

## SESLIP Regional Improvement Plan 2023-24

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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
- 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 2022/2023 revealed the following issues of concern:

**Table 1: Issues identified by two or more triad Peer Challenges**

	<b>Summary of issue - mentioned by two or more Triads</b>	<b>What we are currently doing</b>	<b>Budget allocated April 2023</b>
1.	Placement commissioning and sufficiency	A long running commissioning project for children with complex needs has reached procurement stage, with Kent, Southampton and West Sussex piloting.	Establishment of commissioners' network £10,000

2.	Health Service: better and closer partnership working with health colleagues	Developing links via Dr Gavin Lockhart of NHSE/SE	
3.	CAMHS: improve the resourcing and performance of CAMHS across the region	No regional activity	Establishment of commissioners' network £10,000
4.	Quality Assurance: beyond counting the number of SW interventions, how can we assure the quality of SW	QA network	QA Network: £12,000
5.	Demand: anticipating, risk assessing and managing demands on our services	No regional activity	
6.	Workforce stability: Recruitment, retention and development	MoC; Take your place	MoC: £10,000 TYP: £50,000

**Table 2: Issues identified by one triad peer challenge**

	<b>Summary of issue - mentioned by one triad</b>	<b>What we are currently doing</b>	<b>Budget allocated June 2022</b>
1.	Care leavers		
2.	Responding to Care Review – integrating EH and CIN		Early help network - £10,000
3.	Complex mental health needs		
4.	Corporate parenting		
5.	Kinship care	Separating this topic from the Adoption and Special Guardianship Leadership Board	New Kinship care network - £10,000
6.	Bolder ambition		
7.	Improving the accuracy of partnership referrals		
8.	Social prescribing		
9.	System ownership		
10.	Working with very low income		Early Help network - £10,000
11.	Responding to increases in youth violence		
12.	Managing the fall of school rolls and pressure to close schools		

- 1.6. We are planning to support 12 practice networks and five projects
- 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, see <https://www.seslip.co.uk/download-file/1373>



- 1.8. Following consultation with DCSs across the region, four broad priorities for 2023-2024 have been identified:
- collaborative and supportive networking arrangements
  - collaborative commissioning (with each other and health; alongside collaborative provision)
  - SEND
  - workforce – including developing anti-racist practices

## 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. 17 proposed workstreams for this improvement plan

**Table 3: 17 Workstreams for South East Sector Led Improvement in 2023-24**

Workstreams 2023-24	Outputs
<p><b>Practice Networks (12):</b> We will support 12 regional practice networks: AD Education; AD Safeguarding; Commissioners; Data Benchmarking; Early Help; Fostering; Kinship Care; Lead Members; Principal Social Workers; Quality Assurance; Regional Adoption Leadership Board; SEND – SE19</p> <p>The work programme of each 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.</p> <p>Each of the groups will routinely</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• celebrate and support innovative approaches to service delivery</li> <li>• identify ways in which they can support fellow members to improve</li> <li>• suggest how collective action can help address systemic issues within the region</li> <li>• recognise positive and negative variance in performance, and react accordingly to publicise the positive and tackle the negative</li> <li>• ensure that authorities who are facing more challenges have access to support from others in the region and, where appropriate, national support</li> </ul>	
<p><b>1. AD Education Network</b></p> <p>An active regional network that offers problem-solving approaches, develops shared positions, identifies and escalates issues of risk, facilitates dialogue with the regional education system, and monitors</p>	<p>Briefing and case studies for lead members about the demographic decline and pressures on school sustainability</p> <p>Establish regional discussion programme with DfE Regional Director and with Ofsted South-east (min twice a year)</p>



