

DEX Impact Report

Family Survey Response

December 2022

In July 2022, DEx sent a survey to the families to help understand the impact that DEx is making and to identify areas of improvement.

- **37/100 responses** were received: 9 (24%) families whose child was under 5, 21 (57%) families whose child was aged 5-10 and 7 (19%) families whose child was a Tween (10+).
- Regarding **number of years** with DEx: half of the families have been with DEx for 5-10 years, one third of the families for 1-5 years. Less than 10% of families have been with DEx for under 1 year or over 10 years.
- Just over one third of the surveyed families' children **started coming to DEx** at less than 1 year old, another one third of the children started at 1- 3 years old, 16% of children started at DEx between the age of 3 and 5, with only 10% of children joining DEx at over 5 years old.

How supported families feel with their child since coming to DEx

Very supported Supported OK Unsupported Very unsupported



- Families are generally feeling more supported with their child since coming to DEx.
- Some families are feeling less supported since the pandemic, largely due to the inability to meet in-person and the need to change to a new online or hybrid model. Others experiencing the same services are feeling well supported.
- DEx is noted to be positively impactful for children's development across all ages.

DEx notes that termly organisation could have more notice, and not all families feel able to fully utilise all the services DEx offers.

We commit to sending notices out at the end of each term about the next term's arrangements. We also commit to discussing access issues with families immediately if they let us know they are experiencing problems.

What made you choose to be part of the DEx community?

Key reasons from the open-ended responses are:

- **Gives extra help and support**

'DEx helped me to deal with the initial shock and refocus our family on getting the support he needs as well as the belief that he can be anything he wants to be.'

- **Recommendations**

'We were recommended it by a health professional and were / are so grateful that it's in the borough we live in and that it's such a brilliant resource for us as a family. We love DEx!'

- **Be part of a community**

'It was a lifeline hearing about it after our daughter's birth and has remained a brilliant community.'

- **Specialist Expertise**

'I like it because they have a great interest in providing all kinds of help to our children.'

How well has DEx met expectations?

90% of the families think that DEx met or exceeded expectations whereas 10% are disappointed, see example quotations below.

'High level of educational support and warmth all around, truly a Family!'

'The extra support and enrichment like maths, music, stay and play, OT has been great.'

'From SLT groups to OT, independent support, training for schools and of course peer support from other parents, DEx has been amazing.'

'It used to be great but since the new model was introduced it hasn't really worked for us.'

'I am not sure the offer has been as good as we expected in the school age group. Admittedly this is due to COVID partly. We are not sure when DEx communicates with our child's school.'

DEx notes the change of service models due to the pandemic was a big factor impacting many families' experiences. We are currently engaging with families to address this. We are also addressing communications issues as noted in the latter part of the report.

What do you value or like about DEx?

Families

- *'High level of warmth and commitment of staff and volunteers'*
- *'Kind and knowledgeable specialists'*
- *'The DS specific support it offers to our children and safe place for families to support each other'*
- *'The closest local support group'*
- *'The value it places on our children'*
- *'Great people, good community, right values'*
- *'No support from NHS so it is essential'*
- *'We are like one big family'*
- *'Being part of a community'*
- *'The advice from the professionals is always excellent and they are all proper experts in their field'*
- *The online fitness and music Zoom sessions are very important. Music Mike is really great'*

Families Continued

- *'Really excellent people providing great services and support. Very friendly, warm and welcoming. Good range of services - therapy, play, music, fitness'*

Children

- *'New learning'*
- *'She loves the social interactions'*
- *'Being part of a DS community, he knows he is part of it and recognises others like himself'*
- *'Fun sessions'*
- *'I like seeing my friends on zoom and meeting them at Sundial'*
- *'My son can't speak right now. But he is enjoying I know. He does like to go to DEx'*
- *One family noted 'they have virtually zero involvement now as we aren't able to attend the after school zoom sessions'*

We are committed to assisting every child and family at DEx to find that deep sense of community again as we continue to redevelop after the pandemic. Also, to ensuring everyone can access the full range of DEx services wherever possible.

How does DEx communicate with you?

- 'The team is just great, I would be lost without them'*
- 'Always clear, friendly and informative'*
- 'Communication is timely, relevant, helpful, sensitive and comprehensive'*
- 'Communication comes from too many sources and through too many media'*
- 'Lots of emails and information from DEx as a whole but sometimes lack of responsiveness'*



DEx will ensure families clearly understand the sources and channels of communication and information to both schools and families, and we will work on more timely responses.

Impact from pandemic

A mix of responses showing that DEx was supportive during the pandemic but that for some, the post-pandemic DEx isn't working as they would choose.

65% of responses state a definite preference for a combination of face-to-face and online settings going forward.

Interestingly, 11 (30%) families would prefer to be completely in-person, 2 (5%) families prefer completely online since moving out of London.

- 'DEx was a lifesaver during the pandemic.'*
- 'The response to the pandemic was amazing. We have benefited so much from all the different activities and now feel closer than ever to those at DEx and the other families.'*
- 'Lack of face-to-face interactions but appreciate that support has continued via Zoom.'*
- 'We felt more connected before (the pandemic)'*
- 'It was much clearer that our child was benefiting from the DEx sessions pre-pandemic.'*

DEx recognises that the merits of both face-to-face and online settings and will continue to offer our research-based methodologies in a 'hybrid' format for most children aged 5-18. We know all age groups benefit from social interaction and will offer some face-to-face sessions for all ages in 2023. The impact of the pandemic on the organisation means it is unlikely we will return to regular weekly face-to-face Saturday sessions next year. We will also work on explaining your child's achievements more clearly.

Improvements suggested by families

Communication - clearer, more timely and advanced communication to families, more information on how DEx works with schools and children post-Covid, more information on the benefits of the services on offer.

NB traditionally, these are always under development as we take note of feedback, results and new research from term to term.

Service offering - expanding to young adults, more social activities for both children and adults, greater online offer, more support for parents, volunteering opportunities for Tweens, individual targets for parents, bring back the Thursday online disco, more SLT and social sessions, more diversity, more practical tips, more communication skills, physical games or sport, more sessions for schools, away days during the holidays, open up local play groups across London. Other families would like DEx to focus on the key offer and have a tiered fee system.

We will do our best to offer services that address overall families' needs where practicable and ensure the current service offer is accessible.

Sustainability of the organisation - fundraising and outreach to new families, create a support network for families, extend the range of online services.

Diversity - be more diverse by including non-white therapists/DS experts.

CEO's suggestions for how families could help to improve DEx, collectively



Responses **highly** recommend DEx to other DS families

Thank you for answering the survey and for supporting DEx!

- + Please don't wait for the next survey to give us feedback!
- + Engage with the DEx team continually to raise questions and issues
- + If you didn't add your name to your survey responses, please contact Ann if you had complaints – we want all DEx families to feel supported and to feel the positive impacts of DEx
- + If you know of any diverse therapists/DS experts, please send us their details.