



SESLIP Regional Improvement Plan 2021-22 - Provisional

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PROVISIONAL VERSION issued following SESLIP Steering Group Meeting 26 February 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is a provisional version of the SESLIP Regional Improvement Plan for 2021-22 and it is published for information comment and feedback. The reason for the provisional publication is uncertainty over the extent of DfE financial support for SESLIP in 2021-22: the plan will be finalised when the government's spending plans are confirmed.
- 1.2. This plan is an iteration of the last two years' plans¹. It reflects the continued growth of regional activity, including the hosting of DfE and MHCLG funded projects alongside activity supported by members' subscriptions and DfE grant.
- 1.3. There are now 9 practice networks: Adoption and Special Guardianship; Assistant Directors Education; Assistant Directors Safeguarding; Commissioning; Data Benchmarking; Fostering; Lead Members; Quality Assurance; SEND.
- 1.4. Other project activity features Children Missing Education, a new Future Leaders' Programme called "Take Your Place" and the whole programme has been informed by the Triad Peer Challenge sessions that were held in winter 2020-21.
- 1.5. The purpose of this regional improvement plan is to identify action that will assist all the local authorities in the South East to deliver effective services which improve outcomes for children and young people.
- 1.6. The plan recognises that all children's services have strengths which can help inspire improvement in others; it also recognises that they are all capable of further improvement. It aims to discourage the conclusion that only poor or weak services need improvement help; instead it celebrates honest self-evaluation and constant improvement as antidotes to complacency.
- 1.7. The main features of the plan are
 - a non-stigmatising approach to improvement
 - support for innovation and new approaches to service delivery challenges
 - development of the skills of staff, managers, corporate and political leaders
 - increased sharing of ideas, insight, understanding and solutions

¹ [Previous Regional Improvement Plans are available here](#)

2. Objectives of this plan

- 2.1. We will identify ways in which local authorities can support each other to improve and look at how collective action can help address systemic issues within the region.
- 2.2. We will recognise both positive and negative variance in performance and try to ensure that no child is left behind.
- 2.3. We will ensure that authorities who are facing more challenges have access to support from others in the region and, where appropriate, national support.
- 2.4. We will take collective action where this will support several authorities with their improvement journeys, including lobbying government where necessary.
- 2.5. We will support the effectiveness of lead members and their deputies and colleagues.

3. 17 proposed (subject to funding) workstreams for this improvement plan

- 3.1. New or expanded workstreams included in this plan are:
 - Response to DfE's Care Review (regional coordination with LAs and providers)
 - Post-Covid Organisation and Practice
 - Children Missing Education
 - Quality Assurance, Fostering and Commissioners' Networks – further development
 - Lead Members' Network support – peer challenge and topical workshops
 - SEND SE19 – High Needs Block and Inspection
 - Memorandum of Cooperation – development of a revised agreement
- 3.2. We are continuing to lead the national Data to Insight project which has been separately funded by the MHCLG. We are also continuing to develop Phase 2 of the DfE funded project looking at the commissioning and sufficiency planning.
- 3.3. £8,500/35,000 (depending on funding) has not yet been allocated to new or expanded projects. The SESLIP Steering Group will commission new projects during the year using this budget allocation.
- 3.4. The 17 proposed workstreams are divided into four groups:
 - Practice Issues (5)
 - Regional Networks (9)
 - Leadership and Staff Resources (2)
 - Self-assessment and Peer Challenge (1)

