**SESLIP Quality Assurance Leads Meeting**

**Wednesday 14 September 2022 (14:00 – 17:00)**

**Attendees:**

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| Borough | Marc | Gammon |
| Bracknell Forest | Kogie | Perumall |
| Brighton & Hove | Tina | James |
| Brighton & Hove | Justin | Grantham |
| Brighton & Hove | Sharon | Martin |
| East Sussex | Douglas | Sinclair |
| East Sussex | Helena | Wickens |
| East Sussex | Louise | Carter |
| Hampshire & IOW | Amanda | Meadows |
| Hampshire & IOW | Sophie | Butt |
| Kent | Alison | Watling |
| Kent | Elise | McQueen |
| Medway | Rebecca | Cooper |
| Milton Keynes | Sophie | Marshall |
| Oxfordshire | Tan | Lea |
| Portsmouth | Kate | Soutter |
| Reading | Fiona | Betts |
| Slough | Sandra | Davies |
| Southampton | Stuart | Webb |
| West Berkshire | Nicola | Robertson |
| West Sussex | Linda | Steele |
| West Sussex | Sophie | Carter |
| Windsor & Maidenhead | Shungu | Chigocha |

**Apologies:**

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| Wokingham | Rachel | Oakley |
| Surrey | Patricia | Denney |
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| 1. **Introductions & Apologies** |
| Sophie Butt (Chair) opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves for the benefit of new members to the meeting. |
| **2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting** |
| The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.  Actions from a previous meeting were submitted from Douglas. These will be circulated at the end of the meeting. All actions are now closed.  **Action**: Circulate the actions |
| 1. **Care Review Discussion** |
| The group decided on the Care Review as a topic of discussion at the previous meeting. Sophie Butt (Chair) led the discussion.  Sharon Martin (Brighton & Hove) commented that she is interested in the recommendation by the National Panel regarding the role of experts with regards to conference chairs and IROs. The interest lies with how it fits with the parallel emphasis on utilising services regarding practice, learning and development noting that it felt at odds with previous messages around children’s needs and safeguarding.  Sandra Davies (Slough) commented that the reviews came out with a big bang but has gone very quiet where the government is reviewing the documentation. There were lots of conversations around the services being removed which asks the question, how do we keep the service moving forward when we don’t know what the service will look like?  The chair asked if other local authorities were experiencing issues recruiting and retaining staff in IRO roles? This led to an explorative discussion where it was noted by a few authorities that recruitment and retention is an issue. Shungu Chigocha (Windsor & Maidenhead) commented that in there is a lack of permanent staff and recruiting into these roles is a challenge. Due to the current state, people are looking at the locum roles as they are worried about their jobs  Sophie Butt (Chair) stated that both HCC and IOW are experiencing issues retaining IROs and are looking at the possibility of separating the roles and recruiting into them. IROs have reportedly been treated in a less favourable way by other colleagues. This was investigated but there was nothing of importance to note, it could just be a vulnerability where they go into meetings and think that colleagues have read the review and believe they are no longer important.  Sharon Martin (Brighton & Hove) suggested the use of Family Safeguarding Hubs with the emphasis on the role on the community. With a rise in number of children on CP plans the question is how do we move closer to developing a strategic response to public health concerns as opposed to social care trying to address CP concerns? |
| 1. **Feedback from CP Chairs Sub-group** |
| Sharon Martin (Brighton & Hove) presented the feedback from the CP Chair Sub-group.  In the last meeting there were discussions about Child Protection Conference trends with regards to the number of children on a plan. Performance is variable across the South-East.  Anti-racism remains a standing item on the agenda. There was a conversation around quality assurance and audit processes and a general recognition that some of the processes do not address anti-racism issues, this need to be built into audit processes and embedded within the team meetings.  Language barriers and the use of translators was discussed. Sharon Martin noted that translators are used more than translations in meetings, but budget pressures are a big factor in this. Brighton & Hove have used Google Translate but have found it does not translate word for word. Most have agreed that translators were used when required, but this is not in place routinely.  There is a keenness to keep recruitment and participation of children and families as a standing item on the agenda.  Reframe and other aspects such as Lived Experience includes family advocacy and peer mentoring to offer support to parents that are going through the process. There have been discussions around how they can help and how they can be reimbursed. Certainly, in most conferences, professionals outweigh families, we would like to see the number of family members outweighing the professionals. This way we would not rely on professionals. This will continue to be discussed in meetings.  Sophie Butt (Chair) suggested this would be something good to share in the next meeting or the next one.  **Action**: Sophie Butt to touch base with Sharon Martin regarding professionals and families in meetings.  The Chair asked about the mode of meetings and the availability of partners at face-to-face meetings, adding that most meetings are being held virtually in Hampshire and the IOW. Kogie Perumall (Bracknell) commented that there needs to be a consistent process for partners. If we are saying professionals can attend virtually, are we insisting that partners share their reports with the Chair and families in advance?  Sharon Martin (Brighton & Hove) commented that parents are not receiving the reports. The default position at Brighton & Hove has been adapted whereby all are expected to attend in person but participants can request a link to attend virtually. This entails families to travel and with the cost of living, it is not always as easy as it was before.  Break for 10 mins |
| 1. **Quality Assurance & Performance – SESLIP SE Benchmarking for Q3** |
