



Targeted Support Prospectus



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1. Introduction

This prospectus outlines the South-East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP) Targeted Support Programme offer.

We aim to make the most of the skills, experience and commitment to peer-to-peer support and challenge in the region and to align this with the funding available from the DfE.

We focus the work on what will be most useful to Local Authorities (LAs) in the region as well as providing valuable development opportunities for colleagues to work in other LAs as part of the targeted support approach.

The South East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP) is the name of our Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA). Made up of all single/upper-tier local authorities in the Southeast it aims to:

- ✓ improve outcomes for children and young people across the South East
- ✓ establish a culture of honest and constructive dialogue and challenge within and between authorities
- ✓ demonstrate the capacity and capability of the sector to achieve a coherent and consistent self-improving system
- ✓

SESLIP is founded on a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) which has been agreed nationally and in the South East. Additionally, participating authorities have each signed a [tailored Memorandum of Understanding](#) to support the SE children's sector-led improvement programme.

The targeted support programme sits alongside several initiatives to assist Local Authorities in the region. This programme complements these activities and focuses on what can be done within individual local authorities on a topic of their choosing. It may be that a couple of Local Authorities might wish to work together on the same topic, however, the emphasis of targeted support is to focus on a local area rather than across the South East as other parts of the SESLIP offer covers this.

How We Work

Our dedicated **Targeted Support Core Team** includes experienced, ex-local authority leaders, who have worked at director, assistant director and principal programme manager levels, who have led and delivered improvement and targeted support nationally. The core team's practice is enhanced by collaboration with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) from across the full range of children's services.

The Targeted Support Programme offers DfE funded targeted improvement packages of work, developed collaboratively, at no cost to the LA, approximately 40 days each including the work to establish scope with the LA.

Over a 12 month period, we can offer 3 CSC and 12 SEND improvement support packages. We envisage that multiple packages of support will be run at the same time.

As a DfE funded initiative we work with individual LAs to ensure that the work:

- a. Contributes to the DfE Children's Social Care Enablers:
 - 1. Multi-agency working is prioritised and effective
 - 2. Leaders drive conditions for effective practice
 - 3. The workforce is equipped and effective
- b. Contributes to the 5 DfE SEND Enablers:
 - 1. Co-production and relationships at the heart of the system
 - 2. Shared vision and evidence-informed priorities
 - 3. Stable and knowledgeable leadership and governance
 - 4. A focus on high-quality delivery of the essentials
 - 5. A well-organised, skilled and supported workforce
- c. Explicitly enables the voice of the child:
- d. Promotes the engagement and involvement of the LAs Parent Carer Forums
- e. Supports reflective practice, quality assurance and audit
- f. Supports effective leadership, management and professional supervision
- g. Uses regional diagnostic information and analysis
- h. Uses other forms of LA engagement and feedback
- i. Uses existing LA centered work including the Delivering Better Value in SEND toolkit

Targeted support offers a development opportunity for LA staff to act as Subject Matter Experts and be part of the targeted support team on specific packages of support relevant to their experience.

This approach provides invaluable opportunities for LA colleagues to apply their skills and expertise in another LA area. It enables them to reflect on their own area's work, and to apply their learning back to within their own work. Time provided by LA employed colleagues will be back funded at the regional tiered rates.

Such development opportunities can provide an important part in colleagues' continuous professional development and enable them to build wider skills which can contribute to their career aspirations.

Our work is underpinned by a strength-based ethos and a focus on best, risk-aware practice that prioritises the outcomes of children and families, including their welfare and SEND.

2. How to Access Targeted Support

The SESLI programme has consistently been guided by recognition that all children's services have strengths which can help inspire improvement in others; and that they are all capable of further improvement. The programme aims to discourage the conclusion that only under-performing services, or those judged poor or weak, need improvement help; instead, it celebrates honest self-evaluation and constant improvement as antidotes to complacency and drivers of innovation and readiness to face future challenges. If you like to support the programme as a subject matter expert, please get in touch. Details on the footer of each page.

Targeted Support is available to all LAs in the SESLIP area and will arrive from other SESLIP diagnostic programmes such as **DCS self-assessment and peer challenge** and **SEND Courageous Conversations**; referral from CSC and SEND **Improvement advisers at DfE and LGA**; CSC and SEND **Universal Improvement** and direct demand from LA colleagues via regional networks and forums.

