

**S.E.19 SEND Conversations**

**LAs meeting**

**Tuesday 20th July 2021**

**12:15 - 13:30**

**Notes of meeting**

| **Local Authority/ Organisation** | **Attendees** |
| --- | --- |
| Bracknell Forest | Kashif Nawaz |
| Brighton and Hove | Rhianedd Hughes |
| Buckinghamshire | Lucy Perren |
| East Sussex | Bethan Twigg |
| Hampshire | Alistair Hines |
| Hampshire | Claire Campling |
| Kent | Rosemary Henn-Macrae |
| Kent | Louise Hickman |
| Medway | Wendy Vincent - Chair |
| Oxfordshire | Catherine Clarke |
| Portsmouth | Julia Katherine |
| Portsmouth | Karen Spencer |
| Portsmouth | Clare Poyner (DSCO) |
| RB Windsor & Maidenhead (Achieving for Children) | David Griffiths |
| Reading (Brighter Futures for Children) | Fionna Betts |
| Reading (Brighter Futures for Children) | Hester Collicutt |
| Reading (Brighter Futures for Children) | Nikki Stevens |
| Slough | Deborah Bowers |
| Slough | Harpreet Deo |
| Slough | Johnny Kyriacou |
| Slough | Chelsea Barnes |
| Southampton | Tammy Marks |
| Surrey | Julie Beckett |
| Surrey | Kathrine Everett |
| West Berkshire | Jane Seymour |
| West Sussex | Helen Johns |
| West Sussex | Jo Hill |
| West Sussex | Natalie McNeill (DSCO) |
| Wokingham | Sal Thirlway |
| Wokingham | Jenny Hooper |
| DfE S.E. Region SEND Adviser | Liz Flaherty |
| S.E.19 SEND Network Co-ordinator | Tracey Maytas |

1. **Welcome and background to meeting**

Wendy Vincent, Medway, welcomed everyone and reiterated the online meeting protocols.

1. **Actions and matters arising from last meeting**

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed:

* The DfE have a list of first and second contacts for SEND for all areas, which Liz needs to keep up-to-date. It was agreed for Tracey to circulate the existing list of contacts on the SESLIP website for members of this group to update.*In progress. The SESLIP website will be updated to add a secondary contact. Tracey will send it out to the group to be updated for September.*
* The SEN2 data is out and a national analysis is being looked at. It was agreed for Liz to do a session about the national picture in the next meeting. Tracey to include it in the next agenda. *Closed. On agenda.*
* Element 3 Funding Reviews for Schools - Proposal to benchmark figures against across the Region. Several LAs expressed interest in discussing this. Wendy to take these conversations forward with Tracey to help facilitate.*- Tracey and Wendy to set up a Task and Finish Group.*
* SEND Training Assurance Framework: *Sue Gibbons to inform this group when the training goes live. - carry forward to next joint meeting*

1. **DfE General Update**

Liz Flaherty, DfE SE Region SEND Advisor, provided the following update:

* SEND Review: There is no confirmed publication date yet nor whether there is going to be a green paper or not.
* New Integrated Care Systems: There is a CDC publication which provides useful background on that. SEND Advisors were a bit concerned that SEND has been given low priority. *(Attached)*
* National funding formula for 2022-23: A short document has been published with key facts and a useful Q&A *(Document Attached)*
* REACT meetings: Regular REACT meetings are being held, which Liz has attended with social care colleagues and people from Regional Schools Commissioners about Covid. It is highly likely to continue into the next academic year.

At the last South East meeting, Liz gave input on SEN2 data which they found really interesting and it was quite new to them. She aims to get SEND high up in the agenda of those meetings. They were surprised at the increase on numbers of EHCPs.

