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**South East Region Fostering Network**

**Terms of Reference – January 2022**

**Background**

The South East Regional Fostering Network was established in September 2019 as an informal group of fostering leads from the 19 SESLIP LAs. In January 2022 it was taken over by a new DCS chair and a decision was taken to formalise the terms of reference for the group.

**Aim**

The South East Regional Fostering Network is overseen by the South East Region Directors of Children’s Services and support is funded through the Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP).

“The overall aim is to provide sector-led leadership and support to the Fostering system in the south east, understanding and supporting practice development and bringing together issues of common concern and/or good practice to facilitate prevention, early intervention and good outcomes for children and young people in the region”

**Objectives**

To achieve this aim, the Network will have the following specific objectives:

* To identify and feed in specific areas of good practice and key concerns to the regional DCS group;
* To agree regional responses to national consultations and make representations on key issues relating to Fostering;
* Through the analysis of data and other information, to understand key strengths and opportunities for improvement in the south-east;
* Through the analysis of data, to identify key lines of enquiry for the region and commission specific, in-depth pieces of work as appropriate;
* To ensure that national messages are cascaded throughout the region as appropriate.

**Ways of Working**

* The network Sponsor will be a DCS in the South East region; currently this is Deborah Glassbrook, DCS, Brighter Futures. Any change of Sponsor will be approved by the South East DCS Group;
* The Network will informally report to the South East DCS group through the DCS chair;
* The EH network will appoint from its membership one or more Chairs and Vice Chairs who will support the SESLIP appointed consultant in devising agendas, chairing the meeting as required and taking part in national events/conference calls as required on behalf of the group;
* The network wishes to be as inclusive as possible. Membership is open to all 19 local authorities/children’s trust. Members should be of sufficient seniority to represent their organisations at a strategic level as well as to understand the Fostering operations in their LA;
* The network will develop an annual work programme reflecting regional priorities and issues;
* The network will meet quarterly;
* Depending on the work programme, specific project groups or task and finish groups may be set up to complete identified pieces of work.

**Review**

* The network will review this Terms of Reference on an annual basis.

January 2022