**10th Annual General Meeting of SASC Ltd**

**Minutes**

**12th July 2024**

**10am**

**1) Apologies:**

Received from Caroline Holden (Acting Vice Chair of SASC), Kate Blundell, Rachael McMullen, Chivonne Preston, Anna Smith and Jane Miller.

There were 16 attendees in total.

**2) Minutes of last AGM:**

No questions were raised. The minutes are approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

**3) Matters Arising:** none.

**4) Chair’s Report (Lynn Greenwold, SASC Chair):**

Welcome to this 2024 AGM.

SASC continues its core remit by working in a highly collegiate way to ensure that best assessment practice is available and maintained.

We have made good progress on the goals we set out at last year’s AGM. We continue to work to support our professionals and their learners to underpin standards in assessment practice across the range of specific learning difficulties assessors are called upon to assess.

SASC Consultation on Literacy and Dyslexia - Dyslexia Delphi Definition

SASC has supported three years of research and consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders culminating in a Delphi exercise to reach consensus around a definition and identification criteria for dyslexia.

Led by Professor Maggie Snowling (Oxford University), Professor Julia Carroll (Coventry University), Paul Thompson (Warwick University) and Lynn Greenwold and Caroline Holden (Chair and Vice-Chair of SASC). 71 academics, practitioners (including psychologists and specialist assessors), representatives from stake-holding organisations and other interested individuals across the UK, Europe and farther afield, participated. This study concluded in the spring of this year, with the publication of 2 papers, currently under peer review. The papers set out a new definition of dyslexia and an assessment model, with guidelines for assessors based on the Delphi’s findings.

We sincerely hope that this strong consensus will be formative in providing universal and equitable assessment for dyslexia. The Delphi papers have been submitted to academic journals for peer review. Minor revisions may be required prior to publication, if accepted by those journals. In the meantime, assessors are free to use the Delphi dyslexia definition but advised to look out for any relevant updates if and when the Delphi papers are accepted for publication. Links to the papers and information on how to reference the Delphi definition can be found in our SASC briefing paper accessible from our website news item.

SASC acknowledges and recognises the importance of this Delphi definition in shaping current thinking about the nature of dyslexia. I would like to acknowledge our gratitude to the team which led this study and all those who have participated in this important work.

Maths difficulties and dyscalculia guidance

We have continued our working group concentrating on updating our maths difficulties and dyscalculia guidance. The group has been first concentrating on reviewing and updating the definition and identification criteria before looking at intervention strategies. We are continuing to explore how best to resolve issues with specialist assessor training in this area.

SASC Website

We successfully launched our new website last spring and feedback has been very positive. We are continuing to make improvements including a site-wide search facility which should be available by the end of the summer.

Working with other organisations

We continue to broaden our consultations with groups with regular meetings and with a range of other professionals in our working groups, with course leaders, and our test evaluation committee, STEC, is working with the BPS test standards committee to share information and reviews of relevant tests.

We continue to update guidance in response to questions received and to address updates on SASC work, updated assessment guidance and new developments. These are announced on the website and circulated to SASC members by email. Topics addressed during the past year included:

Planned work for 2024-2025

* To update SASC assessment report formats to take account of the Delphi dyslexia definition and updates on maths difficulties and dyscalculia guidance.
* Produce updated guidance on maths difficulties and dyscalculia assessment and underpinning training.
* A protocol for a shorter report format for assessors carrying out formative/interim assessments in schools.
* A protocol for a shorter report format for an optional post-16 re-assessment.
* Develop some guidance notes relating to referral to speech and language therapist, including correct referral pathway and obtaining parental consent.
* Guidance for independent assessors on opportunities for establishing closer links with schools.
* Guidance on how to characterise profiles that do not meet the diagnostic criteria for dyslexia.
* Explore benefits of SASC’s becoming a charity.
* Updates on other SASC initiatives.

Two individuals who have made major contributions to SASC are retiring this year. Caroline Holden as Assessment Issues Coordinator has steadfastly driven forward our work on supporting the development of the Delphi definition of dyslexia while overseeing the significant number of other initiatives we undertake. Caroline has also supported me as acting chair for a number of years. We will be advertising for a new Assessment Issues Coordinator shortly.

Rachel Simpson has served as excellent chair of STEC, our test evaluation committee, and made significant contributions to assessment guidance and our review protocols. We greatly value the contributions they have made. And I would like to welcome Louise van der Valk as our new chair of STEC who moves into that role having served on the committee for a number of years. I know she will continue the tradition of dedicated work with her colleagues at STEC.

We have also had a number of changes to the board this year. Through new members we have increased the areas of interest with representatives from the schools sector, from research and teacher training. Joining the board as directors are Mark Loveday, Michelle Luciano. Also contributing to our work we have 3 new observers with additional experience in teacher training, Sharon Dobson Waters and Sarah Guest and local authority specialist advisory service, Alison Szalay. The fifteen (15) current directors and all observers are named at the end of this report.

Our Conference this year around the theme ‘New definitions and tests: implications for the assessment of specific learning difficulties’ was exceedingly well attended and our work is drawing increasingly wider followers.

