**SESLIP Quality Assurance Leads Meeting – 10 March 2021**

1. **Attendees:**

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| Bracknell Forest | Kogie | Perumall |
| Buckinghamshire | Ruth | El-Rouby |
| East Sussex | Douglas | Sinclair |
| East Sussex | Lou | Carter |
| **Hampshire Chair)** | **Stuart** | **Ashley** |
| Hampshire | Amanda | Meadows |
| Isle of Wight | Simon | Dear |
| Kent | Julie | MacQuire |
| Medway | Christine | Pitchers |
| Oxfordshire | Tan | Lea |
| Portsmouth | Sarah | Alexander |
| Reading | Fiona | Betts |
| Surrey | Gillian | Halden |
| Surrey | Carol | Adamson |
| West Berkshire | Kirsty | Benson-Allison |
| West Sussex | Linda | Steele |
| West Sussex | Sophie | Carter |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | Shungu | Chigocha |
| Wokingham | Liz | McAuley |
| SESLIP for CME Item | Chris | Owen |
| SESLIP Facilitator | Diane | Williamson |

1. **Apologies:**

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| Brighton and Hove | Justin | Grantham |
| Brighton and Hove | Tina | James |
| Kent | Kevin | Kasaven |
| Medway | Becky | Cooper |
| Milton Keynes | Sophie | Marshall |
| Slough | Sandra | Davies |
| Southampton | Stuart | Webb |
| Surrey | Patricia | Denney |
| West Berkshire | Nicky | Robertson |

1. **Matters Arising from last meeting** 
   1. IROs and CP Chairs contribution and added value and CP Chairs Network – on today’s agenda
   2. Contextual Safeguarding and Plans for Adolescents – no tools have been shared, the subject is on forward agenda for September, no regional work is already happening for Safeguarding Transitions
   3. **ACTION** Douglas Sinclair to share East Sussex protocol developed as part of Care Leavers transitions work - the key is to get Adult Services’ buy-in and ownership
   4. QA Support to Triad Challenges – 2 QA challenge meetings have taken place Southampton & Bracknell Forest and Kent & West Sussex. The learning from these is that they are quite time intensive in terms of set up and preparation and may not be best use of time. However, where authorities shared their SEF, they found the challenge useful and subsequently reflected on the discussion and thought about additional QA activity to support their narrative and understanding of data, e.g., CP numbers
2. **Children Missing Education**
   1. This item attended by Chris Owen – SESLIP consultant supporting the SESLIP CME work.
   2. Ofsted scrutiny, currently through a COVID lens, of school attendance of vulnerable children is intensifying.
   3. Chris introduced the scope of CME:

* Children missing education (CME) are:
  + some of those who are electively home educated (EHE)
  + those subject to exclusion (permanent and prolonged, fixed-period), [from Sept the language is moving back to ‘suspension’ & ‘expulsion’]
  + those placed on reduced timetables,
  + those persistently absent from school,
  + those absent due to medical needs and, beyond 15 days, supported by the LA
  + those being ‘off-rolled’
* Examples of joint working across children’s services:
  + Better & targeted data and information sharing: e.g., weekly updates of data about attendance for CIN / LAC / TAF / SEND (Oxfordshire, E Sussex); local ‘improve attendance’ groups across school & LA, quick review & response for CYP open to social care (Surrey).
  + Stronger shared outcome about school attendance across children’s services: 90% is not good; highest possible expectation for all CIN, LAC, TAF (Oxfordshire).
  + Weekly meetings about cases of concern now including education colleagues in some unitaries, so attendance & school issues picked up early (e.g., B&H, Portsmouth).
  + Full re-opening, reminder to schools about procedures for reduced timetables, so open decision-making that ensures children’s services staff know as well (Southampton, Hants).
  + Significant increase in EHE through this year: capacity challenge for LAs; DfE guidance hampers LAs from being pro-active; difficult to be sure how many are vulnerable learners.
* Emerging evidence that numbers at risk of exclusion is increasing – profile of those open to social care is hard to assemble.
* Emerging evidence of numbers of young people who are particularly vulnerable (e.g., GRT, moved into area, at risk of CSE and CCE) are drifting away from education as well.