To access targeted support a Local Authority, via their DCS, will work with the Targeted Support leads to determine what specific support would add value, and they will scope a proposal of work together.

For **SEND targeted support** this would be available following a SEND Courageous Conversation and include consideration of the local area's priorities and current work, alongside Regional Diagnostic data where available, and feedback from SEND Courageous Conversations.

The range of topics covered in SEND Courageous Conversations across the region so far has included:

- Developing/reviewing the local area Self Evaluation (SEF)
- Transitions, including 16+
- Alternative Provision
- Timeliness/quality of new EHC assessments
- Annual Reviews
- SEND support and inclusive practice in mainstream schools
- Joint commissioning

- Coproduction and the impact of this
- Ordinarily Available Provision/Prevention and the Graduated Response
- Outcomes for children – including evidence of partnership working having positive effects
- Quality Assurance
- What happens when (following an agreement for a health assessment for example)
- Communication

Targeted support can also focus on:

- Banding and funding arrangements
- SEND Sufficiency planning
- Or other topics as determined by the local area, in the context of the diagnostic activity detailed above.

For **CSC targeted support**, this would be available following a DCS self-assessment or a peer challenge, alongside regional diagnostic data where available, and taking into account the LAs local priorities. DCS self-assessment and peer challenge events across the region to date include: -

- Expanding Family Network Meetings and sharing practice around Early Help – co-ordinate pilots and share learning regionally, clarify roles, skills and responsibilities of practitioners, schools and other services in family support.
- Developing community capacity and parental networks with place-based approaches
- Regional strategy with police to target higher level child exploitation perpetrators
- Work on improving unregulated placements
- DBS flexibility for kinship carers
- Complex needs of younger children in residential care increasing (dols, tier 4 CAMHA, needs faster regional responses)
- Quality Assurance – balancing quantity vs. quality, outcomes over compliance, empowering children and families
- Focus on children missing education or at risk of care
- Challenges of delivery of education outcomes within broader social care frameworks.

The Targeted Support Programme is informed by the DfE's objective to support:

- the development of the Families First Partnership Programme, including:
 - updated local protocols for assessment reflecting new single service
 - refreshed threshold documents and a shared practice framework for individual LA areas;

- development of specific expertise and innovative practice in response to extra-familial harm, child sexual abuse and domestic violence.

A bespoke package will be agreed collaboratively and will include clear objectives, measurable outcomes, an agreed timeline and a governance mechanism to evaluate and share progress and outcomes.

After the package is complete, feedback will be collated from across the targeted support work and used to provide progress to Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) in the region and to the DfE in terms of overall impact and use of the DfE grant. This will include reporting quarterly to the DfE on the Key Performance Indicators agreed by the region for this work.

LAs who are involved and benefitting from the Targeted Support Programme, will be asked for feedback throughout the life of the programme.

The final proposal will be signed off by the LA DCS and Chris Baird, the Programme Lead.

A Word on Availability

In 2025/26 it is envisaged that to fit within the DfE funding, with the help of LAs including the release of staff, 3 Children's Social Care packages and 12 SEND packages of support will be delivered. It is important therefore to express an interest as soon as you are confident a package of support will augment and make a difference to what LAs are already doing or have planned.

3. SESLIP Targeted Support Core Team

Chris Baird

Chris has over 17 years of senior leadership experience including 4 years as a Director of Children's Services. Chris has led the full range of children's services and has spent significant time in his career focusing on SEND, Commissioning and Education, including working across health organisations and Councils.

Chris has been involved and led sector led improvement activity across a range of local authorities, including peer challenge work for the LGA. Chris continues to provide, SESLIP associate work on commissioning, SEND (the SEND Courageous Conversations programme) and DCS peer challenge.

Chris is currently an independent chair of a SEND Improvement and Assurance Board and also is a qualified coach in Transformational Coaching, providing coaching on behalf of the Staff College for DCS, and aspiring leaders.

Jenny Boyd

Jenny has over 20 years' experience at senior level in operational and strategic management of early help and front-line children's social work services within county and unitary local authorities, including at Assistant Director level. Within her Assistant Director roles Jenny has an evidenced track record of leading and supporting underperforming services to achieve significant sustained improvement.

