



East Midland Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA)

Memorandum of Understanding 2022-24

Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Lincolnshire County Council, North Northamptonshire Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Rutland County Council, West Northamptonshire Council, Northamptonshire Children's Trust

All ten local authorities in the East Midlands are committed to the principles behind sector led improvement and therefore have formed the East Midlands Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance (RIIA). We individually, and collectively, believe that it is our responsibility to ensure that the services we provide and the approaches we take are rooted in ensuring that outcomes for children, young people and their families are improved; and that our populations are better off as a result of the work we do. The Alliance is built upon openness and trust, and will serve to provide, for each council in the region, robust support and challenge; and a programme of joint learning and development against clear priorities.

Our ambition is that the Alliance will:

- Serve as the primary means by which the sector will address the early identification of concerns before they reach crisis point.
- Build and share good practice.
- Contribute to evidenced based models, and innovative ideas to drive improvement.
- Create the conditions for a learning system which unites all stakeholders from regulation to delivery in a robust and collective approach to improvement.
- Measure and celebrate success and impact of the work we do.

The Alliance is a collaboration across the region of Directors of Children's Service, Chief Executives, LGA and DfE. The relationship across all stakeholders of the Regional Improvement and Innovation Alliance will be based on trust and co-operation. Information will be shared in a professional way across all partners with the principle being that all information will be shared as this better safeguards children and young people through the development of a high challenge, high support improvement framework.

The approach we are adopting across the region including, where possible, with our partner agencies and organisations, will ensure that we develop reflective practice throughout the system, and the necessary skills to embed our vision.

To achieve our aspirations we recognise that we need to continue to change culture rather than structure and this takes time, commitment and determination. We believe that three characteristics are essential to achieving an effective, self- improving system:

- The ability to identify issues early and accurately before they reach crisis point.
- The ability to respond quickly when concerns are identified, to land tough messages and ensure remedial actions are taken swiftly.
- The right capacity within the region to provide the right improvement support when and where it is needed
- Equally to learn from good practice and successes, both locally and from further afield.

We are determined that the ambitious approach we are committed to will lead to the development and next practice, rooted in system change rather than best practice which is often invested in an individual or group. To ensure that our approach has lasting commitment we have all secured support from our Chief Executives and Lead Members. To root the agreement we all signed this Memorandum of Understanding. This move demonstrates both our commitment and determination to improve outcomes beyond those achieved already.

1. Introduction

1.1. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is between the ten Local Authorities that make up the East Midlands Region namely: Derby City, Derbyshire, Leicester City, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, West Northamptonshire, North Northamptonshire, Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire and Rutland.

1.2. The MoU sets out the agreed areas and activities in which the Local Authorities will work together through the Alliance to support Sector Led Improvement, with shared aims of:

- Securing improvement work that is focused on galvanising Children's Service to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people, working in particular on the need to avoid service failures, improve performance in relation to the more intractable challenges and sustains progress during a period of significant economic restraint.
- Building on existing capability in Children's Services, corporately and with partners to diagnose improvement challenges, identify risk to performance and commission effective, evidence based and value for money solutions.
- Systematically sharing knowledge about what works across the sector and ensuring that there is effective brokerage of best practice solutions.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of policies designed to improve the lives of children.

1.3. The MoU is not a statutory or contractual document, it is a statement of commitment to work collaboratively to support the regional sector led improvement model. Its impact will be monitored through governance board which will meet twice a year involving the Lead Chief Executive, Lead Member, Directors of Children's Services leading on the RIIA, DfE and LGA.

1.4. The areas that are covered by this MoU include:

1.5. Arrangements for the joint scrutiny of performance and improvement plans

- A common set of core activities, supported by a common core dataset collected and analysed within each LA on a quarterly basis.
- Agreement to share data across the region.
- A process of peer challenge through Challenge Conversations
- Production of a high level regional development plan, focussed upon key common challenges.
- Offer and brokerage of support which is proportionate, matched to need and delivered by the most appropriate person/people. This will include how to broker support from outside the region.
- A voluntary shared accountability for outcomes in the region.
- A duty of care for the regions leaders of Children's Services

1.6 For the duration of the MoU, each Local Authority agrees to:

- Complete and submit a self-evaluation (SEF) and agreed supporting information. Each Local Authority will ensure that their self-evaluation is signed off by the DCS, Lead Member, Chief Executive or equivalent.
- Arrange for the submission of quarterly agreed data for in-year analysis and benchmarking. (See Section 6)
- Release colleagues who lead on data and performance/improvement activity as required to underpin the agreed regional processes.
- Participate in a biennial Challenge Conversation with other Directors of Children's Services. Challenge Teams will consist of DCS's working in Triads.
- Produce a development plan, identify strengths and areas for development. Each Local Authority's development plan is signed off by DCS, Lead Member, Chief Executive (or equivalent).
- Be prepared to both offer and receive support, brokered within the RIIA.
- Allow the RIIA members and manager to draw on data, SEFs and Development Plans in order to inform the Improvement offer.