Table 1: 17 Workstreams for South East Sector Led Improvement in 2020-21

Workstreams 2021-22	Outputs
Actions that will address practice issues:	
<p>1. Collaborate to improve commissioning and provision for young people with complex needs.</p> <p>To utilise the DfE grant provided for the second phase of the project (£128,600 to July 2021), working with 4 local authorities to develop an innovative and co-produced model of commissioning.</p> <p>A governance group including provider representatives assists the DCS Sponsor in directing the project.</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex)</p>	<p>To complete the outputs of the DfE's £128,600 phase 2 grant from the "Improving Commissioning and Sufficiency Planning to Increase Stability and Permanence for Looked After Children - Seed-Funding Opportunity"</p> <p>To deliver defined packages of services ready for commissioning by all LAs in south east which have been co-produced between 4 local authorities, providers and users.</p> <p>Establish a SESLIP-wide commissioners' group to share the learning of the project and prepare SESLIP authorities for adopting the commissioning framework (see 9 below).</p> <p>End of phase 2 close down (July-August 2021)</p>
<p>2. Children Missing Education: support and development funding to improve identification of CME, monitoring and re-engagement by vulnerable learners' post-lockdown.</p> <p>To establish a coordinated approach to data gathering, to feature in the new Education Data Dashboard, and to produce written evidence of strategic responses to CME and of collaboration across the South-East which will improve practice.</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth on behalf of Alison Jeffery)</p>	<p>Collaborate to support LAs to review or develop areas of local practice worked on through the 2020-21 development projects.</p> <p>Support projects that address challenges for groups of concern due to the pandemic: prolonged absence by priority vulnerable groups e.g. at risk of CSE and CCE, minority ethnic groups such as GRT children; strategies to reduce the use of part-time timetables by schools; audit education for pupils with medical needs across the SE.</p> <p>Recommend shared policy positions on CME. Share more rigorous benchmarking data about CME that can identify progress and impact.</p> <p>Maintain the shared library of local policy and practice documentation that is accessible to LAs via the SESLIP website.</p> <p>Periodic presentations to the AD Education Network and to SESLIP DCSS about the impact of this programme.</p>
<p>3. Post-Covid Organisation and Practice</p> <p>To promote positive responses to a range of challenges facing Children's Services in the post-covid period. Topics will include new ways of organising remote and electronic service delivery; the role of local authorities as the middle-tier in education; mental health, emotional well-being and resilience of young people; teaching and learning in schools</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex) and Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</p>	<p>This work stream will develop positive approaches to a range of service design and delivery issues across all aspects of children's social care. It will promote positive, non-stigmatising language to describe initiatives that address the needs of all children.</p> <p>It will develop thinking, assemble evidence and recommend shared positions about approaches to a wide range of service organisation and delivery issues, both between local authorities and with key partners in education, health and youth justice</p>

Workstreams 2021-22	Outputs
	Develop thinking, assemble evidence and recommend shared positions about engaging the most vulnerable learners and how to monitor progress across local school systems, including exploring what options there are to include suitable indicators in the various SESLIP Data Benchmarking Dashboards.
<p>4. Input to the DfE Care Review</p> <p>To support the development of a regional submission to the DfE’s call for evidence that reflects the particular circumstances of the South East in relation to workforce pressures, availability and affordability of housing, regional cost-of-living variations, legacy provision of residential care estate, factors affecting re-investment.</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex) and Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</p>	<p>This project will supplement the submissions made locally by individual local authorities and nationally by ADCS, and reflect the particular circumstances of the South East and its historic contribution to meeting the national demand for residential care facilities, together with the challenges faced by local authority, third sector and private sector providers in maintaining and redeveloping that provision.</p>
<p>5. Data to Insight</p> <p>To continue to lead the work of this nationally funded project, which has its own governance arrangements via CS-NPIMG.</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Stuart Gallimore (DCS East Sussex)</p>	<p>Lead on the national Data to Insight project, manage a project manager, chair the project to maintain and develop LA data tools such as the ChAT . Continue dialogue with ADCS, DfE and MHCLG about ongoing funding.</p> <p>More detail at www.datatoinsight.org</p>

Support for Regional Practice Networks

We will support 9 Regional Practice Networks: Adoption &SG; AD Education; AD Safeguarding; Commissioning; Data Benchmarking; Fostering; Quality Assurance; SEND. Working with LGA we will also support the network of Lead Members and their deputies.

The work programme of each Network Group will be a mixture of “top-down” and “bottom-up” activity. The SEADCS meeting will refer tasks for further investigation; the networks will provide mutual support and encouragement and also bring suggestions to the SEADCS group.

Each of the groups will routinely

- celebrate and support innovative approaches to service delivery
- identify ways in which they can support fellow members to improve
- suggest how collective action can help address systemic issues within the region
- recognise positive and negative variance in performance, and react accordingly to publicise the positive and tackle the negative
- ensure that authorities who are facing more challenges have access to support from others in the region and, where appropriate, national support

Workstreams 2021-22	Outputs
<p>6. Regional Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board</p> <p>To hold regular meetings of the Regional ASGLB Liaison with RAAs and others Liaison with National ALSGB Increase focus on special guardianship</p>	<p>Maintain regular meetings of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board.</p> <p>Align practice in process and support in securing permanency arrangements</p>