Jenny has experience of sector led improvement, being part of the Essex County Council Partners in Practice programme, the precursor of sector led improvement, and which delivered diagnostic reviews and post-diagnostic feedback, training and support to local authorities across the country.

In her Assistant Director roles Jenny has led several innovation projects and most recently was responsible for a wholesale system transformation for children's social care with the successful introduction of Family Safeguarding and the piloting of a new way of working in line with the Care Review recommendations around Families First.

Claire Woodcock

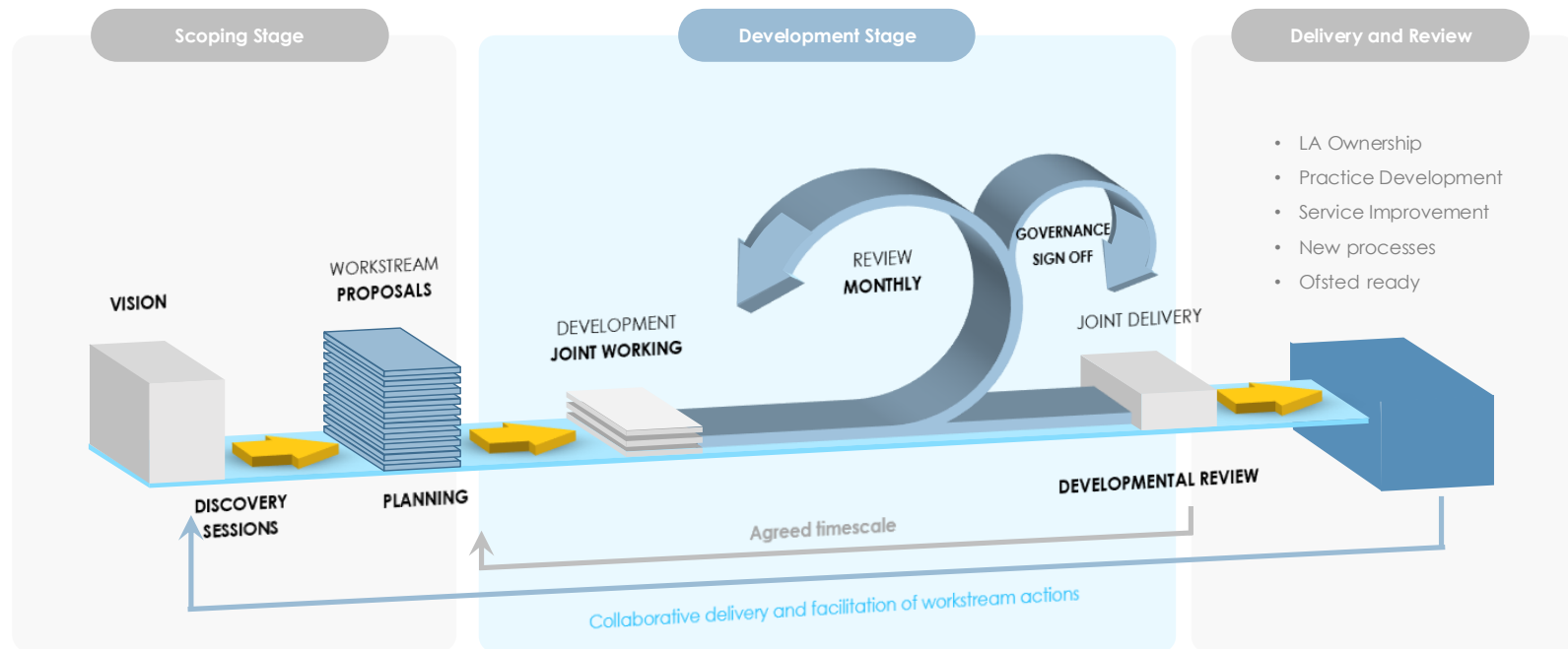
With over 20 years professional business management experience in both private and public sectors, globally, Claire is well placed to leverage her management consulting, programme management and coaching skills in driving large scale transformation and service improvement. Moving from a teaching career and a secondary/higher education leader to a public sector Principal Transformation

Consultant, Claire has successfully led several sector-led improvement programmes aimed at transforming public services and enhancing operational efficiency, most recently in partnership with local authority children's services in the Southeast.

