**SESLIP Quality Assurance Leads Meeting**

**Wednesday 27 March, (2pm – 4pm)**

**Attendees:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hampshire  | Sophie  | Butt  |
| Brighton & Hove | Sharon  | Martin |
| East Sussex | Douglas | Sinclair |
| Kent | Kevin | Kasaven |
| Kent | Leemya | McKeown |
| Milton Keynes | Martin | Clement |
| Reading | Otilia | Broadhurst |
| West Sussex | Beverly | Berry |
| Windsor & Maidenhead | Shungu | Chigocha |
| Surrey | Thomas | Stevenson |
| Oxfordshire | Senay  | Nidai |
| Hampshire | Kimesha | Osbourne |

**Apologies:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Brighton & Hove | Tina  | James |
| Buckinghamshire | Aman | Sekhon-Gill |
| East Sussex County Council | Helena | Wickens |
| Hampshire County Council | Amanda  | Meadows |
| Kent County Council | Debee | Beale |
| Medway Council | Rebecca  | Cooper |
| Milton Keynes | Sophie  | Marshall |
| Southampton | Stuart | Webb |
| Surrey County Council | Patricia | Denney |
| Surrey County Council | Linde | Webber |
| West Sussex | Laura  | Mallinson |
| Wokingham | Sara | James |

|  |
| --- |
| **1. Introductions & Apologies** |
| Sophie Butt (Chair) opened the meeting and introduced Kevin Kasaven and Leemya McKeown from Kent County Council to the group. This will be the final SESLIP QA Leads meeting chaired by Hampshire, as the responsibility is being handed over to Kent County Council with Kevin as Chair. |
| **2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting** |
| The minutes were agreed. There were no actions outstanding. |
| 1. **Quality Assurance** – Partner input in strategy discussions / Conversion rate of Section 47s to ICPC
 |
| A theme developed in the previous meeting (11 December 2023) around partner input in strategy discussions. The Chair suspects this is because it appears to be a current theme for Ofsted Inspectors. During the Isle of Wight ILACS Inspection in October/ November 2023, Inspectors were keen to look at partner input in strategy discussions within the MASH environment and for those that take place for cases that are already open to children’s social care. After that meeting, the SESLIP admin had circulated a short questionnaire with a few questions to complete prior to today’s meeting. Martin Clement provided an overview for Milton Keynes City Council.The Police are based within MASH and attend strategy discussions regularly. Health partners send reports and attend occasionally. There is often a lack of information submitted from Health partners.There is some inconsistency with regards to partner attendance out of office hours. The Police are generally always in attendance, but Health partner attendance varies. Where there are strategy discussions on open cases, both police and health partners contribute, there is never a direct challenge to requesting information. The Police do not always attend in person for strategy discussions, especially uniformed officers. It can be a challenge to get contributions from the MET Police. How other professionals are brought in is a matter of course and is usually as and when required. There are clear lines of communication with internal Health and TVP colleagues. Conversion Rate of Section 47s (S47s) to ICPC – 74% of S47s do not require an ICPC. Many of the S47s are for missing children or cases where the LA have been able to locate safety for children very quickly, therefore there is no need for the Conference.Leemya McKeown provided an overview for Kent County Council.Kent County Council (KCC) had a focused visit on the Front Door at the end of January 2024. Leemya commented that she has also noticed that Inspectors were keen to look at partner input in strategy discussion and child protection conferences. Much of the feedback received was around strategy discussions. Kent is a large authority, so Inspectors looked to understand the practices in different parts across the County. Police attendance at strategy discussions can depend on staffing, area, and how the police are organised. Police in East Kent were less responsive than central, north, and west Police. There have been challenges with Health partners in terms of having the most relevant representative for both MASH and district teams.Kevin Kasaven noted in the meeting chat that although the health representatives have access to databases across primary care, they are unable to represent the views of the specific health agency and contribute towards the analysis. In terms of attendance in office hours and out of office hours, there are challenges around Health colleagues’ ability to contribute effectively out of office hours. It is generally recognised that Kent has a good relationship with the Police especially regarding strategy discussions on open cases. Tom Stevenson provided an overview for Surrey County Council. Surrey has a MASH team by another name - Children’s Single Point of Access ‘C SPA’. Strategy discussions take place in the individual service areas. There is a difference between day services and EDT in that where possible EDT will transfer the strategy discussion to the service area the next day. Feedback from the SEND inspection was that most strategy discussions do not have the expected membership. Usually, discussions in the MASH environment are between Social Care, the Police and sometimes Health. It is rare that Surrey would bring in education. There is a much fuller discussion with regards to open cases. The authority has a solid partnership with Health and Police colleagues, so there is a greater ability to get people into a room. Following the SEND