SESLIP Regional Improvement Plan 2022-23

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1. Introduction

1.1. 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.

1.2. 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.

1.3. 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
   - post-pandemic actions responding to the impacts of lockdown

1.4. The core activities include the collection and publication of benchmarking data, an annual round of self-assessments and triad peer challenge, the identification of improvement needs and interventions and the support of regional practice networks.

1.5. The output of the series of triad peer challenges in 2021/2022 revealed the following issues of concern:

Table 1: Overarching issues identified by triad Peer Challenges

	Overarching issues	What we are currently doing	Budget allocated June 2022
1.	Post-covid/Service priorities - How to acknowledge workforce fatigue and frame the context for the next phase	Learning from remote and flexible working	Workforce: £10,000 Self-assessment and peer challenge £60,800 Networks: various
2.	Partnerships: responding to health changes and promoting whole system leadership; anticipating changes in Education/SEND expectations	Some work with NHS(E) and Anna Freud Centre; SEND and Education networking	SEND SE19: £114,584 Education Network: £15,000 Liberty Protection Safeguards: £5,000 NHS Transition to ICS areas: £0

Table 2: Issues identified by two or more triad Peer Challenges

	Summary of issue - mentioned by two or more Triads	What we are currently doing	Budget allocated June 2022

1.	Workforce: Getting, keeping and developing permanent high-quality staff	MoC on Agency Staff Take Your Place future leaders programme	Workforce: £10,000 Take Your Place: £45,000
2.	Quality Assurance: beyond counting the number of SW interventions, how can we assure the quality of SW	QA network Motivational Interviewing training	QA Network: £12,000
3.	Placement sufficiency and unregistered and unregulated placements	Placement sufficiency commissioning project INMSS work done by SE19 SEND East Berks Commissioning Project (Slough, BF, W&M) Fostering Network ASGLB	Commissioners Network: £25,000
4.	Co-production - focussed on improving SW and SEND practice and the visibility of successes	Some recent work with Lead Members on Corporate Parenting. SE19 SEND links to Parent Carer Forums and organising a Co-production Conference	SEND SE19: £114,584
5.	Demand/financial pressures including HNB and links to placement sufficiency (see elsewhere)	SE19 SEND HNB working group Current topic for AD Ed Network	SEND SE19: £114,584 Education Network: £15,000

Table 3: Issues identified by one triad Peer Challenge

	Summary of issue - mentioned by one Triad	What we are currently doing	Budget allocated June 2022
1.	Corporate priorities: the struggle to raise the visibility of the children's agenda	Some work with Lead Members Network	Lead Members Network: £12,000
2.	Insight from data: getting more benefit from the wealth of available data (and checking that the data is accurate and comparable)	Data benchmarking group, and its sub-groups	Data Benchmarking: £80,000 Networks: various
3.	Early Help: interest in learning more about possible approaches	Early Help network, Family Hubs regional development	Early Help Network £10,000
4.	Educational Gap: how to tackle underachievement by SEND and Pupil Premium groups, and understand Covid impacts	AD Education Group, and Education data benchmarking sub-group	Education Network: £15,000
5.	Inclusion: how to promote more inclusion in mainstream settings	SEND network AD Ed Network	SEND SE19: £114,584 Education Network: £15,000
6.	Progress in RI authorities: how best to evidence progress	Data benchmarking group	Small packages of SLI support: £94,000

1.6. We are planning to support 10 practice networks: Adoption and Special Guardianship; Assistant Directors Education; Assistant Directors Safeguarding; Data Benchmarking; Early Help; Fostering; Lead Members; Quality Assurance; SEND; with a Commissioning network due to be launched during the year.

1.7. The SE19 SEND programme has been significantly expanded following the announcement of DfE grant for its activities. There is now a separate SEND regional improvement programme and plan.

2. Objectives of this plan

2.1. We will identify ways in which local authorities can support each other to improve and take collective action to 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 programmes.