Claire is a level 7 qualified Executive Coach and Supervisor, and has worked closely with senior stakeholders, programme directors, and elected members delivering leadership workshops and peer mentoring and coaching programmes to share best practice and improve professional curiosity, and analysis of risk and need. This experience has enabled her to build a broad network of local government stakeholders with whom she has gained the reputation of trusted advisor driving measurable and meaningful outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

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4. Targeted Support Framework



5. Delivery & Methodology

SEND and CSC Targeted Support Packages

All targeted support packages are tailored to suit local authority needs and priorities, and to align with their existing improvement plan. A proposal is created, collaboratively, and key performance indicators agreed via initial discovery sessions with a project team drawn from subject matter experts across the region, and coordinated by a project lead from the Targeted Support core team.

Specific, measurable outcomes will be decided with the local authorities taking part in the funded projects.

Below is a list of services previously delivered across the region, together with insight into the delivery methodology used.

Service Diagnostic

- Mobilise a bespoke whole service diagnostic across a variety of scales
- Onsite and virtual observations/shadowing of practice and process within teams and services using Subject Matter Experts
- One-to-one interviews and focus groups discussion with staff, managers and leaders
- Evaluate threshold application
- Conduct data reviews
- Triangulate secondary evidence (e.g. Ofsted reports)
- Analyse and produce a recommendations report

Assurance including Document Review

- Peer review improvement plans, policy and documentation
- Evaluate quality assurance processes
- Carry out co-auditing and moderation to support staff in assuring their own work
- Deliver a Learning Event
- Contribute objective view to Assurance/Improvement Boards

Peer Challenge and Inspection Preparation

- Peer challenge and testing of improvement areas
- Help prepare senior managers, what to expect
- Sharing tips and lessons learned
- Assist in preparation of documents – assurance
- Practicalities of preparing for and responding to an inspection – available from other local authorities who have had recent experience

- Annexe A
- Guidance to collation of evidence in advance

Partnership working - Working better together (ICB, Education, LA)

Workshop facilitation

- Effectiveness of operational and strategic multi-agency boards

Reflective sessions

- What support do schools and LAs need from each other and how to achieve it?
- Parent/Carer communication and involvement
- Involvement of children and young people in decisions and planning

Performance and Quality Assurance

Peer review of QA Framework & Improvement Plans

- Trusted advisor
- Critical friend

Smart Planning workshop

- Assessments and Plans

Review KPIs and Impact Measures

- How to evidence impact

Review Auditing Framework

SEND Partnership working - Workshop facilitation covering such topics as:-

- SEND Ordinarily Available Provision
- Working better together – partners and clarity of roles and responsibilities
- Graduated Response
- Alternative Provision
- Coproduction and working together
- Quality Assurance

Self Evaluation (SEF)

Joint Commissioning

- Contributions to the areas SEND Strategy
- Arrangements and opportunities to enhance effectiveness
- Impact and opportunities

Communication and how to make the most of the Partnership including:

- Reflections on current methods and impact
- How does the partnership use and contribute to communication
- The Local Offer
- What do children use and want?
- What do parents/carers value?

Provision

- Sufficiency planning
- Development of specific types of provision such as Alternative Provision; Resource Bases

Quality of EHCPs, Annual Reviews

- Purpose and processes
- Meaningful outcomes
- SMART planning
- Use of AI

Working with Parents and Carers including Parent Carer Forums

- Coproduction charter/ MOU development
- Measuring effectiveness

Leadership and Management

DCS/AD

- 1:1 mentoring/coaching support via phone call /Teams

Workshops

- What good practice looks like
- Sharing regional experience

Peer mentoring & coaching

- 1:1 or group of identified staff, including Heads of Service, with clear objectives supported by subject matter experts
- Improve management oversight/grip
- Building resilience in staff
- Improving staff professional curiosity
- Enhancing team working

Shadowing & Observations

- Opportunity to observe other LA teams and service areas
- Modelling what good looks like – roles and processes

Transformation, Business Processes & Support

Leadership coaching workshop

- Creating and sharing a vision

- Teamwork and communication

Transformation Services & Continuous Improvement

- Business processes
- Use of technology
- Service Re-design
- Framework
- People and Partnership Improvement

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6. 2024-25 Case Studies

Case Study – HCC-WSCC Improvement Partnership

Sector Led Improvement – Service Diagnostic – Early Help

The Challenge:

To deliver key messages to a local authority Early Help service as to the findings and themes following remote case auditing being undertaken to establish a baseline as to current practice. Also, to highlight key recommendations arising from this.

