



Targeted Support Prospectus

Updated for 2026-27

Strengthening SEND and Children's Social Care Systems Across the South East



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1. Introduction

The South East Sector Led Improvement Programme (SESLIP) is the Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA) for all single and upper-tier local authorities (LAs) across the South East. 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

This prospectus outlines the SESLIP Targeted Support Programme offer. The Programme began in 2025/26 and received very positive feedback. The report can be found [here](#).

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.

In light of the government reforms across the system for children, including major education and SEND Reforms the targeted support programme offers the opportunity for support and peer to peer work and reflection within three areas:

1. Supporting the individual leaders (mentoring, coaching, possibly supplying consultant capacity to take on particular tasks)
2. Strengthening assurance, using peer challenge/peer review of self-assessments, plans and services, to give supportive developmental feedback
3. Continuing our work on the *SEND data challenge* - agreeing counting rules, making systems work to supply useable data comparisons

with the core aim of enabling and supporting LAs and their partners to lead their local systems, for children to achieve and thrive throughout their lives and to be included and have their needs met.

Our shared purpose is clear:

- 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

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- demonstrate the capacity and capability of the sector to achieve a coherent and consistent self-improving system

All projects focus on strengthening:

- Strategic governance
- Operational leadership
- Service delivery, with a particular focus on what it means for children
- Workforce capability
- Quality assurance
- Financial sustainability
- Relationships and how to incorporate parent and carer voice
- Developing effective partnerships

The golden thread running through all work is impact:

Better outcomes for children, young people and families.

2. Our Offer at a Glance

We provide funded, structured improvement packages for developing leadership, capacity and system integration, SEND systems and Children's Social Care (CSC).

We now offer:

- ✓ Consultant diagnostic option
- ✓ Project scoping capacity
- ✓ Funding Regional Lean Process Mapping Academy
- ✓ Funding Coaching and Mentoring Programme
- ✓ Phased Targeted Support packages
- ✓ Support aligned to '*Every Child Achieving and Thriving*' and '*Putting Children and Young People First*' reforms

In 2026–27 we can deliver:

- Up to 3 CSC improvement packages
- Up to 12 SEND improvement packages
- Multiple packages running concurrently

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Opportunities for Peer-to-Peer Support

We recognise the pressure LA colleagues feel during this period of significant change, alongside day-to-day service delivery and the rolling inspection regime.

However, LAs such as **Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, Medway, Milton Keynes, Portsmouth, Southampton, & West Sussex**, that have enabled their staff to take part in peer to peer support have seen significant benefits in terms of learning for their own organisation as well as colleagues feeling valued and seeing the opportunity as high value Continuous Professional Development.

We will make every effort to offer opportunities that LA colleagues can take up as part of the targeted support offer in other LAs in the region. Much of the work is flexible both in terms of timing, location and amount of work involved.

Flexible & Phased Support Model (NEW)

We are removing the notional 40-day limit from packages.

Instead, on behalf of the region, we now offer:

- Phased targeted packages of support
- Capacity funding for LAs to engage
- A Coaching and Mentoring Programme – to access coaching and for aspiring coaches to build their coaching skills
- Free access to the Regional Lean Academy – to learn Lean Process Mapping methodology
- The ability to extend or deepen support without reapplying

This approach enables host authorities to:

- Build learning capability
- Support problem solving
- Embed learning sustainably
- Avoid fragmented improvement cycles
- Align more effectively with DfE programmes

All support remains DfE-funded and delivered at no cost to the participating authority.

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3. What Targeted Support Can Help You Achieve

Targeted Support is designed to help councils:

- Strengthen strategic governance and leadership grip
- Improve inspection readiness
- Address performance and quality assurance challenges, focusing on what these mean for children
- Reform operational delivery models
- Planning support in response to central and local government reforms
- Strengthen co-production and partnership working particularly with children and families
- Improve Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) timeliness and quality
- Develop sustainable sufficiency strategies
- Embed improvement frameworks

We align explicitly with:

DfE Children's Social Care Enablers:

- Effective multi-agency working
- Leaders driving conditions for effective practice
- A skilled and supported workforce

DfE SEND Enablers:

- Co-production at the heart of the system
- Stable governance and leadership
- Evidence-informed priorities
- High-quality delivery of essentials
- Workforce capability and resilience

4. Areas of Targeted Support

Targeted Support can include:

SEND Focus

- SEND strategy development

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- SEND Reform Plans
- Every Child Achieving and Thriving Plans
- Impact for Children
- EHCP timeliness & quality
- Annual Reviews
- Alternative Provision
- Sufficiency Planning
- Ordinarily Available Provision
- Graduated Response
- Commissioning inc. Joint Commissioning
- Coproduction and Co-Design frameworks
- Quality Assurance frameworks

Children's Social Care Focus

- Family First Partnership Embedding
- Early Help transformation
- Family Network Meetings
- Exploitation strategy
- Unregulated placements
- QA frameworks
- Practice model development
- Inspection readiness
- Complex needs pathways
- Performance and audit redesign

Leadership & Governance

- Coaching and mentoring
- Improvement Board assurance
- Risk and performance grip
- Leadership development workshops

Transformation & Continuous Improvement

- Business process redesign
 - Lean Six Sigma
 - KPI alignment
 - Digital enablement
 - Workforce resilience
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5. How We Work

Our model is:

- Strength-based
- Peer-led
- Evidence-informed, including using national best practice including from the DfE SEND and AP Change Programme
- Outcomes-focused
- Risk-aware

The Targeted Support Core Team works alongside:

- Regional Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)
- Former Directors and Assistant Directors
- Operational leaders
- Governance specialists
- Transformation consultants

LA colleagues acting as SMEs are back-funded at regional tiered rates.