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. 21 proposed workstreams for this improvement plan

3.1. The 21 proposed workstreams are divided into six groups:

- RIIA Core (5)
- RIIA Options (3)
- Practice Networks (10), including SEND Improvement Programme
- SESLIP funded priorities (3)

Table 4: 21 Workstreams for South East Sector Led Improvement in 2022-23

Workstreams 2022-23	Outputs
RIIA Core Activities: all funded by DfE grant (5)	
1. **Data benchmarking** To collect and publish a range of data benchmarking reports. **DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)**	Quarterly production of the national RIIA dataset; Quarterly production of benchmarking data for children's social care, early help, education, SEND, adoption and special guardianship. Annual production of peer challenge 55 dataset profiles; CSC workforce benchmarks. Support for the national Data to Insight project See line 13 Data benchmarking network
2. **DCS annual self-assessment and peer challenge** To continue to develop and improve the parallel triad/quartet arrangements for self-assessment and peer challenge for DCSs and for Lead Members **DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)**	To deliver Round 5 of DCS self-assessment and triad/quartet peer challenge in the winter 2022-23 To deliver Round 2 of Lead Member self-assessment and triad/quartet peer challenge in autumn 2022 To develop data triangulation and quality assurance support for self-assessments

Workstreams 2022-23	Outputs
3. **Family Hub Development** To appoint a regional co-ordinator to work with the DfE national team and colleagues throughout the region to support the spread of family hubs. To support the development of the Family Hub service in the Isle of Wight. **DCS Sponsor: Kathy Marriott (Isle of Wight on behalf of Steve Crocker)**	To bring this Regional Recovery Funded project to a close
4. **Small package SLI support** We will broker requests for small package SLI support from around the region, to be delivered by a region-wide team **DCS Sponsor: Alison Smailes (Hampshire on behalf of Steve Crocker)**	There will be a minimum of 4 packages of support, none exceeding 39 days input, for peer reviews, diagnostic work, case audits or other similar improvement work. The scope and size of each package to be the subject of discussion and agreement between the target local authority and Hampshire's programme manager.
5. **National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children** Hampshire will host a regional coordinator and placement officer to support the operation of the NTS **DCS Sponsor: Alison Smailes on behalf of Steve Crocker (Hampshire)**	To bring this Regional Recovery Funded project to a close
RIIA Optional Activities: funded (at least in part) from the Regional Recovery Fund (3)	
6. **Workforce matters; recruitment and retention; agency.** Monitor and develop the working of the Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) on agency staff with the DCS Group and consider appropriate next steps **DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)**	To monitor and develop the working of MoC through the governance group
7. **Take Your Place – our future leaders' programme** We will continue to develop the Take Your Place programme **DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)**	To deliver the first Aspiring Assistant Directors' course, alongside other modules
8. **Placement Sufficiency – collaborate to improve commissioning and provision for young people with complex needs.** To combine the DfE grant provided for the second phase of the project (£128,600 to July 2021) with a further £60,000 from the RRF project to work with at least 4 local authorities to develop an innovative and co-produced model of commissioning. A governance group including provider representatives assists the DCS Sponsor in directing the project. **DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex)**	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" To sustain the pathfinder activity of the 4 partners and expand to further early adopters in the region. 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.

Workstreams 2022-23	Outputs
Practice Networks (10): We will support 10 Regional Practice Networks: Adoption and Special Guardianship; AD Education; AD Safeguarding; Commissioning; Data Benchmarking; Early Help; 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	
9. Regional Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board To hold regular meetings of the Regional ASGLB Liaison with RAAs and others Liaison with National ALSGB **DCS Sponsor for Adoption and SG Leadership Board: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)**	Maintain regular meetings of the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board. Align practice in process and support in securing permanency arrangements Embed S.E. RAA arrangements in adopting a consistent approach to practice Narrow the Gap in children waiting and available carers through the analysis of data
10. AD Education Network To hold regular meetings of the AD Education Network, develop shared positions on strategic responses to lost learning. Maintain a focus on children missing education, off-rolling and learning recovery. To plan more closely with the SEND network and organise a joint event, following the publication of the national SEND Review. **DCS Sponsor: Deb Austin (Brighton and Hove)**	Development of shared thinking about strategic local education systems and respond to the government's white and green papers 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. Maintain regular meetings of the AD Education Network including joint meetings with the SEND SE19 and coordination of future programme planning. Develop work between members of the network to better understand the needs of children missing education (CME).
11. AD Safeguarding Network To hold regular meetings of the AD Safeguarding network, including joint meetings with other regional networks **DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)**	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
12. Commissioners' Network **DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex)**	Establish a SESLIP-wide commissioners' group to share the learning of the project and prepare

