

The Eastern Region Children’s Improvement Board: Memorandum of Understanding for the Eastern region children’s sector led improvement partnership

Background: Regional organisation and delivery is critical in making the work of the Children’s Improvement Board optimally effective. This MOU for Eastern Region CIB creates a simple framework through which regional delivery can operate with appropriate local freedom to focus on key regional needs and issues. The ER CIB’s approach complements existing structures within the Eastern Region, providing an umbrella under which regional networks can operate with a shared vision and focus.

Mission and Territorial Scope: This MOU confirms the arrangements for the Eastern Region as a CIB Regional Partnership with a mission which covers the three objectives of:

- the general improvement of the system of children’s services in striving for optimal outcomes for children, young people and families, and excellence, efficiency and economy in the services that support them;
- support and intervention in the case of material weakness or potential failure of children’s services; and,
- a channel for the delivery of policy initiatives and innovations in pursuit of excellence and better outcomes.

The Region covers the services provided by and in the principal authorities named in **Annex 1**.

Membership, Chairing, and Meeting Arrangements: The Regional CIB Partnership has membership and associated arrangements as described in **Annex 2**.

Regional Accountable Body: Suffolk County Council will be the Accountable Body for the funding delegated to the ER CIB by the 11 principle authorities in the region (named in Annex 1). Suffolk County Council will disburse those funds in accordance with the agreement between the ER CIB, the Eastern Region DCS group (the central governing body) and the programme team (hosted by Norfolk County Council)

Administrative Procedures: The administrative procedures of East of England LGA will apply to the conduct of Regional CIB Partnership business appropriately interpreted to reflect the Regional CIB’s role, mission, and prerogatives. This includes procedures in relation to potential conflicts of interest matters, and to procurement arrangements – both of which are to be regulated, inter alia, by a register of interests. The financial and

administrative arrangements between the ER CIB, East of England LGA and the CIB Regional partnership will be managed by designated staff in each.

Activities and Business Planning: The ER CIB Regional Partnership is supported by the SLI Programme Team in order to achieve deliverables agreed with the Eastern Region DCS group (central governing body) as detailed in the costed offer detailed within **Annex 3**. The Programme Team will submit a project plan detailing deliverables to the ER CIB (including a rationale for activity, timescales, delivery partners, outputs and outcomes). It will also provide updates of progress and outcomes to the ER CIB as required.

Conflict Resolution: In the event of any disagreement of substance which cannot be resolved between the ER CIB partnership, or involving the other principal parties, it is the duty of all the signatories to this MOU to conciliate differences, and (should that not be possible) to agree a mechanism appropriate to the character of the differences to ensure resolution.

Freedom of Information: The Region will, as far as appropriate, act as if it were subject to statutory Freedom of Information requirements.

Status, Duration and Review: This MOU is not intended to and does not create legal obligations between the parties. The MOU and these Regional CIB arrangements will continue at least until the end of financial year 2016/17 at which point it will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Signed on behalf of Eastern Region CIB Partnership:

Dated: 17th November 2014

Lead DCS

Jenny Coles

Director of Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services
(Hertfordshire County Council)

Lead Member

Cllr. Richard Roberts

Lead Member for Children
(Hertfordshire County Council)

Lead Chief Executive

Gillian Beasley

Chief Executive
(Peterborough City Council)

Accountable Body:

Cllr Richard Stay

EoE LGA Panel Chair
(Central Bedfordshire Council)

Annex 1 – the principal authorities in the Eastern Region

The Memorandum of Understanding for the CIB Regional Partnership in the Eastern Region relates to the services by and in the principal authorities listed below in alphabetical order

Bedford Borough Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Central Bedfordshire Council
Essex County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Luton Borough Council
Norfolk County Council
Peterborough City Council
Southend-on-sea Borough Council
Suffolk County Council
Thurrock Council

As a region we are also keen to involve the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCBs) who will be responsible for taking the lead with partner engagement.