Delivery needed to focus on both good practice identified and where practice, processes or procedures needed to be further developed or improved. This needed to be in a way that was informative, meaningful and provided a forum in which senior managers and managers within the service could use as a basis to agree improvement plans.

Secondly, how the service would use the outcomes to inform the whole staff group, share expectations and improvement plans.

A re audit exercise would then measure progress.

SLI was established from the onset with a mindset of continuous improvement.

Our Approach:

The SLI team works in an improvement partner role and relationship in order to help support other Local Authorities to ensure practice, processes and procedures are reviewed and changes are implemented as effectively and efficiently as possible. In order to do this:

- An audit tool was agreed with the LA along with the number of cases to audit on in which to provide a small window into practice
- Agreed that a learning activity workshop would be the preferred style to deliver the outcomes from the case auditing
- The learning activity workshop would be planned and co delivered with the LA in question
- The senior managers from the service would lead the improvement part of the workshop to ensure ownership and buy in
- The management group in the service would be responsible for drafting improvement plans with advice as appropriate.
- Re auditing and reporting would focus on progress made and any further recommendations/next steps



Key Benefits:

Having a planned approach which took into consideration the needs of the service, outcomes being sought with a delivery method which acknowledged required improvements and a forum in which key planning could take place and progress measured.

- An overview as to **windows into practice**
- Collaborative **partnership working** with the **ability to challenge/critical friend**
- Focus on the **improvement journey needed**
- Focus on the value of using **the management group** to support change prioritisation and decision making
- Focus on the value of **improvement plans and how they can inform practice**
- A **forum for sharing ideas** to address areas of need
- A **wider awareness** of where the service was at, where it needed to get to and service expectations
- **Recognition of progress** but with a focus on the **'impact and what next'**

A bespoke package will be agreed at scoping stage. For more information, or to become involved as a subject matter expert, please contact Claire@clairewoodcockconsulting.com

Case Study



Peer Coaching and Mentoring – using a coaching approach to support practice

The Brief:

Under the Improvement Partnership work with West Sussex, it was identified that modelling best practice through a peer mentoring programme would be a useful area of focus, whilst acknowledging that West Sussex had rolled out training on good practice and basic practice expectations across the entire social work workforce. HCC SLI conducted scoping exercises with West Sussex colleagues to understand what the specific focus of the mentoring would be and then went on to develop a peer mentoring programme to meet this brief.

This premise of this programme is based on the role being a very active one, where the mentor will be working with the mentee to encourage them in the development of relevant skills and attitudes for the future, both in terms of social work practice and in the arena of leadership and management. The focus of the coaching role is on the ability to help the mentee see beyond the current situation and to identify what the future can look like and what needs to happen to help achieve this. This is helpful in setting goals and identifying what actions an individual needs to take next.

Our Approach:

The HCC approach to delivering the Peer Mentoring programme is to have nominated HCC District and Team Managers to act as peer mentors. They link in with West Sussex colleagues (Practice Managers) who work in a same or similar role and use their experience and knowledge in a facilitative manner to support the development of the mentee. This could be through but is not limited to:

- Active listening
- Asking questions to help develop the mentor and the mentee's understanding of a situation or problem
- Using the mentoring relationship to challenge and work in a strength based way
- Providing information and knowledge and sharing informal networks
- Offering different perspectives
- Providing an insight into their work and career
- Being a sounding board and a critical friend
- Encouraging self-reflection through super useful questions

Key Benefits:

- Delivery of key messages was more effective and reached a wider audience, especially those directly responsible for social work practice with children and families.
- West Sussex colleagues have a mentor who is a practicing social worker and manager in HCC but who can offer independent and objective mentoring/advice to them.
- Goals are clearly set, and outcomes defined at the outset so that all parties are clear on what needs to be achieved. Accountability is key and everyone is committed to the process and the expectations.
- The output and outcomes can form a clear feedback pipeline into any Steering Groups, Boards or internal governance mechanisms.
- There is a tangible and measurable impact on practice with children and families for e.g. increase in management oversight reduces drift in planning.