Workstreams 2022-23	Outputs
	SESLIP authorities for adopting the commissioning framework. Working in parallel with the Placement Sufficiency Project and East Berkshire Commissioning Project to set up and sustain a Commissioners' Network
13. Data Benchmarking Network We will continue to support the quarterly collection and publication of regional benchmarking data across the range of children's services. We will lead the new national Data to Insight project **DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)**	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. Introduce education data benchmarking with a focus on children missing education Lead on the national Data to Insight project
14. Early Help To meet regularly to develop early help benchmarking, share good practice, understand invest to save propositions and support the deployment of family hubs. **DCS Sponsor: Grainne Siggins (Bracknell Forest)**	Identify and feed in specific areas of good practice and key concerns to the regional DCS group; - agree regional responses to national consultations and make representations on key issues relating to Early Help - understand key strengths and opportunities for improvement in the south-east through the analysis of data and other information; - identify key lines of enquiry for the region and commission specific, in-depth pieces of work as appropriate; - ensure that national messages are cascaded throughout the region as appropriate.
15. Fostering Network To hold regular meetings of the Fostering Network, develop shared positions on strategic issues. To support joint approaches. **DCS Sponsor: tbc**	To support the Innovation Scale and Spread initiatives Mockingbird and Inside Out.
16. Quality Assurance Network We will continue to support and hold regular meetings of the Regional Quality Assurance Network. Where possible we will deliver mutual quality assurance activity based on the Peer Challenge Triads/Quartets **DCS Sponsor: Sophie Butt (Isle of Wight on behalf of Steve Crocker)**	Support the improvement of the effectiveness of existing quality assurance activities. Maintain the library of shared Quality Assurance Tools. Further the shared understanding of good practice, through network meetings, sharing practice standards. Develop opportunities for mutual external audit moderation and challenge. Sustain the CP chairs network with the aim of enhancing the contribution of CP chairs to quality assurance.
17. SEND 19 Network To hold regular meetings of the SEND 19 Network, its sub-groups, including joint meetings with AD Education network, focused on supporting and	The DfE has supported SEND improvement work with specific grant and in response, we have created a regional SEND improvement team with its own improvement plan.

Workstreams 2022-23	Outputs
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. **DCS Sponsor: Kevin McDaniel (Windsor and Maidenhead)**	
18. Support for Lead Members Network Working with LGA to develop and deliver a development programme for Lead Members across the region Lobbying of central government **Lead Member Sponsor: Cllr Hannah Clare (Brighton and Hove)**	To deliver induction and development support for Lead members To deliver a programme of expert workshops to improve the technical knowledge of lead members To develop peer challenge arrangements for lead members to complement the DCS-led annual self-assessment and peer challenge.
Other SESLIP activity:	
19. Input to the DfE Care Review To respond to the DfE Care review and the subsequent government proposals **DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex)**	To respond to the DfE Care Review proposals
20. Liberty Protection Safeguards To support to implementation of revised arrangements for Liberty protection Safeguards for 16- and 17-year-olds **DCS Sponsor: Grainne Siggins (Bracknell Forest)**	To work with Adults Services colleagues and the LGA on the response to the new arrangements
21. Health Service Transition to Integrated Care Services **DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)**	To work with NHS colleagues on supporting the transition to ICS areas across the region

