two Test Review days have been held since the last annual report. This is a greater number of meetings than usual, due to the increased workload involved in producing a Pre-16 Test List from scratch. STEC has reviewed a large number of tests this year, and has a continuing list of tests still in process of being reviewed or yet to be reviewed. Since March, as with so many other organisations, STEC has moved to online meetings.

STEC continues to produce Guidance documents for each newly approved test, and these are published on the SASC website. Due to the large number of tests reviewed this year, there will be a delay in producing these Guidance documents.

## Queries about tests and guidance

STEC continues to assist SASC with responding to queries about tests.

## 2. Committee members

STEC's workload continues to increase and STEC is currently advertising for new Psychologist and Specialist Teacher Assessor committee members.

Three valued members retired from the committee this year: Caroline Holden, Marlene Caplan and Katherine Plowden Roberts. They have all made a huge contribution to STEC's work and we thank them for the time, effort and expertise they have given to evaluating tests and producing guidance.

## 3. Aims for 2020-2021

- To complete and publish guidance on all the tests that have been added to the lists this year.
- To complete reviews in progress, and to continue working through the list of tests still to be reviewed.
- To evaluate and potentially reorganise the SpLD Assessment Tools page on the SASC website
- To continue working with SASC on updating guidance on aspects of selecting and using tests within diagnostic assessments.

## 7) Board Members and Officers

Board members September 2020 AGM

Directors	Institution Represented (or Affiliation)	Term
Ann Greenwold (Chair)	Independent	2020-2024
Lia Kender (Financial Director)	Independent	2020-2024
Liam Ashley	BDA	2020-2024
Michael Castiglione	Independent	2020-2024
John Duncan	Independent	2020-2024
Caroline Holden	Independent	2018-2022
Paula James	Independent	2020-2024
Stephen Jones	Independent	2018-2022
Katherine Kindersley	Independent	2017-2021
Annifer McDermott	Patoss	2019-2023
Michael McMullen	HADC	2018-2022
Katherine Plowden-Roberts	Independent	2017-2021
Anna Smith	DA	2018-2022
Mark Turner	Independent	2018-2022
Sheila Warren	ADSHE	2020-2024

## 8) Any other business –

- Clarification was sought on the L7 topup situation for assessing dyscalculia when already having L7 dyslexia, as many are being told that L5 is okay. Similarly if you have L7 dyscalculia do you only need L5 dyslexia to do assessments. – Response SASC are still looking into the position, and at present would recommend you continue on the higher level training to assure sufficient level of training.
- Why is it so difficult to find things on the website? – Response we are looking to invest in a completely updated website to address these issues.
- I am getting enquiries from university students asking for a needs evaluation. Are they still allowed and are universities using them? – Response: Evaluations of need continue to be accepted through 2020.
- I have a student whose assessment was aged 8 and now going to university, their needs are very different now, how will the university understand their needs? – Response: Their strategies and needs will indeed have changed. The initial assessment established they had a SpLD. Later assessments, not necessarily full diagnostic assessments, should have been done to support their continuing education needs.

9) Date of next Annual General Meeting: June 2021 date to be confirmed.