Workstreams 2023-24	Outputs
<p>data on vulnerable children and young people</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Deb Austin (Brighton and Hove)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Chris Owen (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Ensure that LA challenges in response to the SEND and AP Improvement Plan are raised and coordinated across education</p> <p>Support responses to challenges faced in the early years sector and safeguarding in schools at local level</p>
<p><b>2. AD Safeguarding Network</b></p> <p>To deliver a community of practice for ADs Safeguarding that helps to improve services and provides collaborative support.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Mark Evans (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To complete an independent review of the network and implement its recommendations</p> <p>To support ADs in implementing the changes arising from the Care Review</p> <p>To provide induction to SESLIP for all new ADs (regardless of tenure)</p> <p>To complete tasks and projects as directed by the regional DCS group</p>
<p><b>3. Commissioners' Network</b></p> <p>To research and establish a commissioners' network</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Lucy Butler (West Sussex)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Chris Baird (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To produce a "state of the region" report</p> <p>To identify potential partnership commissioning or procurement projects involving one or more local authorities and one or more health organisations</p>
<p><b>4. Data Benchmarking Network</b></p> <p>To collect and publish a range of data benchmarking reports.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Luke Ede (East Sussex)</b></p>	<p>Quarterly production of the national RIIA dataset</p> <p>Quarterly production of benchmarking data for children's social care, early help, education, SEND, adoption and special guardianship</p> <p>Annual production of peer challenge 55 dataset profiles; CSC workforce benchmarks</p> <p>Support for the national Data to Insight project</p>
<p><b>5. Early Help</b></p> <p>To develop this network through regular meetings, sharing of practice and the development of collaborative projects</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Grainne Siggins (Bracknell Forest)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To publish an Early Help "state of the region" report covering areas of good practice and key concerns based on data analysis</p> <p>To share national messages, agree responses to consultations and make representations on Early Help</p> <p>To share practice that brings together CIN and Early Help in response to <i>Stable homes built on love</i></p> <p>To commission projects that provide benefits and understanding across the region</p>
<p><b>6. Fostering Network</b></p>	<p>To meet quarterly to:</p>



Workstreams 2023-24	Outputs
<p>To enable sharing and improvement of fostering practice.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Sarah Daly (Portsmouth)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Act as a forum for LAs to share good practice, and collaboratively problem solve</p> <p>Enable fostering leads to identify regional issues which require escalation</p> <p>To share practice regarding LA responses/implementation of <i>Stable homes built on love</i> (regional care cooperatives, extension of staying put arrangements).</p> <p>Undertake mystery shopping of 19 LAs and the most used IFAs to improve recruitment and retention of foster carers.</p> <p>Oversee Mockingbird delivery through the region</p>
<p><b>7. Kinship Care</b></p> <p>To identify the founder members of this new network and institute regular meetings</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To draft and publish a Kinship Care "state of the region" report covering areas of good practice and key concerns based on data analysis</p> <p>To identify regional projects relating to kinship care which respond to and shape national policy consultations in this area</p> <p>To respond to any funding which may be made available.</p>
<p><b>8. Lead Members Network</b></p> <p>To provide support and challenge opportunities for Lead Members so that they meet their statutory responsibilities in the most sustainable and impactful ways.</p> <p><b>Lead Member Sponsor: Cllr Jacque Russell (West Sussex)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Deborah Glassbrook (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To provide induction for new Lead Members</p> <p>To offer one to one support</p> <p>To deliver four themed workshops based on outcomes from Triad events</p> <p>To review and further develop self-assessment documents</p>
<p><b>9. Principal Social Workers (PSWs)</b></p> <p>To develop a regional network to act as a community of practice</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Lara Patel (Reading)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Mark Evans (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Establish a region wide network and develop terms of reference</p> <p>Support PSWs to have an influence in the development of the regional sector led programme</p> <p>Develop collaborative approaches to shared issues and challenges to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort</p> <p>Develop peer support for PSWs to encourage region wide collaboration and resilience</p>
<p><b>10. Quality Assurance Network</b></p>	<p>Support the improvement of the effectiveness of existing quality assurance activities</p>