and JTAI Inspections, Surrey has been expanding the professionals at the table rather than it being just two agencies. By bringing in other partners particularly schools, there is a wider view of the issues for the child.Surrey has monthly conversations around the conversion rate of S47s to ICPCs. Around 30% of S47s go to ICPC and 70% does not result in a formal child protection process. Martin Clement (Milton Keynes) asked how Surrey manage the high-risk missing children cohort as he is interested in the age group of the children that go through the S47 process but do not result in a conference. Tom noted that in terms of exploitation and contextual harm in the missing cohort, Surrey are going through consultation around having a designated response to recognise where there is harm outside the home. This will look like a contextual child protection process that still uses S47s but would not have the characteristics of a traditional child protection conference. In terms of the numbers, there is no pattern that suggests Surrey is taking those over 12-year-old into conference. Due to the safeguarding model, there is a reduction across all cohorts in terms of who goes into the CP process. Around 200-300 children have been taken off plans in the last nine months.Kevin Kasaven noted that there was a similar issue in Kent noting that they found that cases that did not result in a conference were less likely to be re-referred later. The Chair noted that Hampshire have looked at this in the MASH. Attendance differs where cases are open. The Police and Health partners are included in strategy discussions. Most are held virtually. If the discussion is out of hours, we are less likely to have Health representation as they do not operate after 5pm, but Police will be in attendance. Due to the geographic size of the authority, there is no partner attendance for discussions on open cases in district offices at short notice, this continues to be a focus. Feedback from Inspectors following the ILACS on the Isle of Wight was that Inspectors wanted to see increased partner attendance in strategy discussions and the decision-making process. The Chair commented that it appears like all authorities are experiencing similar things in terms of attendance at strategy discussions. Shungu Chigocha (Windsor & Maidenhead) agreed noting that non-attendance of partners is a gap in the process across the local authorities. Sophie Butt (Chair) provided an overview from Hampshire County Council. There is still work to do around the discussions for open cases that take place within the district. Facilitating face to face discussions with all key partners is a challenge due to availability of partners in timescales. Hampshire has good engagement of relevant partners in MASH environment. Hampshire have recently moved to a new reporting system and are still data cleansing, so the data for the conversion rate of S47s to ICPC was taken from the Q3 2023/24 SE Benchmarking report. 69% of CP Conferences held within 15 days of the Section 47 led to a conference. Otilia Broadhurst (Reading) will resubmit their submission as she left out the question regarding the conversion rate of S47s to ICPCs.**Action: Otilia Broadhurst will resubmit the Reading submission to include data for the conversion rate of Section 47s to ICPCs.**The Chair summarised that it is it fair to say that collectively, authorities are seeing similar things arising in terms of the ability to consistently engage at least the core statutory partners, certainly out of hours, and particularly if it’s discussed within MASH verses a case that is already open. The inclusion of other agencies in discussions appears to be and area for development for all authorities in relation to open cases and out of hours. The Chair is interested in the comment that representatives from Kent made about the right type of health representative attendance. It’s not just about having representation; it needs to be the right agency representation.Kevin Kasaven noted in the meeting chat that he believes ICBs have tried to support health representatives by contributing workers who should have all round knowledge/experience to contribute.The Chair noted that in Hampshire, the ICB is reviewing the model and resources that we currently have within the MASH.  |
| 1. **Feedback from CP Chairs Sub-group**
 |
| Sharon Martin provided an overview from the last CP Chairs Sub-group meeting.There was a good discussion around anti-racist practice, and how Local Authorities can feed it into the conference environment, quality assurance processes, and how our quality assurance processes inform the learning and development of the Service. A few interesting papers that were shared for additional reading.Shungu Chigocha commented that she was also at the meeting, noted that discussions touched on how to upskill staff to be confident in asking curious questions around race, gender, quality, diversity, and inclusion etc. It’s about promoting good processes and upskilling the workforce to be competent in using the right language when addressing families.The Chair noted that Hampshire have employed recently employed more overseas workers, and they have experienced a level of racism from the families we work with in and out of a conference environment. |
| 1. **National and Local issues** - How LAs audit inclusive practice
 |
| Kevin Kasaven (Kent) had suggested this as a topic for discussion and asked attendees to consider the following questions.* What factors do you consider/monitor to understand how inclusive practice is landing?