- Participate in the development of a high-level regional development plan, focussing on key common challenges, which is signed off by the RIIA's lead DCS, Lead Member and Chief Executive.
- Contribute to regional improvement events.
- Attend regional RIIA strategic and operational groups, sending appropriate representatives as required.

1.7 The SDSA will support and co-ordinate the activities defined in this MoU, following plans approved by the EM DCS group, who will secure the necessary funds.

The main component of the Regional Peer Challenge scheme for the period of the MoU will be strategic Peer Challenge Conversations. These will be supported by regional working groups, regional seminars, regional project work and complementary thematic peer challenge, e.g. SEND.

2. Strategic Peer Challenge Conversation

Challenge Teams

2.1 The Directors of Children's Services commit to:

- Undertake development to support their leadership of Peer Challenge Conversations including the roles of Peer Challenge conversation Lead DCS, Host DCS, and Triad DCS's.
- Nominate as appropriate senior officers, at second tier or equivalent and those at third tier with relevant experience, to undertake development as Challenge Conversation team members.
- Release and support officers to participate as a team member in at least one review in a MoU period and in additional training and development activities as identified through quality assurance and evaluation.

2.2 The Lead Challenge DCS will form a team, for each challenge conversation:

- The lead DCS, logistical Support Officer and the Data Specialist will request the SEF and challenge pack from the host local authority. The Lead Challenge DCS, 2 Triad DCS's and Data specialist will interrogate the information provided by the host DCS and formulate and agree KLOE's for the Challenge Conversation. The Triad Team, may co-opt technical experts to assist in the challenge conversation.
- Ensuring that a review team does not include colleagues from the local area being reviewed or any with significant prior experience or relationships that may cloud objectivity.
- Ensuring that any critical incidents are reported immediately to the host DCS.
- Receive and review (with the 2 Triad DCS's) a follow-up report from the Host DCS 3-6 months after the review that describes their subsequent actions.

2.3 The 2 Triad DCS will, for each Challenge Conversation

- Form an early relationship with the Host and Lead Challenge DCS.
- Act as coach for the review process.
- Ensure that the reflective process is completed at the end of each review process by each member of the review team and the host DCS.
- Act as a mediator and final adjudicator should any dispute/complaint not be satisfactorily resolved by the host DCS and the onsite review team.
- Participate in additional training and development activities as identified through this Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.
- Receive and review with the Lead Challenge (DCS) a follow-up report from the Host DCS 3-6 months after the review that describes their subsequent actions.

2.4 The Host DCS will, for each review:

- a) Supply sufficient information to the Lead Challenge DCS for them to formulate and agree KLOE for the challenge conversation and undertake the review process.
- b) Liaise closely throughout the process with the Lead Challenge DCS, in particular to ensure that an appropriate challenge conversation timetable is arranged and proceeds smoothly.
- c) Supply the necessary permissions and powers to enable visiting peers to fulfil their role
- d) Respond appropriately to the matters raised in the review report.
- e) Submit a follow-up report to the Lead Challenge and 2 Triad DCSs 3-6 months after the review that describes their subsequent actions.

Challenge Conversation Process

2.5 Each DCS commits to:

- a) Lead, host and quality assure a biennial Peer Challenge Conversation.
- b) Complete and submit a self-evaluation and challenge pack, using the agreed template.
- c) Each self-evaluation is peer scrutinised through the Triad Teams.
- d) Each Local Authority then produces a development plan, identifying strengths and areas for development. Each development plan must be signed off by the Local Authority's DCS, Lead Member and Chief Executive.
- e) Each Local Authority development plan is peer challenged.
- f) Drawing from each LA's self-evaluation and development plan, the RIA produces a menu of support offers.
- g) The EMRIIA produces a high level of regional development plan, focussed on key common challenges, which are signed off by the RIIA's Lead DCS, Lead Member and Chief Executive. The final plan to be published on the ADCS website.
- h) Brokering of support for each Local Authority to be via the RIIA, but in some instances to address high level common challenges, support may be brokered from outside of the region.
- i) To keep up the momentum of improvement and challenge, a six month progress check against the Local Authority's development plan will be built into the challenge process. The Peer Challenge DCS may delegate this to the 2nd Tier Safeguarding Leads in the Triad and the regional data leads to conduct the check in. This may include moderation of audits, case sampling or other agreed activities.
- j) Undertake review activity within the agreed processes as outlined in the scheme.
- k) Deposit reports of reviews with the SDSA to facilitate the extraction of development themes for integration into the regional succession planning and leadership development menu of activities as appropriate.