<p>DCS Sponsor for Adoption and SG Leadership Board: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</p>	<p>Embed S.E. RAA arrangements in adopting a consistent approach to practice</p> <p>Narrow the Gap in children waiting and available carers through the analysis of data</p> <p>Influence national board and act as a conduit to the region and LAs on the national agenda.</p>
<p>7. AD Education Network</p> <p>To hold regular meetings of the AD Education Network develop shared positions on strategic responses to lost learning.</p> <p>Maintain a focus on children missing education, off-rolling and learning recovery.</p> <p>To plan more closely with the SEND network and organise a joint event, following the publication of the national SEND Review.</p> <p>DCS Sponsors: Carol Cammiss (Slough) and Lucy Butler (West Sussex)</p>	<p>Development of shared thinking about strategic local education systems and steps to support learning and recovery from the pandemic (see project 3 above).</p> <p>Share education data as a regional data dashboard, that complements national school-level performance, and develop ways to consider comparative indicators to support shared improvement.</p> <p>Maintain regular meetings of the AD Education Network including joint meetings with the SEND SE19 and coordination of future programme planning.</p> <p>Develop work between members of the network to better understand the needs of children missing education (CME) (see project 2 above).</p>
<p>8. AD Safeguarding Network</p> <p>To hold regular meetings of the AD Safeguarding network, including joint meetings with other regional networks</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</p>	<p>AD Safeguarding Network remains active and has a good core membership who regularly attend and engage.</p> <p>Focus will be on recovery of services from the impact of the pandemic, Ofsted, budget, looked after children sufficiency, UASC and interfaces with key partner organisation</p>
<p>9. Commissioners' Network</p> <p>To hold regular meetings of the Commissioners' network, including joint meetings with other regional networks</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: tba</p>	<p>Working in parallel with the DfE Phase 2 project, to set up and sustain a Commissioners' Network</p>
<p>10. Data Benchmarking Network</p> <p>We will continue to support the quarterly collection and publication of regional benchmarking data across the range of children's services.</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Stuart Gallimore (East Sussex)</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings of the network, quarterly publication of benchmarking data for: social care; 18 national headlines; adoption. Twice yearly publication for SEND. Annual publication for CSC workforce census; Peer Challenge data.</p> <p>Further develop the education data network, termly meetings and benchmarking of CME, EHE, reduced timetables and pupils with medical needs. Support the AD Education Network.</p>
<p>11. Fostering Network</p>	<p>To act as a forum for LAs to share good practice, and collaboratively problem solve</p>

<p>To support ongoing relationship building across the region and improve fostering practice and outcomes</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Carol Cammiss (Wokingham)</p>	<p>To enable fostering leads to identify regional issues which require escalation</p> <p>To undertake quarterly mystery shopping of 19 LAs and the most used IFAs to improve recruitment and retention of foster carers</p>
<p>12. Quality Assurance Network</p> <p>We will continue to support and hold regular meetings of the Regional Quality Assurance Network.</p> <p>Where possible we will deliver mutual quality assurance activity based on the Peer Challenge Triads/Quartets</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Stuart Ashley (Hampshire and Isle of Wight on behalf of Steve Crocker)</p>	<p>Support the improvement of the effectiveness of existing quality assurance activities.</p> <p>Maintain the library of shared Quality Assurance Tools</p> <p>Further the shared understanding of good practice, through network meetings, sharing practice standards.</p> <p>Develop opportunities for mutual external audit moderation and challenge</p> <p>Develop a CP chairs network with the aim of enhancing the contribution of CP chairs to quality assurance</p>
<p>13. SEND 19 Network</p> <p>To hold regular meetings of the SEND 19 Network, its sub-groups, including joint meetings with AD Education network, focused on supporting and sharing successful practice in delivering effective SEND services and managing SEND resources. Build on learning from Covid19 response groups to maintain improved levels of collaboration.</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Kevin McDaniel (Windsor and Maidenhead)</p>	<p>Priority areas of focus 2021-22 to be: Mainstream inclusion at SEN Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ordinarily available provision • Early years work with SEND <p>Refreshing readiness for Joint Inspections/ Re-inspections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximising health partnerships • Scaling up mental health support <p>Exploring opportunities for better management of high needs funding;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INMSS T&F Group • Preparing for Adulthood (Pfa) T&F Groups • Inclusion working group <p>Develop regional response to the SEND review (detail to follow when known)</p> <p>To reinstate (post-pandemic) EHCP peer moderation and review activity eg to share learning and increase quality of assessments and plans</p> <p>To influence DfE SEND Improvement Unit and their contractors to ensure their support program is in line with SE region needs and priorities.</p>
<p>14. Support for Lead Members Network</p> <p>Working with LGA to develop and deliver a development programme for Lead Members across the region</p> <p>Lobbying of central government</p> <p>Lead Member Sponsor: Cllr Gareth Barnard (Bracknell Forest)</p>	<p>To deliver induction and development support for Lead members</p> <p>To develop peer challenge arrangements for lead members to complement the DCS-led annual self-assessment and peer challenge.</p>