4. Budget

Table 5: South East Sector Led Improvement Budget 2022-23: July 2022

	Income	21-22 yearend	22-23 budget at June	Notes
	Carry forward from previous year	151,746	120,297	
	DfE Phase 2 Project	10,000	0	
	DfE RRF Strand 1 Core	317,800	234,800	Earmarked for DfE priorities: data, peer challenge and small package SLI support
	DfE RRF Strand 1 Options	295,750	0	
	DfE RRF Strand 2 Practice Solutions	412,450	0	
	DfE RRF Strand 3 Innovation Scale and Spread	1,328,120	0	
	DfE SEND support	0	114,584	New grant support for SEND Improvement
	SE subs	150,000	162,500	Assumes everyone pays
	Data only subs	2,250	2,250	Somerset and Swindon
	Total In	**2,668,116**	**634,431**	
Plan Ref	Expenditure	21-22 yearend forecast	22-23 at June	Notes
1/13	Data Benchmarking	86,000	80,000	Earmarked in DfE core funding
2	Self-assessment and peer challenge	81,000	60,800	Earmarked in DfE core funding
3	Family Hub development	273,000	0	Tail of project funds with Isle of Wight
4	Small package SLI support	94,000	94,000	Earmarked in DfE core funding
5	National Transfer Scheme	90,000	0	Tail of project funds with Hampshire
6	Workforce matters; recruitment and retention; agency.	20,000	10,000	
7	Take Your Place – our future leaders' programme	55,000	45,500	Regional subscription to The Staff College
8	Placement Sufficiency	100,025	0	Tail of project funds with West Sussex
9	Regional Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board	0	10,000	
10	AD Education	12,500	15,000	
11	AD Safeguarding	8,000	15,000	
12	Commissioners Network	0	25,000	
13	Data benchmarking	0	0	See line 1 above
14	Early Help	3,500	10,000	
15	Fostering	6,000	10,000	
16	Quality Assurance Network	12,000	12,000	
17	SEND – SE19	32,750	114,584	Earmarked in DfE SEND funding
18	Lead Members Network	13,665	12,000	
19	DfE Care Review	2,400	0	Awaiting DfE
20	Liberty Protection Safeguards	0	5,000	
21	NHS Transition to ICS areas	0	0	Awaiting developments
x	New Practice Solutions projects	0	0	Awaiting DfE invitation to apply
xx	New Innovation Scale and Spread project(s)	0	0	Awaiting DfE invitation to apply
xxx	New self-funded projects	0	55,000	Not yet determined
other	SE ADCS Rooms	5,000	10,000	
other	Programme Management	29,000	30,000	
other	Website maintenance	4,650	10,000	
other	ESCC Overhead	7,500	10,000	
	Data to Insight	10,000	0	Project completed last year
	Children Missing Education	17,500	0	Project completed last year
	National Transfer Scheme	0	0	Project completed last year
	Special Guardianship	17,000	0	Project completed last year
	Family Safeguarding – pre-birth pandemic caseload	115,750	0	Project completed last year
	Family Hub Option B	0	0	Project completed last year
	Safeguarding adolescents EFH	72,450	0	Project completed last year

	Safeguarding Infants	50,000	0	Project completed last year
	Reducing Court Backlog	90,000	0	Project completed last year
	Mockingbird	327,600	0	Project completed last year
	Inside Out	174,200	0	Project completed last year
	Lifelong Links	100,000	0	Project completed last year
	East Berkshire Commissioning Project	95,000	0	Project completed last year
	Family Safeguarding – motivational interviewing	576,320	0	Project completed last year
	Pause Reading	55,000	0	Project completed last year
	Post-covid learning recovery	0	0	Project completed last year
	Total Out	**2,636,810**	**633,884**	
	Carry forward to 22/23	31,306	547	

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: Alison Jeffery (DCS, East Sussex, in the chair); Kevin McDaniel (DCS, Windsor and Maidenhead); Steve Crocker (DCS, Hampshire and Isle of Wight); Becky Shaw (Chief Executive, East and West Sussex) and Michael Bracey (Chief Executive, Milton Keynes); Cllr Gareth Barnard (Lead Member, Bracknell Forest) and Cllr Hannah Clare (Lead Member, Brighton and Hove); and the Improvement Advisers from the LGA (Mona Sehgal and William Brooks; Children's Improvement Adviser, Alison Michalska). David Myers, DfE Regional Improvement Adviser and Katie Moore, DfE SEND IOD team are invited to attend these meetings.

5.3.   The lead authority is East Sussex which acts as treasurer for the programme. Richard Tyndall is the programme manager who is retained by East Sussex