



S.E.19 SEND Operational Managers Group
16th March 2023
12:00 to 13:30
Via Teams

Name	Local Authority
Attendees	
Sue Kedar	
Liz Bone	Education and Inclusion Service Manager, Surrey
Velda Woodruff	Hampshire
Sharon Willis	SEN Service Manager, Portsmouth City Council
Lara Jordan	Southampton
Katherine Everitt	Service manager, NE Surrey
Catherine Clarke	Operations Manager, Oxfordshire
Rachel Simpson	SEND, Southampton
Sarah Clarke	NNPCF
Nicholas King	SE19 Associate Consultant
Maria Halford	EHC Manager for Kent
Jamie Conran	Head of SEND, Wokingham Borough Council
Sophie Dann	Kent
Karen Spencer (Chair)	West Sussex
Sheelagh Sullivan	SE19 Region SEND Network Co-ordinator
Nicola Gale (on behalf of Becky Smith)	SE19 Regional SEND Support

Apologies: David Griffiths, Maggie Buckley

Notes of meeting

1. Notes from last meeting and matters arising

Action: Data request for tribunals and EOTAS appeals. Becky to send request to group to complete. To be continued and data request to be recirculated to the group. Data request shared with group along with agenda and notes of the previous meeting. Group to complete and return to rebecca.smith@sdsa.net. Some replies received but not enough to share.

Action: Group to complete and return data request for tribunals and EOTAS appeals to rebecca.smith@sdsa.net by Friday 5th May in order to be shared at next meeting.

Action: Luke to share current contacts that attend SEND Workshops with the group to ensure the right people are being invited. Contacts to be shared with the notes of the meeting to ensure the correct people are invited.

Action: Luke to share latest report with the group – only authorities that have engaged in the benchmarking survey can view/have access the reports. Report will be shared with the notes of the meeting. Please note, the report contains unpublished data so must not be shared with any contacts outside of the SE local authorities or with members of the public.

Reports are available via the SESLIP website- if anyone needs a login to view the benchmarking reports they can request one via csdatabenchmarking@eastsussex.gov.uk

Action: Group to let Karen know if interested in joining SE19 Inter- Authority Placement working group.

Action: Karen to organise separate meeting for SE19 Inter- Authority Placement working group including David Griffiths, Catherine Clarke, Hayley from Buckinghamshire

Action: Sheelagh to talk to Sue and Adeline re health commissioning and therapies and ask Lorraine if she can include this in future agenda item for when she joins. Lorraine Mulroney will join to present about implications of the improvement plans therapies at next regional forum for everyone interested and involved at the end of April. Information and link to join is to follow. Information for Health assessment would be useful about recommended therapies and to help with local area inspections. Andre Imich to attend the bigger SE19 forum in June and this may help with providing more information about therapies.

Action: Group to continue to send any EOTAS tribunal judgements to Sheelagh if you are happy for them to be passed to DfE - request from Andre Imich. Please send if you are concerned with any tribunals to feed up to Andre to provide evidence (these can be anonymised) when discussing with DfE and tribunal service. Sheelagh to redact names on Oxfordshire's tribunals

Action: EOTAS webinar recording and notes to be shared with the group. The webinar recording has been shared however, please let Sheelagh know if you did not receive these.

Action: LGO responses to be included as a future agenda item. LGO responses included as a standing item in upcoming meeting agendas.

2. Updating reviewing guidance for out of authority placements update

Link included below from report where Ombudsman tells Suffolk County Council to improve support for children who can't go to school; <https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2023/mar/ombudsman-tells-suffolk-county-council-to-improve-support-for-children-who-can-t-go-to-school>

3. Annual Reviews:

Tacking the backlog – The current SE19 situation
Sharing of ideas to reduce backlogs
Meeting transfer review deadlines
Quality assuring annual reviews in settings

Group shared their experiences on Annual Reviews;

- To be measured on 20 weeks' time scales.
- Group acknowledged the level of challenge this presents
- Request for LA to give the scores on the doors with updates from the 15th Feb deadline
- The group were asked how many EHCPs have been finalised.
- Expect to get request for data collection on numbers for annual reviews.
- Various attendees shared some information on current situation
- Temporary monitoring and review teams hired by some LAs. Funded to reduce backlog but only temp measure.

