

**S.E.19 SEND Conversations - LAs & DfE**

**22nd March 2022**

**12:00 - 13:30**

**Notes of meeting**

| **Local Authority/ Organisation** | **Attendees** |
| --- | --- |
| Brighton and Hove | Rhianned Hughes |
| Buckinghamshire | Hero Slinn |
| East Sussex | Nathan Caine |
| Hampshire | Alistair Hines |
| Kent | Rosemary Henn-Macrae |
| Kent | Paul Crulley |
| Kent | Steve Tanner |
| Medway | Wendy Vincent |
| Milton Keynes | Caroline Marriott |
| Oxfordshire | Catherine Clarke |
| Oxfordshire | Kate Bradley |
| Portsmouth | Karen Spencer |
| Portsmouth | Liz Robinson |
| RB Windsor & Maidenhead (Achieving for Children) | David Griffiths |
| RB Windsor & Maidenhead (Achieving for Children) | Clive Haines |
| RB Windsor & Maidenhead (Achieving for Children) | Kelly Nash |
| Reading (Brighter Futures for Children) | Hester Collicutt |
| Slough | Deborah Bowers |
| Slough | Chelsea Barnes |
| Slough | Claire Goss |
| Southampton | Kirsty Relton |
| Surrey | Julia Katherine |
| Surrey | Kathrine Everett |
| West Berkshire | Jane Seymour |
| West Sussex | Helen Johns |
| West Sussex | Jo Hill |
| Wokingham | Jenny Hooper |
| Wokingham | Hannah Henderson |
| NNPCF SE Steering Member | Sarah Clarke |
| S.E.19 SEND Advisor, DfE | Liz Flaherty |
| SESLIP Programme Manager | Richard Tyndall |
| S.E.19 SEND Network Co-ordinator | Tracey Maytas |

