**SESLIP Quality Assurance Leads Meeting**

**Wednesday 16 March 2022 (14:00 – 17:00)**

**Attendees:**

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| Brighton and Hove | Sharon | Martin |
| Brighton and Hove | Tina | James |
| Buckinghamshire | - |  |
| East Sussex | - |  |
| Hampshire | Amanda | Meadows |
| Isle of Wight (Chair) | Kim | Goode |
| Kent | Kevin | Kasaven |
| Medway | - |  |
| Oxfordshire | Tan | Lea |
| Portsmouth | Kate | Soutter |
| Reading | Fiona | Betts |
| Slough | - |  |
| Southampton | - |  |
| Surrey | Tom | Stevenson |
| West Berkshire | - |  |
| West Sussex | Christine | Impey |
| West Sussex | Laura | Mallinson |
| Windsor & Maidenhead | Shungu | Chigocha |
| Wokingham | Rachel | Oakley |
| Wokingham | Liz | McAuley |

**Apologies:**

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| Bracknell | Kogie | Perumall |
| Brighton & Hove | Justin | Grantham |
| Hampshire | Stuart | Ashley |
| Slough | Sandra | Davies |
| Southampton | Stuart | Webb |
| Surrey | Patricia | Denney |
| West Berkshire | Nicola | Robertson |