* 1. The relevance of this to the QA Leads Group is to understand and share:
* What assurance activity is in place?
* How do you know it is working?
* How can you evidence this for Ofsted?
  1. Kent:
* Undertaken risk assessment of vulnerable CIN /CP in relation to school attendance, who has eyes on the children, which children need face to face visits
* Kent has a well-established attendance service with good relationships with CSC
* Monitor and share attendance data
* Include attendance service in CYP audit process to QA that service’s work
* Focused look at Youth Justice Cohort – identified 55% in full time education; 9% in education with attendance issues; 36% status unclear
* Lack of effective use of the legal framework to support attendance was raised – e.g., Attendance and education Supervision Orders – Chris Owen reported that most SE authorities have put a hold on enforcement activity during COVID
  1. East Sussex:
* A positive impact of COVID is that it has shone a spotlight on CME as a real vulnerability and the joint work around eyes on the children has been very positive
* EHE is being incorporated into Child in Need/CP plans
* There is a clear message from the authority that vulnerable children should be in school and a clear message to CP chairs that as part of their QA role the detail of EHE plan should be in the child’s plan
* The National Panel is showing interest in a SCR where EHE was identified as an issue
* Pre CVOVID a multi-agency audit of CME was undertaken that highlighted a lack of understanding amongst social workers that led to follow up work with them
* A child exploitation audit had a specific focus on CME – looking at part-time timetable and exclusion and the impact on exploitation vulnerability

**ACTION: Douglas Sinclair will share the East Sussex multi-agency CME audit tool**

* 1. RBWM reported that the virtual school is a key player for them
  2. Surrey:
* They built CME into their covid RAG rating and moderated this alongside monthly audits
* Quality assured visits to CME
* CP chairs – QA the plans for children not in education
  1. Diane mentioned the SESLIP Silver Linings project and Chris confirmed there are some regional examples of CME work that has developed through covid. The links to Silver linings are below:

[Silver Linings Project - SESLIP](https://seslip.co.uk/live-projects/silver-linings)

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| [Education of vulnerable children](https://seslip.co.uk/download-file/1021) | Hampshire and IoW | [Alison Smailes](mailto:sectorled@hants.gov.uk) |
|  |  |  |
| [Wellbeing for Education Return – Training](https://seslip.co.uk/download-file/1030) | Windsor and Maidenhead | [Rebecca Askew](mailto:rebecca.askew@achievingforchildren.org.uk)  [Christine Thomas](mailto:christine.thomas@achievingforchildren.org.uk) |

1. **Added value to the QA system of IRO and CP chairs** 
   1. Sophie explained that West Sussex have undertaken a lot of work talking to OLAs about the roles, responsibilities functions and expectations of IROs and CP chairs. There is a very varied picture across authorities.
   2. Stuart is still awaiting the final report of Hampshire’s review of IROs and CP chairs.

**ACTIONS:**

* **Stuart will share Hampshire’s review report once completed**
* **Agenda for the next meeting with each authority preparing in advance a brief outline of the QA role of the CP chairs and IROS in their authority. This will support a detailed discussion**

1. **CP Chair Network**
   1. There is general agreement that this is a good idea and it is proposed in the SESLIP improvement plan for 2021-2022.
   2. Stuart will raise the proposal again with the AD Safeguarding group.
   3. The group will be a sub group of this network and the chair of the CP group will attend our meetings

**ACTIONS**

* **Stuart will facilitate the first meeting and will aim for this to take place before the end of April**
* **One representative to be nominated from each LA. Nominees to be sent to Diane by 24th March or Amanda Meadows after that**

1. **Responding to minister’s request for assurance - (serious incident notifications, and concerns over increasing incidents involving babies)**
   1. A reminder of the extract from the ministerial letter**:**

