

IMPROVEMENT EAST

JUNE 2024



THE EASTERN REGION EARLY HELP CONFERENCE

The Regional Early Help Conference, held on May 15th, celebrated and showcased the outstanding work carried out by Early Help services across the region. The event organised by the Eastern Region Early Help Network featured keynote speeches from Dr. Susannah Bowyer (AD at Research in Practice), Helen Lincoln (Chair of ADCS Families, Communities & Young People Policy Committee & Exec Director for Children, Families and Education in Essex), and Anthony, a father with lived experience from Hertfordshire. Additionally, nine out of the eleven local authorities in the region delivered workshops, highlighting innovative and excellent practice. The conference drew 226 attendees, including colleagues, partners and stakeholders, and the feedback received has been overwhelmingly positive.



'It was really good – so many thought provoking sessions and a real appetite to share practice, with lots I can feedback to government, particularly the complexity around joining up so many policies across so many departments, all with multiple targets, guidance and reporting that can often seem competing on the ground.'

'It was lovely to be there and get a sense of the enthusiasm and commitment of the participants.'

'It was great to have the chance to get together and see what other LAs are doing in this space'.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES WORKFORCE

The Eastern Region's Memorandum of Cooperation for the Employment of Agency Social Workers has been in place for nearly a decade and compliance is monitored by the regional workforce team. In addition, the team are working with other regions to influence the DfE in their thinking around the National Agency rules and are supporting the region to prepare for the changes.

The Eastern Region Microsite continues to gain momentum. The workforce team strive to ensure it accurately represents both the region and the 11 local authorities within it. They are actively seeking blog content and short videos to showcase and promote the impactful work of our social workers in the region.

If you have any questions, queries or ideas for content please contact Vicky Brooks

VickyBrooks@southend.gov.uk

Please support the Eastern Region microsite by following the LinkedIn page and sharing your networks.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/eastern-region-social-worker-jobs/>

EASTERN REGION SEND NETWORK

Eastern Region SEND Forum

The network held the last SEND forum of the current academic year on 13 June. As always, a wide range of speakers contributed to the event, including Benedict Coffin from the DfE, Chris Morris from Bedford Borough representing regional SENDAP Change Partners and Paul Opoku from Herts and West Essex ICB. In line with all our forums this year, attendance was high with a good range of colleagues from all of those involved in SEND across the region. The forum continues to be a successful way of conveying information around SEND and sharing the best regional and national practice. Thanks to Louise Warren (NHSE) for her support as co-chair of the forum.

Courageous Conversations (SEND peer review)

Two Courageous Conversations have been completed and a further conversation takes place in July. Three conversations are planned for the Autumn term and Lou Williams is sorting dates for the remaining five for the spring and summer 2025. We need volunteers for our 'peer review volunteers' list. Feedback from peer reviewers is always incredibly positive so support in encouraging staff to participate is appreciated. We need one more peer reviewer for the July conversation. Please get in touch if you have staff who are interested.

SEND network meetings

Our SEND network meetings continue to be held for Strategic Leads, PfA/post 16, Operational Leads, DCO/DMOs, Young People and DSCOs. There has been considerable change in membership in some areas, reflecting the changes in the region around SEND. If staff are new to the region, we can arrange short meetings to explain what can be offered from the regional SEND network and are happy to be included in induction plans.

Healthy Parent Carers Initiative

This project is being run in partnership with Exeter University. It is intended to support PCFs provide support for the mental health of parent/carers who have children or young people with SEND. Parents/carers are provided with a short course that promotes an approach to enabling participants to support their own mental health and pass on their learning to support other parents/carers. The approach seeks to help children and young people with SEND by ensuring that the parents/carers that they rely on are looking after themselves. Four areas have completed the course and others are currently participating. Feedback from participants has been very positive. A more formal evaluation is planned in the Autumn.

SEND Conference – Spring 2025

A SEND conference is being planned for February 25 at Robertson House, Stevenage. The conference is being organised by the regional young person's group who are keen to ensure that their voice is heard by regional SEND decision makers. It will provide opportunity to discuss regional priorities for the future in the context of coproduction. There will be more details in September 2025.

