

## SASC CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Welcome to this 2022 AGM.

Once again I would like to begin by reviewing who we are and what we do. SASC and its subcommittees are a collaborative group of professionals working in a similar field to agree standards of practice. No single organisation or individual dominates. SASC represents multiple professional organisations and training organisations across the UK and includes representatives from these organisations as well as expert independent assessors on its decision-making Board. Members of the SASC board, STEC and other subcommittees contribute their time voluntarily.

STEC, the SASC Test Evaluation Committee, a key sub-committee, reviews and pilots tests, produces guidance on the standardisation, reliability, validity, advantages and disadvantages of those tests, and consults with publishers, academics and practitioners:

- To ensure that use and selection of tests is evidence based and follows best practice.
- To promote quality and consistency in assessment across all age groups.

Julia Kender, our STEC vice-chair, will present the STEC annual report later in this AGM.

SASC and STEC strive to bring about change through consensus. Decisions and guidance go through a consultation process with the organisations involved in SASC and where possible with a wider audience of individual practitioners, academics and tutors.

SASC's work has involved **four key elements**:

- **First**, to maintain a publicly accessible **list of qualified assessors**.
- **Second**, to identify a selection of tests that can be used by appropriately trained and qualified professionals, **alongside guidelines for practice and training**.
- **Third**, to propose **standards and a code of practice** for all those involved in assessments including the production of **reports in an agreed and accessible format**.
- As one of the DfES' Working Group's 'overall aims' was to establish evidential requirements that (organisations) could confidently regard as providing a reliable professional judgement that a student has a SpLD(s),
- the **fourth** area of work was to support **the implementation of updated guidance around the assessment of SpLDs**, providing advice about identifying, assessing and referring students with any of the named SpLDs.

The fourteen (14) current Directors include senior members of four different professional bodies for Specialist Teacher Assessors the British Dyslexia Association (BDA), The Dyslexia Guild and The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (PATOSS,) the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education ADSHE, psychologists, assessors and trainers. Representatives from the British Psychological Society and ACHIPP [association of child psychologists in private practice] also attend meetings, contributing to discussions and liaising with their organisations.

Joining the board this year is Sarah Bevan as Patoss representative with Jen McDermott as independent. Both have extensive experience in assessment at primary and secondary levels. Standing down from the board is Lia Castiglione who we thank for her positive contributions. Current board members are listed at the end of this report.

We have initiated regular monthly meetings to review queries received.

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

SASC continues to review its range of guidance to keep it up to date and has just issued Guidance on the Assessment and Identification of Autism / Autism Spectrum Conditions. This guidance was presented Dr Sue Sheppard as part of this year's annual conference and the recording of that webinar along with our other presentations from the Conference programme this year are available to members free of charge through the 1<sup>st</sup> of July. Details will be sent to members.

Since January 2021, SASC has been working to produce a consultation paper on key issues in the diagnostic assessment. In May of this year SASC invited all interested individuals and organisations to respond to this consultation paper via an open online survey. The consultation has provided an opportunity to reflect on practice, discuss the issues and ideas covered in the paper and explore what potential changes to working and assessment practices might be beneficial and why.

**Key areas explored in this review and the results of this consultation are the subject of a number of webinars at this year's conference.**

### **Members of the group**

#### **From SASC Board:**

Co-ordinator: Caroline Holden Independent Board member SASC, with role as Assessment Issues Coordinator

Nicola James British Psychological Society (BPS) Observer SASC

Rachael McMullen Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre (HADC) Board member SASC

Jane Warren Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE) Board member SASC

Gillian Ashley British Dyslexia Association (BDA) Board member SASC

Lynn Greenwold, Chair of SASC Board and CEO Patoss

**Academic and professional partners:**

**Professor Dorothy Bishop**, Professor of Developmental Neuropsychology, University of Oxford

**Professor Julian Elliott**, Professor & Principal of Collingwood College in the School of Education, Durham University

**Vivian Hill**, Programme Director at University College London Institute of Education EP training programme. Chair of BPS Division of Educational and Child Psychology.

**Professor Brian Lamb**, Visiting Professor of Special Educational Needs and Disability, Derby University

**Professor Brahm Norwich**, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter

**Gavin Reid** independent educational psychologist and author.

**Professor John Stein** Emeritus Professor of Physiology, University of Oxford

**Professor Joel Talcott** Professor of Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience, Aston Brain Centre, Aston University

**Professor Richard Wagner**, Robert O. Lawton Distinguished Professor of Psychology, Associate Director, Florida Center for Reading Research, Department of Psychology, Florida State University

Also contributing to discussions and content are **Jo Ward** and **Sarah Crawford**, lead educational psychologists in Staffordshire and Warwickshire, regarding the Response to Intervention/ Assessment Through Teaching strategies they have developed in those counties. **Janet Goring**, who leads the Literacy & Numeracy Support Service to primary and secondary schools in the London Borough of Wandsworth has given a talk to the group around her experiences of a further commonly found model for literacy support and assessment in UK schools, i.e. the contracted-in service. **Dr Margaret Crombie** Specialist teacher-assessor, member of the Cross-Party Group of the Scottish Parliament on Dyslexia, and **Carol Graham**, Principal Teacher of Additional Support Needs in a military boarding school in Scotland.

**Planned work for 2022-2023**

- SASC response to SEND Green Paper.... by July 2022
- Structured discussions with practitioners and stakeholders. December 2022.
- Further liaison with BPS working groups. September-December 2022
- A redraft of the consultation paper, re-wording the proposed definition and diagnostic criteria for dyslexia. November 2022 - April 2023
- Launch new SASC website making more accessible with information information easier to find.
- Continue to review current guidances

To consider:

1. A protocol for a shorter report format for assessors carrying out formative/interim assessments in schools?

2. A protocol for a shorter report format for an optional post-16 re-assessment?
3. Guidance for independent assessors on opportunities for establishing closer links with schools.
4. Guidance on how to characterise profiles that do not meet the diagnostic criteria for dyslexia.

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. They have given so generously of their time, and expertise. And you, our members, who through your communications bring 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.

Directors	Institution Represented (or Affiliation)	Term
Lynn Greenwold (Chair)	Independent	2020-2024
Caroline Holden (Vice Chair)	Independent	2022-2026
Julia Kender (Financial Director)	Independent	2020-2024
Gillian Ashley	BDA	2020-2024
Sarah Bevan	Patoss	2022-2026
Kate Blundell	Independent	2021-2025
Helen Duncan	Independent	2020-2024
Nicola James	Independent	2020-2024
Katherine Kindersley	Independent	2021-2025
Jennifer McDermott	Independent	2022-2026
Rachael McMullen	HADC	2022-2026
Anna Smith	DA	2022-2026
Mark Turner	Independent	2022-2026
Jane Warren	ADSHE	2020-2024

Observers: Hannah Farndon BPS, Denise Thornton ACHIPP, Lynn Lovell BDA