Actions that will develop leadership capacity and staff resources:	
Workstreams 2021-22	Outputs
<p>15. Take Your Place – the future leaders programme</p> <p>We will continue to develop the Take Your Place programme following soft launch in 2020/21 (Common Myths about Leadership and Women in Leadership)</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (Portsmouth)</p>	<p>The programme will include a first SE Black and Asian Leaders course (in June 2021) and second Women in Leadership course in the Autumn.</p> <p>As the impact of Covid19 starts to reduce we will roll out other planned elements of the programme (likely to include score leadership skills module, shadowing opportunities and first annual conference). We plan to make decisions about style of delivery (i.e. virtual vs in face to face) in late spring/early summer</p>
<p>16. Workforce matters; recruitment and retention; agency.</p> <p>Complete review of the regional Memorandum of Co-operation on agency staff with the DCS Group</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Sarah Hammond (Kent on behalf of Matt Dunkley)</p>	<p>Work is underway to review the MoC. This will be reporting to the DCS group on 26/02/21. The programme for work for 21/22 will depend on decisions made at this meeting. The options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up of a project to refresh the terms of the MoC and also each authority's commitment to it • Ending of the MoC arrangement • Limited revision of the current MoC arrangement <p>The Social Work Health Check Benchmarking tool continues to be available for all SE authorities</p>

Actions to deliver the annual cycle of self-assessment and peer challenge:	
Workstreams 2021-22	Outputs
<p>17. Annual Self-assessment and Peer Challenge.</p> <p>To continue to develop and improve the parallel triad/quartet arrangements for self-assessment and peer challenge for DCSs and for Lead Members</p> <p>DCS Sponsor: Stuart Gallimore (East Sussex)</p>	<p>To deliver Round 4 of DCS self-assessment and triad/quartet peer challenge in the winter 2021-22</p> <p>To consult on the timing of Round 2 of Lead Member self-assessment and triad/quartet peer challenge</p>

4. Budget

Table 2: South East Sector Led Improvement Budget 2021-22

Budget Options for 2021-2022 A-High B-Low						
	Income	20-21 budget	20-21 yearend forecast	21-22 Option A with grant	21-22 Option B without grant	Notes
	Carry forward from previous year	50,680	71,335	110,185	110,185	
	DfE SESLIP contribution	130,000	130,000	130,000	0	
	DfE Phase 2 Project	0	30,000	18,000	18,000	
	DfE Data to Insight	180,000	180,000	0	0	
	SE subs	162,500	169,000	162,500	162,500	
	Data only subs	750	4,500	2,250	2,250	Somerset and Swindon
	Total In	523,930	584,835	422,935	292,935	
Plan Ref	Expenditure	20-21 budget	20-21 yearend forecast	21-22 Option A with grant	21-22 Option B without grant	Notes
1	DfE Phase 2 Project	5,000	41,500	22,500	18,000	Tail of Phase 2 funding
2	Children Missing Education	20,000	15,900	20,000	5,000	
3	Post-Covid Organisation and Practice	0	0	15,000	0	Scope to be determined
4	Input to DfE Care Review	0	0	10,000	0	Input to DfE review
5	Data to Insight national project	180,000	180,000	0	0	National project funding
6	Adoption and SG Leadership Board	13,000	8,000	10,000	8,000	Includes £3k for data support
7	AD Education Network	15,000	19,250	17,500	15,000	
8	AD Safeguarding Network	15,000	8,000	10,000	8,000	
9	Commissioners' Network	0	0	10,000	0	With DfE ph2 project
10	Data Benchmarking Network	70,000	70,000	75,000	70,000	Includes £10k Education Data
11	Fostering Network	0	6,000	8,000	6,000	
12	Quality Assurance Network	15,000	7,000	15,000	12,000	Hampshire to lead
13	SEND SE19 Network	30,000	20,000	35,000	30,000	
14	Lead Members Network	10,000	5,000	7,500	5,000	
15	Take Your Place	40,000	20,000	50,000	40,000	
16	MoC Review	2,500	2,500	15,000	10,000	
17	Triad Peer Challenge	33,000	35,000	37,500	35,000	Includes £13k DfE data
	New Projects	25,000	0	35,000	8,500	To be allocated
-	Silver Linings	0	8,000	0	0	Closed
-	New models of social work practice	5,000	3,825	0	0	Closed
other	SE ADCS Rooms	15,000	3,075	0	0	Online meetings
other	Programme Management	20,000	15,000	20,000	15,000	
other	Website maintenance	5,000	1,600	4,000	2,000	
other	ESCC Overhead	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	
	Total Out	523,500	474,650	422,000	292,500	
	Carry forward to 21/22	430	110,185			
	Carry forward to 22/23			935	435	

5. South East Sector Led Improvement Programme

- 5.1. The Regional Improvement Alliance for the South East is known as the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP). Further details can be found at www.seslip.co.uk.
- 5.2. The members of the steering group which oversees the programme are: Stuart Gallimore (DCS, East Sussex, in the chair); Alison Jeffery (DCS, Portsmouth); Steve Crocker (DCS, Hampshire and Isle of Wight); John Coughlan (Chief Executive, Hampshire); Cllr Gareth Barnard (Lead Member, Bracknell Forest) and the Improvement Advisers from the LGA (Mona Sehgal and William Brooks; Children's Improvement Adviser, Alison Michalska).