* Are there any specific thematic audits anyone has completed?
* If so, what did you learn?

Feedback from the ILACS in 2022 was that Identity was not well established or focused on in children’s records. Inspectors recognised the improvements made in the focused visit of the Front Door in January 2024.Whilst there have been improvements for the families, it was noted that staff feel less supported. This has got Kevin thinking about how local authorities know how inclusive they are. How is it measured? What do you look out for? and is there a purposeful strategy for the children and for the staff?The Chair asked Kevin to share the link to the Focused Visit report in the chat.**Action: Kevin Kasaven will share the link to Kent’s Focused Ofsted Visit in the meeting chat.**The Chair commented that in Hampshire, the audit of inclusive practice for children and families forms part of the Standard Auditing Framework. This includes a question about recording a child ethnicity, religion and culture, and any other culturally relevant information on a child’s record. In terms of staff, Hampshire circulates a yearly Social Work Survey which includes questions around ethnicity and culture as well as questions around respect, anti-discrimination, and bullying. Questions are primarily in relation to behaviour that is received from the families we work with rather than staff on staff. Tom Stevenson (Surrey) noted an incident that occurred last year, when a young person from an African heritage background was attacked by another group from the Irish Traveller community. There was a lot in the media around how the school and the local authority dealt with. This led to internal conversations around how the authority was supporting both communities. In our work with international social workers, Surrey has recruited from Southern Africa and the Caribbean and there was a sense that there were elements of racism and a lack of patience and consideration around what we were expecting the individuals to do to fit into a new way of working. There needed to be an orientation for social work in the UK. Shungu Chigocha noted that Windsor & Maidenhead have started to have these conversations internally. There was a piece of work around anti-racism and anti-discriminatory practices for the whole service. Following this, many practitioners raised concerns around issues of racism and how it is handled within the organisation. As a result, a group was set up where practitioners were invited to express their concerns and speak openly about their experiences. It was an emotive meeting, but colleagues felt empowered and confident in terms of wanting to speak about their experiences in the organisation. The meetings are about raising awareness and giving people the confidence and a safe space to speak freely.Senay Nidai (Oxfordshire) commented that ethnicity, diversity, and nationality for children has become a talking focus in terms of performance reporting. Oxfordshire now have monthly reporting around children’s files to ensure the child’s ethnicity information is clearly stated on their records. This project involved an audit of 30 children to investigate any disproportionality in the decision-making process for S47s. It was found that the decision to go through the S47 process was appropriate for all the children. The audit revealed some broader themes around the quality of the C&F Assessment that followed. It was found that they lacked the holistic understanding of the lived experience for the child, or gave an insight into the family functioning, how the child identities etc. This impacted the effectiveness of the service being delivered according to the child’s identity.The Authority has developed training around social graces and unconscious bias to reach a better understanding of the cultural competence within our workforce. The training seeks to help workers become more aware of our own values, what is important to us, and how we are using these in assessments. Sharon Martin (Brighton and Hove) noted the cohort of children that end up with CP plans lasting longer than 18 months. When looking at the data, the greater proportion are white British but when you drill down into the cohort with the classification of black, mixed race etc, are maintained on CP plans much longer than other children. This has prompted some helpful conversations. There has been a lot of work done to provide emotional and practical support for or overseas colleagues. These workers have been upshifted from their homes and families, and do not have a recognised network. Sometimes their expertise, experience and competence would be overlooked, and they were often treated like NQSWs.SESLIP have asked Kevin to think about creating a tool around how we can all be more inclusive to improve retention and recruitment. Kevin noted that the discussion was helpful for thinking about how to audit the tool.  |
| 1. **Recent Ofsted Inspections / Ofsted publications of interest**
 |