| **No.** | **Agenda item** |
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| **1.** | **Welcome and background to meeting**  Julia Katherine, Surrey, welcomed everyone and reiterated the online meeting protocols.  This is the last of these meetings with the current arrangements. |
| **2.** | **Actions and matters arising from last meeting**  The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed:   * SEND Network working groups: **Action: Tracey to contact LAs regarding who they have signed up for these meetings**.   **15/02/2022:** In progress.Tracey will send a grid with who she thinks is attending on behalf of each local area for all the groups for LAs to review.  **22/03/2022:** **In progress.** Tracey will send the grids of each LA's contact for the SE19 SEND Network groups to members of this group. Everyone to take responsibility that they are the current contacts for your areas.   * **Elaine Munro to take the discussion around managing capacity and time allocated to EPs to PEPs in the South East and feed back - to find out if there are EP services that have approached this in a different way, any ideas, any learnings.**   15/2/2022: Carry action forward.  **22/03/2022: Tracey to liaise with Elaine Munro for an update. Carry action forward.**   * An action was agreed for Tracey and Nathan to convene a meeting with South East LAs and Benedict Coffin**.**   15/02/2022: Nathan will raise it with Benedict.  22/03/2022: On agenda. **Action closed.**   * An action was agreed for **Paul Crulley, Kent, to identify specific questions around their structure of tribunal teams for colleagues to answer and send them to Tracey to create a survey.**   15/02/2022: Carry action forward.  **22/03/2022: Paul to take forward as part of Operations Managers meetings.**   * Tracey to liaise with Heather Campbell about specific dates and invites for SIOD to join the SE19 SEND Network meetings.   15/02/2022: Carry action forward.  22/03/2022: Heather is willing to join these meetings when she has a clearer idea on how SIOD will link with the regional networks. **Action complete**.   * Discussion: Impact of Staff Absence and Recruitment Challenges on the delivery of provision in EHCPs - regional experience of pressures: Action for Tracey to bring this item back to the agenda for next joint meeting in May.   22/03/2022: Action for next meeting.   * Tracey to forward to Liz Flaherty the names of the people who could provide her with information around tri-partite funding agreements for INMSS place costs: Sally Murray, David Griffiths, Rosemary Henn-Macrae.   22/03/2022: **Action complete**. |
| **3.** | **DfE Update**  Liz Flaherty, DfE SE Region SEND Advisor, tabled the embedded slides.    Regarding the SEND Review, the meeting felt it was important that there will be an implementation plan for it.  The SEND Advisor team has been increased. From 1st April, there will be two SEND Advisors in the SE region: Liz Flaherty and Mark McCurrie. Both will attend the SE19 SEND Network meetings.  Liz agreed to share the list of LAs which will be working with Liz and Mark. Embedded below. |
| **4.** | **Feedback from HNF meeting with Benedict Coffin, DfE**  Nathan Caine, East Sussex, explained that he met with Benedict Coffin for a further conversation around HNF. They discussed the following:   * How the system for high needs funding is incentivised. This might come out as part of the green paper. Nathan put forward at the meeting that at the moment the high needs funding does not do this effectively. * Independent non-maintained sector. Some non-maintained schools can have the same top-up as independent schools or even more. There should be some parity around the expenditure in the independent non-maintained sector and the state sector, which Benedict agreed to look at. * Problems in the funding for the state funded schools - top-up funding incentivises special schools to fill up very quickly. Benedict thought that DfE are willing to consider special schools to have some free spaces. * There is a challenge around how the funding can work and willing to see what comes out of the green paper.   Julia commented that it reinforces the importance of working across the SE19 on funding issues because speaking with a collective voice we are going to be much stronger on our position.  **It was agreed that Tracey would invite Benedict Coffin to a future SEND Strategic Conversations meeting.** |
| **5.** | **Sharing SEND Review Activity**  Liz advised not to make any assumptions of what is going to be in the SEND Review paper since there were still re-writes last week. |
| **6.** | **Surrey Key Stage Transfer survey: Outcome**  This survey was initiated by Nick King at Surrey. Six responses have been received so far. There is reasonable consistency across the figures. Anonymised version embedded below.    **An action was agreed for Tracey to re-circulate it and members of this group to complete it by this time next week.** |
| **7.** | **High Court Judgement re Annual Review timescales; Discussion**  Liz clarified that this item refers to the Devon Judicial Review.  The previous understanding of regulations has been that four weeks after the annual review the LA needs to notify whether they are going to maintain, amend or cease the plan but that there is an unspecified amount of time for the proposed amendments to be shared in the EHCP. The High Court Judgement ruled that the duty of the LA following an annual review meeting where there is a proposal to amend is to issue the amendments with the copies of any evidence within four weeks of that meeting.  Liz read an email from André Imich, in which he stated that the DfE has not made a statement about the judgements. André is working with DfE colleagues to try to get a clarification. There are discussions at the DfE currently to add specificity around that time.  All LAs agreed the four weeks would be a challenge, as could another agreed timescale.  Wendy Vincent, Medway, explained that LAs struggle to get paperwork and advice back within four weeks. Any clarity the DfE could give would be helpful.  **Liz agreed to respond to André on behalf of the SE19 that there is major concern and an interim holding statement around this would be helpful.**  Alistair Hines, Hampshire, suggested to add a paragraph about this topic to propose a change in the SEND Review.  Karen Spencer, Portsmouth, said that there is a letter template on the IPSEA website for parents to fill in around dates when they should have the annual reviews amended. **Liz agreed to feed this back as well.**  Jo Hill, West Sussex, said that the content of ARs is often poor but developing LA capacity to either attend/challenge or train to improve quality is a massive challenge.  She added that 9 times out of 10 the issue is not actually what is written in the EHCPs, changing this wrongly becomes the focus of the annual review when actually it is challenging the failure to deliver what is already there that is needed. |
| **8.** | **SEND Operations / Team Managers SEND Teams Benchmarking Survey: Outcomes**  Karen Spencer explained that this was initiated because the SEND Operations / Team Managers were interested in looking at how SEN teams across the region are organised, the types of roles, average number of cases and salaries. These inevitably have an impact on how they meet their duties.  A survey was created and a report has been put together with the responses. Embedded below.    The additional comments are very helpful in giving detail around the different types of roles.  The SEND Operations / Team Managers agreed that some additional information might be helpful in relation to stability of teams and information around temporary / agency staff. A short survey with additional questions has been circulated to members of that group.  It was also felt that it might be helpful to share teams structures and job profiles, which will be published on the SESLIP website.  The following comments were made:  Julia thanked the group for pulling this together. It is helpful to anyone looking at the structure of their teams.  Deborah Bowers, Slough, commented that they have found that sometimes agency staff are not able to do the tasks sufficiently competently and there seems to be a lot of movement.  Hero Slinn, Buckinghamshire, suggested to take this forward to put recommendations for the SE19 region. Karen replied that they did not look at having recommendations but she agreed that it could be a good basis to look at how collectively make best use of this information. There was general agreement from the group.  The following actions were agreed:   * **Members of this group to consider if there are any specific questions on the collected data and any preference on how the comparison is presented, e.g. look at spend compared with caseload levels.** * **Operational managers group to consider the data at their meeting in May and come back to the SEND Strategic Conversations in June with any recommendations that might be universally helpful across the SE19.** * **It was suggested to also look at the costs incurred by staff turnover.** |
| **9.** | **New Joint Inspection framework**  It is expected to come out shortly after the SEND Review.  It was agreed to leave it as an item for future meetings to discuss the implications of the new inspection framework. |
| **10** | **Changes for the SE19 SEND Network from April 2022; transitional arrangements and future working**  Tracey went through the embedded slides, highlighting the key changes in the arrangements for supporting this network from 1st April.    Richard Tyndall, SESLIP Programme Manager, joined the meeting and presented background to the existing work of SESLIP programme across social care and education. The SE19 SEND Network is already attached to this but from 1st April SESLIP will now be funded directly by DfE to support regional SEND development. He shared the 7 key themes that the over-arching programme is working to:   1. Workforce: Getting, keeping and developing permanent high-quality staff 2. Quality Assurance: beyond counting the number of interventions, how can we assure the quality. 3. Placement sufficiency and unregistered and unregulated placements 4. Post-covid/service priorities - How to acknowledge workforce fatigue and frame the context for the next phase 5. Co-production - focussed on improving social work and SEND practice and the visibility of successes 6. Demand/financial pressures including HNB and links to placement sufficiency 7. Partnerships: responding to health changes and promoting whole system leadership; anticipating changes in Education/SEND expectations   Details were also given on what is currently being done and what might be added to the programme.  Richard reported that the SE DCSs are fully aware about the SEND agenda with Kevin McDaniel (RBWM) acting as the lead in this. He felt that some of the general SESLIP funds might be directed to support SEND activity over and above the DfE grant.  He showed some of the content which can be found on the SESLIP website (link [here](https://www.seslip.co.uk/)), such as contacts for the region, news updated weekly. Most of the website is public access. Log-ins are required only for restricted material and that access will be granted on request by contacting Richard at [richard.tyndall@richardtyndall.co.uk](mailto:richard.tyndall@richardtyndall.co.uk) .  Julia remarked that this item is to give reassurance that the arrangements of the SE19 Network are changing but the work established will continue.  On behalf of the network, Julia thanked Tracey for all the work she has done in establishing, maintaining and keeping the work of the network. A round of applause was given to Tracey. |
| **11** | **AoB**   * Brief feedback from SE19 SEND Steering Group 16th March (notes to follow):   The notes are on the website. Tracey will circulate them.   * PfA Survey - more responses please:   A plea was made to respond to the PfA survey which went to the LA leads. The responses received so far suggest that having more information on that could be really interesting. |
| **Future meeting dates:**   * Tuesday 10th May 2022 - Joint meeting | |
| **Future topics:**   * SEND Review (standing item) * New Joint Inspection framework (standing item) * Impact of Staff Absence and Recruitment Challenges on the delivery of provision in EHCPs - regional experience of pressures (May joint meeting)   Please send any items or questions and queries you would like to discuss with colleagues to Tracey. | |