| The Chair led the discussion around Quality Assurance and Performance.  The group discussed the different tools that are being used to engage young people in meetings. Sandra Davies (Slough) spoke about My Review, My Views which is an online tool for children to use if they did not want to give their views personally. The feedback can be used to identify issues the children are raising. It has been in place for a few years so is embedded.  Fiona Betts commented that Reading have not progressed this much further and are trialling a Starting Point mentoring programme for their care leaver groups which will link in with other agencies.  The Chair asked if other Local Authorities are still using Mind of My Own or has this been superseded by other technology? Tan Lea has stated that Slough are using it but have looked at Voice of a Child as an alternative as MOMO is not meeting their needs.  Douglas Sinclair said that East Sussex have purchased the newer version of MOMO which is a much more improved app. They have also used Microsoft Forms to develop consultation forms for parents which includes the ability to put a QR code in emails. So far, they have received a ‘trickle’ of parents using it. Once they have had a little more time with it, Douglas is willing to share any benefits from using it.  The Chair asked how many of the local authorities have Children in Care Councils where members include care experienced children/young people, and if there are standalone children in care councils that identify and gather the young people to form part of the group? A show of virtual hands showed that more than 50% of LAs confirm that they have.  It emerged that pre covid, local authorities found it easier to engage the children. The role must be task and outcome focused for the children to have something to invest in which requires resources to deliver on the promises. This requires funding.  Douglas Sinclair (West Sussex) commented that it as a large authority, it takes a huge effort to pick up the children which is an ongoing issue. The team is not huge but are very well engaged in supporting the young children. There is a panel including young people from our Care Leaver cohort that are used in interviews. We have found this to be insightful especially in cases of neglect where there are older teens in the family.  Sharon Martin commented that young people were included in the panel in a recent recruitment round for IROs. The young people ask some good questions, and emotional support was offered outside of hours as the questions could trigger trauma. |
| 1. **Topics for discussion – Multi Agency Audits** |
| Multi Agency Audits was suggested as a topic of discussion in the previous QA Leads meeting. There were no submissions requested for this as it was a topic of discussions.  The Chair asked how many local authorities are involved with this via LSCPs and if there is anything that has worked well?  Amanda Meadows (Hampshire & IOW) commented that Hampshire had a JTAI in 2016 and going through it has cemented the process for partner working. Hampshire do JTAI and other agency audits which has helped focus the mind on obtaining responses. In terms of the audit itself, most of the agencies find it useful in terms of understanding the work of other agencies so they can see the benefit of the audits. Everyone understood the follow up process which has helped us understand why we do things in a certain way. It put us in a good position ever since.  Fiona Betts (Reading) reported that the local authority is not quite at the point that they can say what works and what does not. There is lots of work for Front Door and Exploitation audits. Reading is trying to create a multi-agency programme that rolls on its own, but the challenge is getting the three agencies to align. There is a single audit for exploitation and slightly different tools for front door and other agencies.  Douglas Sinclair (East Sussex) commented that their audit programme is embedded. The partnership audit is run in two sections, the case file audit and a self-assessment which is used to identify gaps or vulnerabilities as well as what we do well. This is completed by a mix of practitioners from all agencies as well as representatives from the QA Subgroup. Once issues are identified, we bring in the relevant teams to form discussions. It is a reflective learning exercise.  Sandra Davies (Slough) commented that they have taken a slightly different approach based around the JTAI. We allocate it out to all agencies to complete from their own perspectives then complete a presentation that identifies whether outcomes were met and areas of improvement and success. There is a workshop style meeting that then gets fed back to the safeguarding summit in October. We are only on our second wave. It’s quite long so we only do four cycles a year to get the momentum going and do six cases at a time.  Douglas Sinclair (East Sussex) asked if other authorities have completed an appreciative audit where you look at something that went well?  The Chair (Hampshire & IOW) explained that they have tried to implement this in in both authorities but had to work hard to collectively identify cases where agencies felt they did well in their service.  Helena Wickens (East Sussex) asked what method was used for the Appreciative enquiry?  The Chair explained that staff were used from the positive practice group and other agencies in a local learning exercise where agencies had to put forward a case that they wanted to highlight what they did well.  Amanda Meadows commented that at the back of the JTAI there are question from Ofsted that can be used for the core. It is a joint effort to examine multi-agency collaborative working for the benefit of the children. In our experience not all partners treat Ofsted Inspections with the same level of urgency in our experience. |
| 1. **Any other Business and Information Sharing** |
| Any suggestions of items for discussion for the next agenda  Kogie Perumall suggested the response to the Josh Macalister review and looking at the various models of conferences (virtual/face to face/hybrid).  Douglas Sinclair suggested return home interview timeliness/completion. As there is no national data, how are other local authorities managing the return home interview data.  Shungu Chigocha suggested UASC placement and management pressures  The Chair asked attendees if they would like the SESLIP QA Sub Group meetings to remain virtual or change to face to face meetings. The consensus is to continue with virtual meetings. This can be reviewed in the next calendar year.  Meeting ended at 16:36 |