This model:

- Builds regional capability
 - Reduces reliance on expensive consultancy
 - Supports professional development
 - Strengthens sector-led improvement
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6. NEW: Responding to the 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' White Paper & SEND Reforms 'Putting Children and Young People First'

SESLIP will actively respond to the 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' White Paper and SEND Reform 'Putting Children and Young People First' by:

- Supporting authorities to interpret reform requirements
- Aligning Targeted Support with LA implementation plans
- Providing governance and delivery modelling support
- Strengthening cross-service integration
- Supporting workforce reform and partnership development
- Ensuring alignment with DfE expectations

Our offer will sit alongside:

- Local implementation planning
- DfE improvement advisers
- Existing reform programmes

We will ensure Targeted Support acts as a practical enabler of reform rather than duplicating national initiatives.

7. NEW: Funded Scoping Capacity "Creating the Space to Think"

Through our work this year, we have identified a common challenge:

Many local authorities do not have sufficient internal capacity to determine what would be most helpful alongside existing local improvement activity and DfE programmes.

To address this, SESLIP can now offer **scoping capacity if desired**:

We will provide funded consultant time to:

- Research and analyse local data
- Review current improvement plans
- Map alignment with DfE programmes
- Identify duplication or gaps
- Develop structured project proposals

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- Define phased improvement plans

This offer enables authorities to:

- Make informed decisions
- Ensure support complements existing work
- Avoid overburdening internal teams
- Create clarity before committing to delivery

Option A: Specialist SESLIP Subject Matter Expert (SME)

We will place an experienced SEND or CSC SME within your authority for a short diagnostic engagement (typically 5–10 days) to:

- Review performance and diagnostic data
- Meet with leaders and managers
- Assess governance and operational effectiveness
- Identify priority risks and opportunities
- Recommend whether a full TS package is required

Option B: Consultant Funding Option

Alternatively, SESLIP can provide funding for:

- A specialist external consultant selected collaboratively
- Focused evaluation work to determine scope and improvement need

This flexible approach enables:

- Early clarity
- Informed decision-making
- Proportionate intervention
- Better alignment with your improvement plan

8. NEW: Lean Academy

Sustainable improvement requires strong business processes. Funded by the Targeted Support Programme, led by Claire Woodcock (Lean Six Sigma Green Belt 2015), we now offer access to the **SESLIP Lean Academy - Process Mapping and Continuous Improvement** leading to sustainable change and supporting long-term system reform.

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The Academy will:

- Train local authority teams in Lean methodologies
- Provide structured process mapping workshops
- Build internal facilitators
- Practical tools for managers
- Create a self-sustaining improvement culture

The aim is to move from externally supported improvement to locally owned, self-sustaining continuous improvement.

This can be delivered as:

- A standalone training package F2F on request from LA
- Delivered regionally across multiple authorities on F2F or Teams
- Register your interest here [SESLIP Lean Process Mapping Academy - Expression of Interest Form – Fill in form](#)

The objective is to help councils:

- Improve efficiency
- Reduce delays (e.g. EHCP timeliness)
- Strengthen CSC case flow
- Improve quality and consistency
- Embed measurable improvement

9. NEW: Coaching and Mentoring Programme

Funded by Targeted Support Programme, led by Claire Woodcock (ILM Executive Coach 2015 and Coach Supervisor 2019). Coaching is a structured, supportive conversation that enables individuals to think clearly, explore challenges, and identify their own solutions. It is not directive; instead, it helps leaders and practitioners develop insight, confidence and capability to address complex issues within SEND and Children's Social Care systems.

Mentoring provides access to experienced professionals who can share knowledge, insight and practical advice. Within SESLIP, mentors are carefully aligned to participants based on role, experience and context.

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SESLIP has access to a strong network of qualified, accredited and experienced coaches and mentors, including senior leaders with significant expertise in SEND, Ofsted and commissioning, who can offer support across a wide range of leadership and service challenges. All 19 local authorities can request support aligned to their priorities.

This includes aspiring coaches who would like to improve their coaching skills as well as those looking to access coaching sessions,

How the Programme Works

- LAs nominate participants
- Participants complete a Participation Information Form
- SESLIP matches participants to coaches/mentors
- Typically 6 x 1-hour sessions
- GROW model used

An initial 'chemistry' session to ensure a good fit between coach/mentor and participant. Alternative matching is available if required. [SESLIP Coaching and Mentoring Programme Participation Form – Fill in form](#)

10. Targeted Support Framework & Methodology

Each project follows a structured framework:

Phase 1 – Discovery & Scoping

- Data review
- Governance assessment
- Alignment mapping
- Risk and opportunity analysis
- Agreed measurable objectives

Phase 2 – Initial Delivery

- Workshops
- Leadership coaching
- Operational review & potential for redesign
- Quality assurance strengthening

Phase 3 – Embedding & Extension (where required)

- Further phased support
- Lean capability building
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Sustainability planning

Phases can be extended without requiring a fresh application, subject to governance review.

11. Targeted Support Core Team

Chris Baird

Chris has over 18 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, has a diploma in Transformational Coaching, and provides coaching on behalf of the Staff College for DCS, and aspiring leaders, as well as for other organisations.

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 leadership and coaching skills in driving large scale transformation and service improvement. Moving from 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, accredited with the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM 2015) and has worked closely with senior stakeholders and elected members delivering leadership workshops and peer mentoring and coaching programmes to share best practice and improve professional curiosity. 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.

12. Availability & Next Steps

Capacity remains limited and early expressions of interest are encouraged.

For further discussion or to express interest please contact:

SESLIP Targeted Support Programme

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