I would like to thank 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. Members of the SASC board, STEC and other subcommittees contribute their time voluntarily.

They have given so generously of their time, and expertise; and also, you, our members, who through your communications and collaboration help develop policy and bring further issues to be explored. Working together we strengthen guidance and standards in assessment practice and training.

Once again, I want to invite others to join in supporting our consultations and developing practice. Please write to us with your interests.

**5) Financial Director’s report & presentation of annual accounts (Julia Kender, Financial Director):**

The accounts have been prepared by our accountant and have been approved by the SASC board. SASC is in a sound financial position with income largely derived from APC registrations and course authorisations. Assets remain broadly similar to the previous financial year. (As shown on Page 3 of the Accounts document.)

Page 2 shows that income for 2023 -2024 was marginally more than 2023. Expenditure appears to show a marked increase (8828) but if we turn to the detailed breakdown on Page 5 we are able to track this. There have been some increases in travel and meeting costs, in computer accessories and insurance but the biggest increase appears to be from the management fee. However, the management fee for both years was £10000 but the invoice was not submitted until after the year end 2023 and thus appears in 2024 accounts. Taking this into account our income covers our expenditure with a small surplus remaining.

Some discussions have taken place at the SASC board to consider how we might best use our reserves while maintaining financial security.

There have been significant shifts in defining dyslexia related to the Delphi study and in the range of assessment materials and one of the options may be to use some of our reserves to fund some consultancy relating to assessment issues. I will have more to report on this next year.

Thank you for attending the meeting today.

**6) STEC Report (Lynn Greenwold, on behalf of Louise van der Valk, STEC Chair):**

Aims for 2023-2024

* To review new and updated tests when relevant.
* To write and publish guidance on tests that have been added to the lists.
* To update the test list annually for publication in June.
* To continue working with SASC on updating guidance on aspects of selecting
* and using tests within diagnostic assessments.

Test Lists

The pre-16 and post-16 test lists have been updated to include new tests reviewed this year and further clarification of some points in the FAQs. The updated lists will be uploaded to the SASC website with all changes highlighted.

Test reviews

A number of tests have been reviewed but did not meet the criteria for inclusion on the list. The most common reason for not approving a test is insufficient data about standardisation, leading to concerns about the validity and reliability of the test results.

The decision was made to withdraw the Wide Range Intelligence Test (WRIT) from the list in view of its age, now that a number of other intelligence or cognitive processing tests are available to Specialist Teacher Assessors. The date for withdrawal is 1 January 2026. Assessors will have 12 months grace from this date to cease using the test and choose alternatives.

The following tests were reviewed and approved:

* Cognitive Assessment System (2nd Edition) (CAS2)
* Reynolds Intelligence Assessment Tool (2nd Edition) (RIAS2)
* Tests of Dyslexia (TOD)
* Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning (3rd Edition) (WRAML3)
* Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting (2nd Edition) (DASH2)

Queries about tests and guidance

STEC continues to assist SASC with responding to queries about tests. STEC committee members have continued to contribute to the ongoing discussions and consultations relating to SASC’s “Guidance on the identification of and effective intervention for literacy difficulties in children and adults. Implications for the assessment of dyslexia” and SASC's Dyscalculia Working Group.

Committee Members

Rachel Simpson has retired from the Chair and the committee. Louise van der Valk has taken on the role of Chair.

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**7) Board Members and Officers:**

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| **Directors** | **Institution Represented****(or Affiliation)** | **Term** |
| Lynn Greenwold (Chair) | Independent | 2024-2028 |
| Caroline Holden (Acting Vice Chair & Assessment Issues Coordinator) | Independent  | 2022-2026 |
| Julia Kender (Financial Director) | Independent | 2024-2028 |
| Kate Blundell | Independent | 2021-2025 |
| Helen Duncan | Independent | 2024-2028 |
| Katherine Kindersley | Independent | 2021-2025 |
| Mark Loveday | Independent | 2023-2027 |
| Michelle Luciano | Independent | 2023-2027 |
| Jennifer McDermott | Independent | 2022-2026 |
| Mark Turner | Independent | 2022-2026 |
| Rachael McMullen | Helen Arkell Dyslexia Charity | 2022-2026 |
| Chivonne Preston | BDA | 2023-2027 |
| Anna Smith | Dyslexia Action | 2022-2026 |
| Sarah Bevan | Patoss | 2022-2026 |
| Jane Miller | ADSHE | 2023-2027 |

Observers: Hannah Farndon BPS, Denise Thornton ACHIPP, Lynn Lovell BDA, Sarah Guest, Alison Szalay, Dr Sharon Dobson Waters

Caroline Holden is stepping down from the board in September and her replacement is being sought. Lynn Greenwold has been reelected as Chair for a further year and Julia Kender has been reelected as Financial Director for a further year. Board members are also active in monthly enquiry response meetings.

**8) Any other business:**

Thanks were expressed to Lynn Greenwold for her continued leadership of the SASC Board.

**9) Date of next Annual General Meeting:**

June/July 2024; date to be confirmed.

**There being no further business to discuss, Lynn Greenwold closed the meeting at 10:23am**