“*We have heard of some excellent, proactive work by local authorities who have reviewed the current circumstances of children who have recently stepped down from child protection plans and I would like to ask that all of you, with your safeguarding partners, undertake similar exercises, if you have not already done so. If you could extend this to review the circumstances of families who have historically caused significant concern, have recently turned a corner, but have had a new baby, in the last 6 months, I would be very grateful. This of course could and should be done in partnership with health services.”*

* 1. Surrey shared that they had approached this with health partners, primarily health visiting services, using as matrix to identify the children that met the criteria for scrutiny. They then:
* undertook a bespoke audit, which in some case led to cases being re-opened.
* The audit weas followed by monthly meetings with key health partners and
* ongoing QA review of the cases in the cohort
* They are repeating the exercise with a new cohort
* Service co-ordinators for the CP chairs are reviewing CP Plans for 0–1-year-olds
  1. Bracknell Forest set up a panel involving QA, First Response, CSC and Health Colleagues and reviewed case in a panel audit
  2. Hants, numbers were quite small.
* found one case that needed to be re-opened.
* developed ICON in response to seeing increase in shaken baby and this has been adopted by a number of authorities.
* Changed policy – any case where there has been a pre-birth assessment will only be closed by exception within 3 months of birth in recognition of the impact of a new baby in the family
  1. IOW -decision to always keep a case open as CIN for at least 3 months at end of CP plan
  2. ESCC:
* Rolled out ICON – Pan Sussex
* Taken part in the National Panel’s Thematic Review – this won’t be published until July
  1. WSCC
* Rolling out learning from 2 near misses
* Stressing importance of sharing pre-birth assessments
  1. Kent
* Audit activity
* Rolled out neglect toolkit
* Developed an Early Years Development programme

**ACTION – Kent will share the early years development programme**

1. **Virtual QA Thematic Peer Challenge Framework 2020 21 – QA**
   1. SW ADCS have shared the details of their proposal for QA Peer Challenge. The focus of the challenge is to give feedback on the quality of quality assurance practice in improving outcomes for children and young people. There are 2 lines of enquiry

* How well does the local authority QA framework and audit system have impact on outcomes for children and families?
* How are children and families involved in QA practice? Is the voice of the child impacting on organisational learning?
  1. The paper was circulated with the agenda. If the group thinks it would be useful for SESLIP to adopt as part of the thematic peer challenge programme then support will be needed from a SESLIP consultant

**ACTION – Thoughts/feedback to be sent to Stuart**

1. **Forward Planning and Agenda:**
   1. This is the last meeting for Diane to support the group. Stuart and colleagues thanked Diane for her work across the region. Hants will continue to sponsor the SESLIP QA work and Amanda will take on the role that Diane has taken

**ACTIONS**

* **Stuart plans to do a monthly touch base that will help develop the agenda and plan contributions. This will help colleagues do preparation in advance of the meetings**
* **Dates for the rest of the year need to be agreed – Diane will send out a template to capture the best day of the week for people for quarterly meetings** 
  1. Forward plan was discussed and updated – see attached



**ACTIONS**

* **Quality of Plans – agenda for June meeting – colleagues to share in advance their work on QA and quality of plans and challenges – this will enable a richer focused discussion at the meeting**

1. **AOB**
   1. Medway – asked about learning from COVID. Diane explained the SESLIP Silver Linings project - to be added to the agenda for the next meeting
   2. Bracknell Forest – raise learning from hybrid conferences – feed into silver lining discussion. See link below to information on SESLIP Silver Linings page:  [Hybrid Child protection conferences](https://seslip.co.uk/download-file/1023)
   3. RBWM -asked the group how authorities determine the number of audits per month to balance quantity and quality. The general view was that it depends where the authority is on its improvement journey and how confident managers are about the consistency and quality of audit. West Sussex reduced the number of audits in order to concentrate on the quality of the audit and ensuring a consistent understanding of practice across auditors. Surrey, expect each manager to audit one case a month from another area and Hants aim for 10% of cases across the year.
2. **Next Meeting –**

**Date – June TBA by Stuart and Amanda 10am-1pm**

**invitation will be sent out for Microsoft Teams**