3. Succession planning/leadership development

3.1 The Director of Children's Services commit to joint work with other DCSs to co-ordinate leadership development and improvement activity to build capacity for self-improvement within the East Midlands. At the start of the MoU, this commitment is exemplified by the following:

- a) Provide leadership for local learning seminars and equivalent regionally-agreed events.
- b) Sponsor and support regional priority projects and the appropriate representation and involvement of their key colleagues within them
- c) Consider re-embarking upon collaborative leadership development activities should the need arise.
- d) Provide a support offer to newly appointed DCSs.

4. Regional Accountability

- 4.1 The EMRIIA will identify a Lead RIIA DCS, Lead Member and a Lead Chief Executive for Sector Led Improvement. For this 2022-24 period, the Lead RIIA DCS is Heather Sandy (Lincolnshire), Lead Members are Cllr Sarah Russell (Leicester City Council) and Cllr Deborah Taylor (Leicestershire) and Lead Chief Executive is Debbie Barnes (Lincolnshire).
- 4.2 The EM DCS group will exercise a duty of care to each other. They will remain vigilant for behaviours or disengagement from the regional activities that might be symptomatic of denial, pressure or avoidance.
- 4.3 They will monitor Peer Challenge Conversation to assure themselves that proportionate responses have been made by the receiving LA, holding each other to account.
- 4.4 The EM DCS group will follow up any areas of concern from any of the Peer Challenge Conversations, through one-to-one communications with each other, stating informally and then escalating through more formal engagement by the EM DCS Chair or the Lead DCS for Sector Led Improvement. If these communications do not allay the concerns of the group, then the group commits to take them via the Chair DCS to the Chair Lead Member and following this the Lead Chief Executive for the RIIA.
- 4.5 Following the Peer Challenge cycle, the RIIA Lead DCS will lead a process to develop a regional plan that describes new actions that will be taken in response to the issues raised. The period of this plan will extend until 2024, when the Peer challenge process is next repeated.
- 4.6 A RIIA Executive Group will meet bi-annually to review the progress and impact of the regional plan and the findings from Challenge Conversations, data sets, development plans, and impact of support provided and any lessons learned. This group will include the RIIA Lead DCS, RIIA Lead Members, the RIIA Lead Chief Executive and regional Children's Improvement Advisers for both DfE (Stewart Bembridge) and LGA (Andrew Bunyan).
- 4.7 A RIIA Operational Group that comprises the Chairs of all associated regional networks and groups will meet 3 times per year to connect the work programmes of their groups with the regional priorities and support the implementation of the regional plan.
- 4.8 For 2022-24, a Strategic Regional Co-ordinator is appointed by EM DCSs (Peter Chilvers) to oversee the regional work included within this MOU and connect the layers of strategic decision-making with operational work across the region.

5. Role of Local Government Association and Department of Education

- 5.1 The LGA's and the DfE's policy position is that to have a fully effective system of Sector Led Improvement, all local authorities should be encouraged and supported to improve and this should be applied to the full range of children's services.
- 5.2 The LGA and the DfE have appointed a Children's Improvement Adviser (CIA) in every region. For the LGA, this officer will include:
 - Intensive political support for children's lead members as well as politicians and corporate leaders more widely, including mentoring and peer support.
 - Support to children's lead member to ensure they have sufficient skills to play an active role in RIAs, enhancing their ability to challenge and scrutinise self-assessments and the effectiveness of regional working more broadly.

- Providing training and development for all senior leaders and other key individuals, such as scrutiny chairs to ensure they have regular opportunities to offer and receive support at a regional and national level on an on-going basis;
- At a national level access to financial management support, including diagnostic and peer support, to help ensure effective use of resources.

For the DfE, the offer will include brokering support from outside the region, especially accessing support through the partners in practice programme.

5.3 The LGA also has a range of national peer reviews and diagnostic tools covering a range of specific aspects of service practice. These could be commissioned on an on-demand basis alongside the work of PiPs or to support councils which have challenges in specific areas. In order to fulfil the role the CIA will be included in sector led discussions in the region.

6. Regional Data Sharing

6.1 The work of this MoU is supported by a common core dataset collected and analysed within and by each LA on a quarterly basis. The data is utilised for in-year analysis, benchmarking and to promote service improvement.

6.2 A regional infrastructure exists for data sharing and analysis, to promote a high challenge/ high support improvement framework where data is purposefully utilised in network groups and partnership approaches to identify themes and trends and better safeguard children and young people.