Annex 2 ER CIB membership, chairing and meeting arrangements

The governance structure aims to engender a strong sense of collective responsibility and will follow arrangements already in place.

The Eastern Region DCS group will be the central governing body and act at the Regional Improvement Board.

An Executive Group will be created including the Lead DCS, Lead Lead Member, and Lead Chief Executive who will meet on a quarterly basis via phone conference.

Members of this Executive group will feedback to their respective regional group:

- Lead DCS (Jenny Coles, Hertfordshire) – Eastern Region DCS Group
- Lead CEx (Gillian Beasley, Peterborough) – Regional Chief Executive Group
- Lead Lead Member (Richard Roberts, Hertfordshire) – Regional Portfolio Holders Network (endorsed by the LGA)

The Executive Group will have terms of reference to be agreed as part of the regional MOU arrangements

Information will also be feed into the Improvement East's Member Panel, which reports to the LGA.

The accountable body will be Suffolk County Council who will act as the financial hub for Sector Led Improvement Funding.

Norfolk County Council will host the programme team who oversee the day-to-day running of the Sector Led Improvement Programme

Annex 3 – The costed Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement Offer 2015 – 2017

The offer

The Eastern Region Sector Led Improvement Programme works with the 11 Local Authorities in the Eastern Region to promote, support and improve services for children and young people in the region. We provide a range of support to the region's councils and individual officers, including:

Self-Assessment, Peer Challenge & Review

The SLI programme coordinates and supports a yearly self-assessment and peer challenge process including:

- Coordination and support to local authorities to produce outcomes focused self-assessment on a yearly basis.
- Set up and coordination of the regional DCS Peer Challenge Board to subject self-assessments to a process of peer challenge and undertake 'challenge conversations' with their matched DCS
- Thematic analysis of all self-assessments to identify areas of innovative, effective practice across the region and shared areas of improvement
- Coordination of regional benchmarking against a suite of key performance measures as part of the Self-Assessment and Peer challenge process (6 monthly and yearly review of data by the DCS Peer Challenge Board, and the production of in-year quarterly benchmarking reports for key regional networks).
- Coordination of peer-led health checks for LAs in the region focusing on a particular service or theme (i.e. safeguarding, Looked After Children & Leaving Care, School improvement)

Regional improvement priorities

The SLI programme coordinates and supports regional projects focused on shared areas for improvement. The programme offers:

- Identification of shared areas for improvement as evidenced within self-assessments and scoping of regional activity to make improvements, undertake research or increase knowledge in key areas

- Coordinate and manage regional activity on improvement priorities utilising Prince2 project management techniques e.g. working with LSCBs on regional standards connected to inspection.
- Support Local Authorities to work together on themes for improvement

Regional networking & sharing effective practice

The SLI Programme supports and coordinates a number of regional networks and maintains a range of communication tools which are free to access to help children's services manage and compare performance, get detailed information about work underway in the region and share best practice:

- Support and coordinate regional networks for Social Care ADs, Children's Commissioners from health & LAs, Children's Workforce Leads, QA Leads and Performance Information Managers, School Improvement
- Produce information and updates for linked regional groups including the LSCB Chairs, Lead Members and Chief Executives
- Maintain the ESP website to be a regional hub of information, data and resources for children's services workers
- Produce a quarterly newsletter for the region to share information on work underway across the networks and within the SLI programme
- Links with local, regional and national agencies and partners to support the region to be outward facing and ensure the regional Children's SLI programme learns from national partners and SLI in other areas of local government (i.e. Adults services, health)

Leadership & workforce development

The SLI Programme will support regional activities focused on leadership and workforce development, including professional development opportunities for principal and senior leaders working in the leadership, management and delivery of services for children, young people and families. The Programme will also oversee project activity within workforce planning including the regional collaboration to manage the supply of social workers with a view to reducing employment costs, improving quality and reducing the dependency on agency and interim social workers.