Workstreams 2023-24	Outputs
<p>We will continue to support and hold regular meetings of the Regional Quality Assurance Network. Where requested from the group we will deliver mutual quality assurance activity.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Sophie Butt (Isle of Wight on behalf of Stuart Ashley)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Amanda Meadows (Hampshire and Isle of Wight)</b></p>	<p>Maintain the library of shared Quality Assurance Tools. Further the shared understanding of good practice, through network meetings, sharing practice standards</p> <p>Develop opportunities for mutual external audit moderation and challenge</p> <p>Support the CP chairs network subgroup with the aim of enhancing the contribution of CP chairs to quality assurance</p>
<p><b>11. Regional Adoption Leadership Board</b></p> <p>To relaunch the board with a sole focus on adoption To hold regular meetings and ensure a route at a regional level between strategic leaders in Children's and the RAAs and VAAs that operate in our region.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Rebecca Eligon (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Maintain regular meetings of the Adoption Leadership Board</p> <p>Align practice in process and support in securing permanency arrangements</p> <p>Embed S.E. RAA arrangements in adopting a consistent approach to practice</p> <p>Narrow the gap in children waiting and available carers through the analysis of data</p>
<p><b>12. SEND 19 Programme</b></p> <p>To hold regular meetings of the SEND 19 Network, its sub-groups, including joint meetings with AD Education network, focused on supporting and 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.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: John MacIlwraith (Buckinghamshire)</b></p> <p><b>Programme Manager: Sheelagh Sullivan (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Support the delivery of the SEND Improvement Plan through: Arranging monthly bi-monthly multi-agency SEND forums to share practice and provide national updates/information</p> <p>Ensuring the refinement and delivery of SE19 SEND Network groups, including development /review of regional agreements and MOUs associated with SEND</p> <p>Liaising with key partners including DfE Advisors, NHSE, CDC, and NDTi</p> <p>Developing and delivering a SEND peer support mechanism around 'constructive/courageous conversations'</p>
<b>Projects</b>	
<p><b>13. DCS and Finance Director Seminars</b></p> <p>To provide opportunities for Corporate Finance Directors and DCSs to explore barriers and solutions to financial challenges within Children's Services.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Deborah Glassbrook (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To deliver four themed Corporate FD/DCS seminars during 2023</p> <p>To develop sets of information/tools</p> <p>To establish a FD regional network</p> <p>To develop a SESLIP FD's website page</p>



Workstreams 2023-24	Outputs
<p><b>14. DCS annual self-assessment and peer challenge</b></p> <p>To plan and hold 6 peer challenge events in 2023-2024</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Richard Tyndall (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>To support all 19 authorities in the production and assurance of a comprehensive self-assessment</p> <p>To organise 6 triad/quartet peer challenge events to validate each self-assessment</p> <p>To produce a prioritised list of regional activity for future regional improvement planning</p>
<p><b>15. Small package SLI support</b></p> <p>Hampshire will broker requests for small package SLI support from around the region.</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Alison Smailes (Hampshire on behalf of Stuart Ashley)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Claire Woodcock (Hampshire)</b></p>	<p>The DfE has renewed the funding for small packages of SLI support. There will be a minimum of four packages of support this year, none exceeding 39 days input, for peer reviews, diagnostic work, case audits or other similar improvement work.</p> <p>The scope and size of each package will be the subject of discussion and agreement between the target local authority and Hampshire's programme manager.</p>
<p><b>16. Take Your Place – our future leaders' programme</b></p> <p>Support the region to develop future leaders and to improve succession planning</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Alison Jeffery (East Sussex)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Mark Evans (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Use learning and insights from 2022 programme to develop specification for this year's programme</p> <p>Work in partnership with the Staff College to design the 2023/4 programme</p> <p>Market and recruit to the 2023 Take Your Place Programme</p> <p>Deliver and evaluate the 2023 programme</p>
<p><b>17. Workforce Matters – MoC</b></p> <p>Work with authorities across the region to address the challenges in recruiting and retaining a high-quality children's social care workforce</p> <p><b>DCS Sponsor: Mac Heath (Milton Keynes)</b></p> <p><b>Project Manager: Mark Evans (SESLIP)</b></p>	<p>Support and maintain the regional MoC</p> <p>Complete and share the learnings for the #thebiglisten (joint strategic needs analysis completed in partnership with the London Region)</p> <p>Develop a regional evidence informed workforce strategy</p> <p>Support authorities in implementing the workforce changes arising from the Care Review</p>