Further information, or to register your interest to be part of a Peer Review or Courageous Conversation team please contact: Rachel.black@norfolk.gov.uk

Eastern Region SEND Network Newsletter

A regional SEND newsletter will be published in July 24. It's not too late to send on any contributions around regional best practice that may be of interest to others.

EASTERN REGION PERFORMANCE DATA

- Systems are now in place to collect annual 903 data securely for use in the Regional Placement Sufficiency Dashboard. We will be reaching out to LA data leads for named contacts to upload data shortly.
- Power Bi reports using 5 years' worth of data have been developed and testing with performance leads across the region will happen over the summer with a view to launch late summer with 2023/24 data (submitted to DfE end of June). Following this work will be underway to collect CiN Census data.
- The Q4 Tartan Rug and analysis is now available to share.
- A test run for collecting SEND benchmarking data will be carried out at the end of Q1 and will report back later in the summer.



PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY

An Eastern Region Placement Sufficiency Diagnostic has been completed, identifying several areas that could benefit from increased regional collaboration across local authorities and with other partners, including the NHS.

The final report, titled 'The Analysis of Children with the Most Complex Needs,' has been finalised and shared with regional leads. Despite an unsuccessful bid to become a Department for Education (DfE) pathfinder for the Regional Care Collaborative Pathfinder, LAs in the region continue to meet to promote collaboration in this area. Additionally, the Eastern Region DCS network has approved a business case to allocate regional funding for designated work in this field, initially for a 12-month period.

FosterEast

Foster East went live on 28th May and currently has nine of the eleven of the LAs in the region on board with work being done with the remaining LAs to get them onboarded as soon as possible.

It is a new, collaborative approach to foster carer recruitment and support. Each council has a slightly different way of working but all share the same aims:

- To improve the experience that our foster carers have during the application process
- To provide solid training and in-depth support to ensure our foster parents can care with confidence, and
- To increase the number of foster carers working with us across the region so we can keep our children rooted in their local communities.

Although early in the project we are already seeing commitment to shared learning and development, alongside a drive to increase enquiries with staff supporting recruitment events across the Region.

To find out more please visit [Foster East](#)

CARE LEAVERS

The managers and leaders of Leaving Care Services from across the region convene quarterly to exchange best practices, address challenges, and collaborate to enhance the experiences of care-experienced young individuals.

As one of the Eastern Region DCS Network's priorities for 2023–2025, a development plan has been established to direct the group's efforts. This plan includes exploring opportunities to increase the number of EET (Education, Employment, and Training) Care Leavers and mapping the Care Leaver offer across the region.

SAVE THE DATE

Eastern Region Leaving Care
Conference

20th September 2024,
Hertfordshire Development
Centre, Stevenage

Additionally, an autumn conference is being organised to bring practitioners together from across the region with a focus on trauma informed practice, transitional safeguarding, and addressing NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) issues.

UPDATES

- > 13/06/24 DfE published [Education, health and care plans, Reporting year 2024 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- > 06/06/24 DfE published [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic year 2023/24 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- > 21/05/24 Data2Insight published [Children's Social Care for Data People](#)
- > 15/05/24 Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel published [Safeguarding children in elective home education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- > 10/05/24 The Children's Commissioner published [An Alternative Route: Post-16 Support for Young People Attending Alternative Provision](#)
- > 09/05/24 DfE launched a [consultation](#) on proposals which position unregistered alternative provision as an intervention, not a destination, to complement education in schools.

REGIONAL INSPECTION ACTIVITY

**Completed Inspections /
Visits Awaiting Published
Reports**

Suffolk Full ILAC

Published Reports

Cambridgeshire Full ILAC

The next edition of the Improvement Newsletter is scheduled for September 2024. If you have anything that you want including or wish to provide names of colleagues who you would like to receive it or want to be removed from the distribution list, please contact rachel.black@norfolk.gov.uk