* New inspection framework: No detail yet for consultation arrangements. Autumn.
* Delivery support: A few discussions are being held around delivery support, trying to better join up regional support and support requested by individual LAs. The overall message about support is that we have to be able to demonstrate the expected impact on children and young people.
* National trial: It is still with the minister to make a decision about the national trial and if it will be extended to next year. *[Post-meeting note: Minister Vicky Ford sent out a letter during the meeting (embedded below) with the decision on that.]*



1. **Feedback from first re-instated SE Region SEND Joint Inspection; Process and experience within current Covid restrictions**

Fiona Betts, Brighter Futures for Children (Reading), provided feedback from their SEND Joint Inspection, which took place from 21st to 25th June, as per embedded document below.



The visit was nearly fully remote, due to a surge in Covid-19 cases in the area.

They had 25 meetings and 8 settings visits over the week.

What went well:

* The timetable worked well for them. They had the Ofsted version they presented and a second one with only meetings and details of attendees.
* They prepared people going into meetings / focus groups, discussed how much information it is useful for people to prepare without being too scripted. Focus group members were asked to consider 3 things they thought were going well and the evidence for that, 2 things that needed to improve or were improving and why that will have an impact, and what a parent/child would say about the support/service.
* Providing background information for focus groups and others, particularly about publicly available data, so people could look into it if they wanted to know details to talk to inspectors about.
* The inspection showed their network and relationships are getting more established, particularly at strategic level.
* It helped that the lead contact for the inspection was not the subject lead.
* Presentations went well.
* Their DCO was very good with the inspectors.

Learning:

* It would have been helpful to have a daily data meeting, especially around the list of EHCPs.
* Communication and managing expectations are important.
* It would have been helpful to have someone dedicated to the settings visits.
* They could have used feedback from focus groups more efficiently to hear what had happened in a meeting and use that for other meetings.
* It would have been helpful to have a health colleague in their inspection team.

The following questions and comments were made:

* They were asked to select the EHCPs for the inspection: 50 EHCPs, updated to include 25 with health input (specified to 5x each for health visitor, school nursing, OT, physio, SALT) plus children and young people from the settings who were part of the inspections. Fiona confirmed that the health input was requested to be in the health section. It was a shock to have to suddenly get all this information.
* In terms of advice that proved helpful, Fiona highlighted preparing the presentation to know what you are telling and questions about identifying impact and focus. They looked at all the best practice from other LAs, which had been shared in a regional meeting just before. Everything went as expected with the exception of the EHCP list request.
* Wendy asked whether the new inspection framework might focus more on health and health needs reflected in EHCPs, hence starting to be introduced in the inspections? Tammy Marks, Southampton, and Liz agreed that they seem to be starting to shift to the intentions of the new framework.
* There was not much discussion about Covid-19. They had quite a lot of evidence around that. They had done a Covid SEF and they were halfway through developing a revised SEF to include the impact of the pandemic and their response to Covid.
* Greater focus on strategic leadership, Fiona remarked that there was a huge focus on how well the LA knew its data, its partners and how it was going. She said that in their first presentation they talked about their strength in those networks and in the second presentation there was much more detail around that.
* It was a positive experience in that they felt that it was about children and young people, tested in strategic, practitioners and children and families.

1. **SEN2 Data National Analysis**

Liz talked to the embedded presentation.



Comments and questions were made as follows:

* David Griffiths, RB Windsor & Maidenhead (Achieving for Children), asked whether the decrease in the number of initial request for assessment refused could be due to Covid-19. Liz agreed and mentioned that they are discussing this in terms of: a) are we now more aware of hidden need, b) are children's needs more complex, c) perhaps schools do not meet those children's needs.

Wendy suggested that schools' funding is very tight and the only way forward might be to request a plan.

* Regarding the increase in independent specialist placement, Tracey asked if it includes 0-25 years old, to which Liz replied that she thinks it is just school age.

In the Preparing for Adulthood group there was a discussion of schools keeping young people in independent placements for a long time now and the uptake for those older young people is higher than for the younger ones. Liz remarked that there is a lot of unpicking to do for the post-16.