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| **Summary of Actions** |
| * SEND Network working groups: **Action: Tracey to contact LAs regarding who they have signed up for these meetings**.   **22/03/2022:** **In progress. Tracey will send the grids of each LA's contact for the SE19 SEND Network groups to members of this group. Everyone to take responsibility that they are the current contacts for your areas.**   * **Elaine Munro to take the discussion around managing capacity and time allocated to EPs to PEPs in the South East and feed back - to find out if there are EP services that have approached this in a different way, any ideas, any learnings.**   **22/03/2022: Tracey to liaise with Elaine Munro for an update. Carry action forward.**   * **Paul Crulley, Kent, to identify specific questions around their structure of tribunal teams for colleagues to answer and send them to Tracey to create a survey.**   **22/03/2022: Paul to take forward as part of Operations Managers meetings.**   * **Tracey to invite Benedict Coffin to a future SEND Strategic Conversations meeting.** * **Key Stage Transfer survey: Tracey to re-circulate it and members of this group to complete it by this time next week.** * **High Court Judgement re Annual Review timescales - Actions:**    + - * + **Liz agreed to respond to André on behalf of the SE19 that there is major concern and an interim holding statement around this would be helpful.**         + **She also agreed to feed back to the DfE that there is a letter template on the IPSEA for parents to fill in around dates when they should have the annual reviews amended.** * **SEND Teams benchmarking survey - Actions:**   + **Members of this group to consider if there are any specific questions on the collected data and any preference on how the comparison is presented, e.g. look at spend compared with caseload levels.**   + **Operational managers group to consider the data at their meeting in May and come back to the SEND Strategic Conversations in June with any recommendations that might be universally helpful across the SE19.**   + **It was suggested to also look at the costs of staff turnover.** |