

South East Sector Led Improvement Programme

2018: Memorandum of understanding: children's sector-led improvement

Introduction

This memorandum was originally developed jointly by ADCS, LGA and SOLACE in 2014 for national use: this version has been updated for 2018 by the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme. It has not been endorsed by the governance processes of the three organisations: it is offered as a basis for sustaining the work of the SESLI programme.

Aims and key principles

1. Directors of Children's Services, Lead Members and Chief Executives will work to improve outcomes for children and young people and to demonstrate the capacity and capability of the sector to achieve a coherent and consistent self-improving system. This will include a commitment to work with other sector led improvement boards and with regard to the context set by national government and regulatory bodies. In this endeavour:
 - The role of the Lead Members is to maintain an overview of the performance of the local government sector in order to identify potential performance challenges and opportunities, and to provide tools and support to help councils take advantage of the approach
 - The role of Chief Executives is to ensure the engagement of the professional leadership of local government in sector led improvement and inform its work from their unique perspective of the full extent of corporate and partnership activity
 - The role of Directors of Children's Services is to provide the reservoir of critical sector expertise and engage the leadership of children's services in sector led improvement
2. The key principles behind programmes of activity in common with those for all sector led improvement are that:
 - Councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement and for leading the delivery of improved outcomes for local people in their area
 - Councils are primarily accountable to local communities and stronger accountability through increased transparency helps local people drive further improvement
 - Councils have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole

It is recognised that central government through statute and regulation may also seek to hold councils to account through inspection and in some cases through intervention.

Local and Regional

3. Sector led improvement will be delivered operationally at the local, regional and national level. Each level will need to be inter-related and mutually supportive as the success of the programme will be dependent on all three levels working together.

Locally: We will encourage:

- Lead Members, Chief Executives, Directors of Children's Services and Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to create a self-aware and learning culture, which is driven by improving outcomes for children and families

- Councils to choose to engage in sector led improvement
- The routine use of self-assessment and external challenge to validate quality assurance, particularly in safeguarding and care
- Councils to make information available to the public including benchmarking data to strengthen local accountability
- Upholding the principle of listening to the voice of children and families in shaping their own journey and in influencing the provision of services for them
- Working in close partnership with other organisations and agencies in a manner that is transparent, accountable and effective in delivering measurable improvement

Regionally: Lead Members, Chief Executives and Directors of Children's Services will work collaboratively through their own agreed governance and self-funded arrangements to:

- Provide leadership and drive in the collective improvement of children's services within the region and support other sector led national and regional Boards in their endeavours to do so
- Establish a culture of honest and constructive dialogue and challenge within and between authorities
- Work with regard to other established bodies (including OFSTED and DfE) to ensure the most efficient and effective approach to working with councils
- Deliver a system of peer scrutiny and challenge which supports self-awareness and continuous improvement
- Encourage the use of, and develop where appropriate, diagnostic tools to help councils understand their own performance
- Respect the confidentiality of documents and other information shared as part of the regional improvement programme
- Contribute to the identification and dissemination of good practice and development of sector leadership and peer support capacity

Signed for the Council

Ian Pearson, Acting DCS



Nick Carter, Chief Executive



Councillor Lynne Doherty, Lead member