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| 1. **Introductions & Apologies** |
| As chair, Kim Goode welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made. |
| **2. Matters Arising from Last Meeting** |
| Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.  All were asked at the last meeting to investigate Early Help as an area of challenge; this item is for discussion on today’s agenda. It was noted that minutes from the last meeting were circulated only one week ago, so not allowing time to undertake investigative work. West Sussex had not been included in the original email so will take this item away and submit at a later date. |
| **3. National/Ofsted Issues** |
| Annual conversation engagements currently taking place, Kim Goode asked for key themes emerging from these.  Surrey advised that headlines focussed on SEND, UASC, adolescent mental health in light of the pandemic and the impact on residential children’s homes. Kent advised that the week prior to their conversation Ofsted informed that the policy had been amended as some LAs are considered too large for a focused visit, therefore Kent will be having a three-week ILAC inspection probably before the New Year. Questions to Kent focussed on the education improvement plan and sexual abuse framework in schools. Unregulated placements was a theme along with care leavers. Ofsted were particularly interested in UASC as Kent has high numbers (over 1000). They showed an interest in the number of notifications as 60% had social care involvement, also staff welfare and protected caseloads. Management oversight is identified as a challenge in Kent’s self-assessment so Ofsted were keen to hear about this. Kent were up front to explain they observed management oversight to be challenging, so explained what measures had been taken to improve this, such as a monthly workshop for all managers, where specific subjects are tracked, i.e. managing performance, strategies. Observing practice and measuring the impact of practice has been a focus, which has evidenced management oversight. Group supervision seems to have the largest impact on practice  Some of this resonated with the Isle of Wight’s (IW) experience as Kim explained that helpful context was prepared in readiness for the conversation along with demographics, although Ofsted questioning was focussed. There was open dialogue however, a different experience to previous conversations. IW were asked about performance issues relating to the January dataset, CP visiting for January in the Children with Disabilities Team, performance in one of the operational teams, supervision and reflective discussions, quality assurance and auditing – what was learned and how information is triangulated, unregulated placements and post 16 supported accommodation, NEET figures, foster placement provision and sufficiency. Early Help and the interface with schools during the pandemic was discussed along with sexual abuse in schools; Ofsted noted specific schools on IW where there are challenges. Sixth form provision was also discussed.  Hampshire (HCC) DCS felt that although Ofsted may not be interested in the pandemic and impact thereafter, they should be made aware. Questions focussed on CP visiting, re-referrals – HCC count theirs differently; this has never been raised as an issue as the front door is safe. HCC and IW were asked which subjects they wished to be considered for a future focussed visit. Oxfordshire are awaiting their annual conversation but welcomed other’s perspectives. Tan Lea questioned how the discussion around protected caseloads went in light of current challenges. Kevin Kasaven explained that Ofsted were already aware of the social worker average caseloads so focused on ASYEs. Kent’s average ASYE caseload is 15 and can be a challenge for team managers with more than one ASYE in their team, however ASYEs are eased and supported into these caseloads.  Reading had their conversation yesterday, however Fiona Betts has yet to gain feedback. A focussed visit was held last month with the letter yet to be published, part of the AEM discussion picked up on key findings from that visit and what the next inspection/visit might be – JTAI (front door), focused visit (CLA and care leavers) or ILACS. Brighton & Hove have their annual conversation arranged for tomorrow, 17 March. |
| **4. Feedback from CP Chairs Sub-group** |
| The CP Chairs sub-group met recently; attendance was reasonable. Sharon Martin advised on matters that were discussed, which included:-   * Hybrid meetings and different approaches to work – one LA is developing new policies around remote working * Agency participation – related to home working * Audio recording – different systems used was shared with the group * Practice policies including anti-racist and anti-oppressive practice – this will now be a standing agenda item going forward. Discussion was around identifying race/culture and reflecting this in plans * QA tools * Conferences – some families feel ‘put on the spot’, how can chairs develop their practice to avoid this? * Adversity – conference teams tend to be predominantly white * Trauma informed practice * Contextual safeguarding used within the conference space * Reflective learning tools and how feedback is used * Covid concerns around thresholds and increase in child obesity. Poverty is also of concern and the impact of families   Going forward agenda items to include PLO processes, supervision orders, child deaths, technology/audio recording and QA processes. Sharon Martin asked for any further agenda items to be sent to her so these can be incorporated into the agenda.  Overall the group welcome the opportunity and space to look at various learning. Meetings are held quarterly currently but possibly bi-monthly moving forward. A team channel has been developed to share templates etc.  IW confirmed that ICPCs are going back to face to face meetings which is creating some push back from partner agencies who do not feel they need to be in the room. Wokingham agreed with this and may look to escalate the issue through the safeguarding partnership; however no firm decision has yet been made regarding face to face. Some families and partners find virtual meetings more convenient and some are at the mercy of councils allowing staff back into buildings and availability of rooms. Reading is anticipating some resistance from partner agencies once face to face meetings resume. Need to address how people engage in hybrid meetings, for example it is an expectation that key partners have cameras switched on.  Surrey are looking at continuation of the hybrid model with the social worker, chair and parents in the room and partners in a virtual space. Better engagement with partners has been achieved this way. The challenge is the use of adequate technology in different settings to make this successful moving forward.  Shunga Chigocha advised that Windsor and Maidenhead held a consultation which included key partners/families to ascertain their views regarding virtual meetings. Many indicated that the current virtual way works for them. The quality of conferences was also reviewed and there is some support for maintaining the hybrid model. Availability to conference rooms is an issue, so Shunga could relate to where key agencies are coming from. |