* Johnny Kyriacou, Slough, mentioned that it would be interesting to know the number of requests for independent schools from parents. Parents are increasingly thinking that independent and high cost is the best for their child and it is not always the case. Liz noted that it can be hard to win 'hearts and minds' of parents in believing local provision can meet need.
* Regarding children with EHC plans awaiting provision, Liz questioned whether these plans need to be ceased or whether we need to encourage those children to come back into the system.
* The percentage of EHC plans within 20 weeks has decreased in 2020. It could be due to Covid-19 but we need to keep an eye on that.
* Liz noted that we need to think about good practice, acknowledge that pressures in one area may not apply to other areas.
* **Tracey asked if it is possible to find out how many / what % of placements into INMS follow tribunal decisions and how many are agreed by LAs. Liz agreed to find out.**

Wendy added that another question would be how many LAs did not bother to take to tribunal because they knew they were not going to win.

1. **Feedback from first re-instated Revisit; Process and outcomes**

Process: Sal Thirlway, Wokingham, explained that the inspectors were clear that the focus of the revisit was only around the areas in the written statement. They did not want to look at any other areas.

They started following the notification of inspection, gathering evidence and information that the inspectors would like to see. They pulled together a narrative around their whole written statement.

It became apparent early on that the inspection team seemed to be quite satisfied with a number of the areas they had on their written statement.

There were six core areas in the written statement of action for the inspection team to look at:

1. Having a co-produced strategy.
2. Better management information and intelligence.
3. Improvement in quality and timeliness of EHCPs.
4. Better collaborative work.
5. Transition to adulthood.
6. Better co-production.

It was quickly identified that the area they wanted to focus on was around transition to adulthood. Inspectors framed much of the focus groups and discussions around transitions. The records of children they requested to see were those in the cohort of children that have been / are going through transition to adulthood. The parents and children and young people they wished to see were also linked to adult transitions.

In terms of engagement with other professionals, it was run in a different way from the inspection. They did not hold a formal focus group with parents. They did not have a specific focus group for teachers. They asked them to identify particular professional groups that linked to the themes they wished to pursue.

There was some frustration from parents and the headteacher community that they were not involved or engaged in the same way they would have been in an inspection. The inspection team felt that that element had been covered with the feedback forms they do with parents and their individual conversations with parents and carers carried out during the inspection.

The LA had engaged and involved colleagues who had worked with them as part of the partnership in the past years, which assisted them as they went through the presentation with Ofsted and CQC. These colleagues understood what had been done in terms of improvement after the inspection and how that linked to the written statement of action.

The presentation showed the improvements made and plans going forward, to show that they are approaching improvement areas as continuous development. That gave Ofsted and CQC the confidence in the work that had been undertaken. They were also clear about areas where things had been slower and were able to give a really clear narrative as to why that was so.

Outcome: All but one area for improvement were signed off. Remaining area was Transition to Adulthood, as they expected.

Sal's advice from their experience was to keep the focus on the written statement and guidance.

Liz added that another strength for their revisit is that they had a lot of evidence about the impact their improvements have had for children and young people.

Wendy congratulated Wokingham for their outcome.

1. **EHC Needs Assessment Requests; numbers across the Region 20/21**

Jo Hill, West Sussex, emailed SE LAs a request of information for data on EHC needs assessment requests in the different areas.

She reiterated her plea whether people are willing to share information for their areas. **She agreed to do a summary of this data to share at a future meeting.**

Wendy noted that they are not showing a huge increase but they never saw a drop during the pandemic. She mentioned whether perhaps areas which have an increase had a drop during March and July last year.

Helen Johns, West Sussex, remarked that they will not meet the deadline due to lack of capacity in their EP team. Wendy said that EPs also have additional traded services in Medway, which puts more pressure to their service.

Tracey recalled that a few years back the South of England Principal EPs group used the SE region steering group to flag up the lack of EP training places to DfE, who extended the number of places. **Tracey agreed to liaise with Liz to see if DfE could be approached again. Elaine Munro, SoEPEP rep on the SE19 Steering Group to be included.**

1. **New Joint Inspection framework. Update from latest meeting & any regional input required**

Tammy Marks, Southampton, explained that in the last meeting they were advised that they had been 'socialising' the draft framework with some LAs.