| Kent County Council recently had a Focused Visit. Kevin Kasaven shared the link to the report in the meeting chat (<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50240382>) Leemya McKeown commented that following the ILACS in May 2020, Kent have been working to develop an inclusivity analysis tool. This includes collaborating with the districts to complete a series of audits and focus groups to get ideas around practice and to benchmark where we would like to be. Feedback from the focused visit in January 2024 noted that staff felt there were lots of opportunities, they felt like they were heard and were happy to work for the Authority.East Sussex had an ILACS Inspection in December 2023. Douglas Sinclair shared the report in the meeting chat (<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50239111>)Douglas noted that the overall grading went down from Outstanding to Good. The inspection was very process led, but social work in the authority was praised. With regards to the management decision making, Inspectors noted that cases were managed well but there was no direct recording by managers by a certain day. In the 2018 ILACS, the Inspectors were complimentary about the private fostering arrangements, particularly around how we manage our language schools. However, in this ILACS, it was not thought to be managed well despite the processes being the same. Due to the previous Outstanding grade, this inspection was shorter. There were eight Inspectors which Douglas though was a lot. KIT sessions were held at the end of the day. By Thursday afternoon, Inspectors had received all the relevant information. Usually, staff would spend the weekend auditing the list of cases that they gave us. But this time, Inspectors identified cases from the list of cases that were already audited. The Chair noted during the Isle of Wight ILACS, the lead Inspector was clear that they wanted the KIT sessions in the morning which made things easier. Leemya McKeown noted that there were only three inspectors in the Kent Inspection, and KIT sessions were in the morning which made it easier.Senay Nidai commented that Oxfordshire had a full 3-week ILACS on the 5 January 2024. The letter will be published on the 9 April 2024. There were five inspectors and KIT sessions were in the morning. The inspection felt like a positive experience for Oxfordshire. There has been some training around Ofsted and the delivery of inspections following what happened with the head teacher. Senay is happy to share the details of the inspection in the next meeting.Sharon Martin noted that Brighton and Hove recently had their inspection, Sharon is happy to share details in the next meeting. The Chair noted that Hampshire are in the window for an ILACS inspection. |
| 1. **Handover to new Chair**
 |
| The Chair reiterated that this is the last meeting that she will be chairing as SESLIP QA Leadership will be moving to Kent with Kevin Kasaven as the Chair. |
| 1. **AOB and information sharing**
 |
| There was no other business or information sharing. |
| 1. **Items for the next agenda**
 |
| Kevin Kasaven had an agenda item for the next meeting. Kevin has access to some additional funding to be used within Analytics Service at Kent. Kevin is thinking about developing a project for a theme we are all interested in. The project would run for a year and be managed by the analytics service. The team would develop the tool would require the SESLIP colleagues to help by distributing the surveys. The team could then produce a report. Kevin suggested management oversight as a good topic to begin with. Kevin asked if colleagues would speak to their directors and colleagues to identify any topics that could be unpicked. The analytics team will create the tool to develop practice across the region.The Chair asked whether Kevin would provide a short overview of the ask so colleagues can have those conversations with their colleagues prior to the next meeting.**Action: Kevin Kasaven will circulate a short overview of the work being completed by the Analytics Service with the group.**Kevin asked if the SESLIP QA Leads group have a Terms of Reference (TOR). The Chair confirmed that the group does have a TOR that has been updated within the last year.**Action: Kim Osbourne will re-circulate the Terms of Reference with the group.**Kevin Kasaven noted that while he was the chair for the Kent and Medway’s Suicide Prevention Network, they had completed multiagency research to see positive practice that prevents suicide and explore reasons for not going ahead with suicide. Kevin shared the following links to demonstrate to the SESLIP QA leads the quality of work the Analytic Service can produce.<https://nspa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/PDF_How-to-support-neuro-divergent-children-and-young-people-at-risk-of.pdf> <https://nspa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/KM-Positive-Practice-Audit-supporting-suicidal-care-leavers.pdf> Senay Nidai (Oxfordshire) commented that she had been thinking about the ILACS Framework, particularly the new grading around care leavers. One of the topics for discussion following the Oxfordshire ILACS was around children who are at risk of exploitation that are older than 18. This posed the question around planning, how it follows through into their adult years, and how we communicate with Adult Services. Senay would like to explore whether this is an issue for other local authorities as it felt like there was an increased expectation of support up until the age of 25.The Chair noted it would be a good area for discussion and urged colleagues to forward any other suggestions to Kevin Kasaven to ensure they are included in the agenda for the next meeting.The meeting ended at 15:45 |