## 4. Budget

**Table 4: South East Sector Led Improvement Budget 2023-24**

Income	22-23 year end	23-24 budget	23-24 year to date	Notes
Carry forward – earmarked for SEND	0	44,123	44,123	Earmarked see line 22
Carry forward from previous year	120,297	107,122	107,122	Unrestricted see line 23
DfE core funding – data	80,000	80,000	80,000	
DfE core funding – peer challenge	60,800	60,800	60,800	
DfE core funding – small package SLI support	94,000	94,000	94,000	
DfE SEND support	114,584	114,584	114,584	
SE subs	162,500	162,500	162,500	Assumes everyone pays
Data only subs	2,250	2,250	2,250	Somerset and Swindon
<b>Total In</b>	<b>634,431</b>	<b>665,379</b>	<b>665,379</b>	

Plan Ref 23/24	Expenditure	22-23 year end	23-24 budget	23-24 year to date	Notes
1	AD Education	15,000	15,000	0	
2	AD Safeguarding	15,000	15,000	0	
3	Commissioners	0	10,000	0	
4	Data Benchmarking	80,000	80,000	0	Paid to ESCC
5	Early Help	8,750	10,000	0	
6	Fostering	8,975	10,000	0	
7	Kinship Care	5,792	10,000	0	
8	Lead Members	14,768	15,000	0	
9	Principal Social Workers	0	10,000	0	
10	Quality Assurance	12,000	12,000	0	Paid to HCC
11	Regional Adoption Leadership Board	9,250	10,000	0	
12	SEND – SE19	70,461	158,707	0	Incl earmarked carry forward
13	DCS and Finance Director seminars	1,875	7,500	0	
14	Self-assessment and peer challenge	13,293	30,000	0	
15	Small package SLI support	94,000	94,000	0	
16	Take Your Place	28,320	50,000	0	Subscription to Staff College
17	Workforce Matters, MoC	21,747	10,000	0	
-	New self-funded projects	0	68,672	0	
-	Children Missing Education	10,080	0	0	Closed
-	South East Learning Day March 2023	6,305	0	0	Closed
18	ESCC Overhead	10,000	10,000	0	
19	Programme Management	23,908	24,000	0	
20	SE ADCS Rooms	9,812	12,500	0	
21	Website and rebrand	23,850	3,000	0	
22	SEND – SE 19 carry forward	44,123	0	0	
23	Unrestricted carry forward	107,122	0	0	
	<b>Total Out</b>	<b>634,431</b>	<b>665,379</b>	<b>0</b>	
	<b>Total In</b>	<b>634,431</b>	<b>665,379</b>	<b>0</b>	

## 5. South East Sector Led Improvement Programme

- 5.1. The Regional Innovation and 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](http://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); Sarah Hammond (DCS, Kent); Stuart Ashley (DCS, Hampshire and Isle of Wight); Becky Shaw (Chief Executive, East and West Sussex) and





Michael Bracey (Chief Executive, Milton Keynes); Cllr Jacquie Russell (Lead Member, West Sussex); and the Improvement Advisers from the LGA (Mona Sehgal and William Brooks; Children's Improvement Adviser, Alison Michalska); David Myers, DfE Regional Improvement Adviser

- 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

Approved by the SESLIP Steering Group  
22 June 2023