Tammy mentioned that we can expect focus visits in the new regime.

The headings LAs will be measured against were discussed in the last meeting.

There was also a discussion around some questions and whether those are accurate to measure if we have an effective SEND system.

There is a lot related to leadership and ambitions of leaders and the environment being created to ensure that good practice can flourish.

There has been a fair amount of feedback on some of the challenges across services.

Emails have been sent out inviting expression of interest for piloting in autumn and spring. Tammy noted that she is anticipating that a draft of the framework will be sent out in autumn.

In terms of how it is going to be marked, Tammy remarked that it looks like they are going for a traditional outcome model, but it has not been confirmed yet.

1. **DfE pupil level census return Jan-22 (pilot) - EHC plan review decisions date data; Information from Data Benchmarking Group - Tracey Maytas**

Move item to September meeting.

1. **AOB**

* Autism Education Trust training (AET) - Liz Flaherty

**Action: LAs to send feedback to Liz if they have used AET recently.**

* Request for **models of Additionally Resourced Provision** to share with London LA - Tracey Maytas

There is some work being carried out in the London region around additional resource provision and there seems to be low experience in models for ARP in that area. **LAs were encouraged to share with Tracey any work they have developed around that area.**

* **Tammy asked if anyone has commissioned an independent consultant to do work about high needs funding in terms of independent funding, early years funding, etc. and if they would be interested in getting involved.** Future meeting dates:

Wed 22nd September 12:00-13:30 - Joint Meeting

Tues 19th October 12:00-13:30 - LAs

* Future topics:
* SEND Review and funding
* NHSE/I National Autism strategy (September meeting)
* Type 1 diabetes NICE guidance (September meeting)
* New Joint Inspection framework (standing item)
* EHC Needs Assessment Requests; numbers across the Region 20/21 - summary by Jo Hill

Please send any items or questions and queries you would like to discuss with colleagues to Tracey.

**Summary of Actions**

* The DfE have a list of first and second contacts for SEND for all areas, which Liz needs to keep up-to-date. **It was agreed for Tracey to circulate the existing list of contacts in the SESLIP website for members of this group to update.** *In progress. The SESLIP website will be updated to add a secondary contact. Tracey will send it out to the group to be updated for September.*
* **LAs were asked by Johnny Kyriacou if they would be interested in sharing experience in terms of IT systems for gathering data and analysing EHCPs. *- It was agreed that a meeting would be set up to share practice there. Action for Tracey.*** *Carry action forward.*
* **Element 3 Funding Reviews for Schools - Proposal to benchmark figures against across the Region.** Several LAs expressed interest in discussing this. **Wendy to take these conversations forward** **with Tracey to help facilitate.** *- Tracey and Wendy to set up a Task and Finish Group.*
* **SEND Training Assurance Framework: Sue Gibbons to inform this group when the training goes live.**
* **Tracey asked if it is possible to find out how many / what % of placements into INMS follow tribunal decisions and how many are agreed by LAs. Liz agreed to find out.**
* **Jo Hill: EHC Needs Assessment Requests; numbers across the Region 20/21: A plea went out to all LAs to share their figures with Jo, who will share a summary of the information at a future meeting.**
* **A few years back the South of England Principle EPs group used the SE region steering group to flag up the lack of EP training places to DfE, who extended the number of places.** *Tracey agreed to liaise with Liz to see if DfE could be approached again. Elaine Munro, SoEPEP rep on the SE19 Steering Group to be included.*
* **LAs to send feedback to Liz if they have used AET recently.**
* **Request for models of Additionally Resourced Provision to share with London LA:** **LAs were encouraged to share with Tracey any work they have developed around that area.**
* **Tammy asked if anyone has commissioned an independent consultant to do work about high needs funding in terms of independent funding, early years funding, etc. and if they would be interested in getting involved.**
* **Regional workshop to be run later in year on how to hit the 20 week target for EHCP completion: Presentation on how to get from very low to 100% (Tammy Marks, Southampton) & how to stay at 95%+ over time (Karen Spencer, Portsmouth)**