- Backlogs seem inevitable –an increase in EHC assessment, in turn leads to number of plans and Annual reviews needed
- Capacity, recruitment and retention are all barriers to meeting timescales and deadlines.
- One colleague explained settings/schools are not providing paperwork regularly. Also, refresher training with SENCOs to support the quality of the annual reviews, completing, and returning paperwork in a timely way to ensure a person centred approach.
- Identify the LAs whose data is showing positive results, look at key features, and then share good practice.
- Annual Reviews are not just a bolt on but part of the wrap around processes.
- Challenges are different in terms of process depending on the size of the local authority. Easier to make changes in a smaller authority.
- Issues with IT systems leading to need to use manual spreadsheets
- The group shared which IT systems used within their LA. So far Liquid Logic is the most popular (links to social care so useful). Capita One and Synergy are next (can link to admissions etc.).
 - Liquid Logic – Surrey, Oxfordshire, East Sussex
 - Capita ONE – Southampton,
 - Synergy – Portsmouth, Kent

Action: Group to share good practice around QA training, share slides and ways of overcoming issues with IT processes.

4. Standing items:

LGO responses

- Children out of school
- Section 19 duty was highlighted, where action has been taken but deemed not enough
- AP provision.
- Attendance at school

Tribunal feedback, including feedback from the ‘user group’

Jamie Conran provided an update on feedback from the Tribunal ‘User Group’

- 13, 500 appeals last year
- 15,000 appeals are expect next year
- 2017 they only received 5000 appeals
- All types of appeals, not just Section I. They have over 100 officers to meet new demand. Trying to recruit more. Encouraging paper hearings. Registering new appeals within 3 days. Receiving 1000 emails per day. If it is truly an urgent then make it very clear.
- Target concluding cases in 22 weeks – meeting 75% of these.
- Video hearing are continuing - F2F hearings are happening in London – these can be hybrid. Standard appeals are often 50 weeks away, Phase transfer appeals are a 10-week timetable (around name and type). April to June to ensure families know where children will go in September. Expediting hearings if children are out of schools. Is this a problem in other areas?
- Recording appeal hearings to help with further appeals.
- Timetable 14-16 weeks appeals can be brought forward if the
- JADARs – Section I – school placements – decision makers will need to attend.
- Case reviews for hearings around more complex issues.
- New form to replace the attendance form.

- Witnesses can only be people who have been involved in reporting on the child and been part of the process.

Suggested to share information with parent/carer forum to dispel any myths.

Recruitment and retention issues

- Continues to be an issues
- Teams are feeling under pressure
- EP service unable to provide information in time
- Complaint directed to SEND teams
- LGO complaints
- All creates more work
- Commissioning private EP assessment to help with backlog – not ideal
- East of England – working on virtual EP assessments
- Attracting locums for EP to form a group to work with more closely
- Difficult to recruit/commission –lack of capacity in private sector

Group suggested completing an audit per LA around team capacity and recruitment and retention.

5. 'What keeps you awake at night' – a chance to use the collective wisdom advice of colleagues around SEN practice

The group discussed challenges around EP assessments with EP service not willing to respond to complaint. Suggestion around joint responses and accountability.

6. AOB

- Suggestions for future meetings
 - The group requested that the Operational Group does not take place in the same week as the Strategic Leads meetings. Others from the service could be invited.
 - Debrief on age phase transfer and deadlines – 15th Feb and May 21st deadline
 - Benchmarking document discussion
 - Share update at next meeting for the out of authority placements

Action: Benchmarking document to be circulated with the notes of the meetings and included in future agenda.

7. Evaluation form

Group to share their feedback on meeting via the following link;
<https://forms.gle/kdw6XeqDxGcXvvqX6>

Date of next meeting: Thursday 11th May 2023, 12-1:30pm

All to take place on Thursday 12-1:30pm

11th May

6th July

Summary of actions

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