| **5. Quality Assurance and Performance** |
| The area of challenge for this meeting is Early Help – cases in social care that have previously had early help involvement.  There was discussion at meeting with contributions from Isle of Wight, Brighton and Hove, Oxfordshire, Kent, Portsmouth and Wokingham. Please could all complete their responses and share with [Sally.Hickman2@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.Hickman2@hants.gov.uk).  **Good practice as identified by QA Framework**  Shungu Chigocha (Windsor and Maidenhead) advised on the introduction of double looping which goes live on 1 April 2022. The model will improve on monitoring of audits; two managers will collaborate when undertaking an audit. This kind of moderation will ensure consistency and encourage professional curiosity, which will redefine what ‘good’ looks like. Managers have different skillsets so if there are differing opinions during the auditing process then discussion takes place. Shungu is happy to bring the initial findings back to this group after a three-month period.  The Isle of Wight (IW) reported it has recently implemented a model to improve the quality of audits. Whilst Hampshire (HCC) undertake 114 audits per month, the IW currently do 28, so going forward IW service managers will meet on a monthly basis to look at the quality of audits undertaken by team managers and consider why some audits are not where they need to be. Audits across HCC and IW are now undertaken as one process for alignment.  Tina James (Brighton and Hove) referred to the quality of audit actions. Brighton and Hove are currently moving from the OLM system to Eclipse and are hoping the new system can assist with compliance. Guidance has been prepared around the quality and completion of audits. Kim Goode added that completion of audit actions is tracked manually, via spreadsheet, on the IW and is therefore an area of focus.  Kent has done some analysis of audit actions and found that the impact of auditing has improved re-referral rates. Referring to analysis of moderation, Kevin Kasaven advised that everyone does it slightly differently, but the impact of auditing and moderation over time has proven to be positive. Good practice is identified via positive practice audits; moving from a deficit approach to celebrating it.  Shunga Chigocha (Windsor and Maidenhead) referred to recent research around ‘machine learning’ and questioned what to do with this in relation to intervention. Intel from moderation should have an impact. Audits are not followed up in supervisions/case discussion, therefore looking at restructuring the supervision template.  Reading has identified that moderation has been lax therefore a panel will be set up for inexperienced staff to gain learning. There is a need to address what the workforce have done with the information, so a new form has been created on Mosaic that tracks through the supervision and identifies that the team manager has closed off the actions, giving confidence that the audit has been achieved.  Liz McAuley advised that Wokingham has a moderation panel which directors/managers sit on for extra scrutiny. Collaboration audits are undertaken with social workers which is dynamic but a challenge around reflective work. Amanda Meadows advised the process in HCC/IW is more around management oversight; case file audits list the actions and spot audits are undertaken to ensure actions are addressed. HCC/IW audits are not graded, which Ofsted do not have an issue with; it is difficult to have reflective discussion if grades are introduced. Kevin Kasaven added that Kent did not grade audits for a time however this did not work well for Kent, staff preferred the grading.    All – in terms of examples of good practice, please put this in writing and send to Sally to disseminate to the group. |
| **6. Any other Business and Information Sharing** |
| **DCS have been asked to nominate someone for the moderation of Self-Assessment panels. Should this be the members of the group?**  Kim Goode advised this regional project is funded by the DfE for self-assessment and peer inspection work. One representative is required from each of the 19 LAs and some funding will be available; the expectation is for attendance a few days per year. Nominations so far include Portsmouth, Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Hampshire and Isle of Wight. Kate Soutter will share a link from the SESLIP newsletter.  **KS to share the SESLIP Newsletter link re moderation of self-assessment panels.**  Kim concluded the meeting by thanking all for their commitment in attending this meeting, however not many LAs represented; there has been some useful discussion. The minutes will be circulated within 10 days of this meeting and agenda distributed in plenty of time prior to the next meeting.  **Topics for Future Meetings**   * QA Framework extended across wider areas of Children’s Services, i.e. SEN etc (Liz McAuley) * Fostering – quality assuring and reviewing adults etc (Kevin Kasaven) * Increased number of s47s – raised at the last meeting |

**Actions from the last sessions – 10 March, 7 June and 10 September.**

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| **1** | **Matters Arising from last meeting** | Douglas Sinclair to share East Sussex protocol developed as part of Care Leavers transitions work | Open |
| **2** | **Children Missing Education** | Douglas Sinclair will share the East Sussex multi-agency CME audit tool | Open |
| **3** | **Added value to the QA system of IRO and CP chairs** | Stuart Ashley will share Hampshire’s review report once completed. Not available at time of QA Leads meeting on 6 January 2022. | Pending |
| **4** | **Responding to minister’s request for assurance - (serious incident notifications, and concerns over increasing incidents involving babies)** | Kent will share the early years development programme | Closed |
| **5** | **Virtual QA Thematic Peer Challenge Framework 2020 21 – QA** | Thoughts/feedback to be sent to Stuart Ashley | Closed |
| **6** | **Forward Planning and Agenda** | 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 | Closed |
| **7** | **Forward Planning and Agenda** | 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 | Closed |