6.3 To facilitate this, it is agreed to link and share data across the region in accordance to these principles:

- Partners will only share pseudonymised and/or anonymised (statistical) data through the dashboard.
- Leicestershire County Council Business Intelligence services will manage the data sharing arrangements, using the Tableau platform.
- Leicestershire BI Service will only process the data in accordance with written instructions from the partners.
- Tableau will not be used to circumvent existing access controls on the source data.
- Access to the dashboards will be limited and controlled within partner organisations.
- Partners will agree not to re-identify, de-identified data. (Re-identifying de-identified data is now a criminal offence under the DPA 2018.)

6.4 A register of data items, as outlined in this MoU appendix, will be maintained that explains what the region is recording/linking/sharing in terms of data (See Appendix)

6.5 New data requests will be considered by Leicestershire BI alongside current arrangements to check whether it is already covered or not. The executive decisions about new areas of data collection, or to share data with additional partners, are made by the regional group of Directors of Children's Services (EM DCS).

6.6 The data register for the period of this MoU includes a nationally agreed dataset of RIIA Indicators. This will be shared with DfE on a quarterly basis, in line with national agreements timely and in line with guidance. The agreed standard templates will be used and the accompanying guidance observed.

6.7 The DfE will share insights from these quarterly data with relevant policy teams to inform their work. The Department's CSC regional improvement team will act as the internal point of contact for any queries raised by policy teams. Ministers may also wish to see these data to get a sense of the overall

pressures in and health of the system. By agreement, the Department may seek to share the insights from quarterly RIIA data more broadly across government departments. Good notice of these requests is required to allow regional groups the opportunity to fully consider and respond.


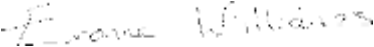

7. Implementation

- 7.1 This MoU commences in September 2022, and replaces the MOU dated October 2020. It will continue to remain in force as such time as it is revoked by the parties.
- 7.2 This MoU will be reviewed in summer 2024 and may otherwise be reviewed at any time at the request of any party.


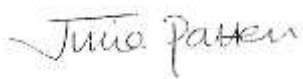

8. Commitment

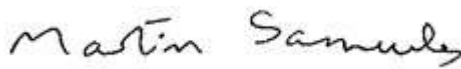


The signatures provided below show the agreement of the Director of Children’s Services, Lead Member for Children’s Services and Chief Executive of the council with this MoU.




9. Signatories to this Memorandum of Understanding

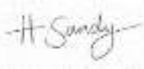
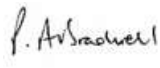

Name of Local Authority	Derby City Council
Director of Children’s Services	Andy Smith Signature  Date 10 August 2022
Lead Member for Children’s Services	Evonne Williams Signature  Date 10 August 2022
Chief Executive of the Council	Paul Simson Signature  Date 10 August 2022





Name of Local Authority	Derbyshire County Council
Executive Director for Children’s Services	Carol Cammiss Signature

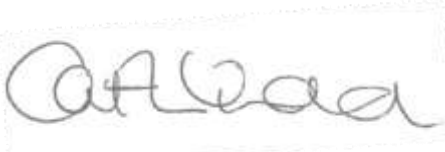


	 Date 31 August 2022
Lead Member for Children's Services	Cllr Julie Patten Signature  Date 31 August 2022
Chief Executive of the Council	Emma Alexander Signature  Date 23 August 2022

Name of Local Authority	Leicester City Council
Director of Children's Services	Martin Samuels Signature:  Date: 10 August 2022
Lead Member for Children's Services	Cllr Sarah Russell Signature:  Date: 10 August 2022
Chief Executive of the Council	Alison Green Hill Signature  Date 10 August 2022

Name of Local Authority	Leicestershire County Council
Director of Children's Services	<p>Jane Moore</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 17th August 2022</p>
Lead Member for Children's Services	<p>Cllr Deborah Taylor</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 17th August 2022</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p>John Sinnott</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 17th August 2022</p>

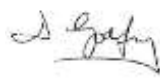


Name of Local Authority	Lincolnshire County Council
Director of Children's Services	<p>Heather Sandy</p> <p>Signature: </p> <p>Date 23.08.22</p>
Lead Member for Children's Services	<p>Cllr Patricia Bradwell</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 24.08.22</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p>Debbie Barnes</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 24.08.22</p>





Name of Local Authority	North Northamptonshire Council
Director of Children's Services	<p>Ann Marie Dodds</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 13/09/2022</p>
Lead Member for Children's Services	<p>Cllr Scott Edwards</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 14/09/2022</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p>Rob Bridge</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 13/09/22</p>
CEO of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust	<p>Colin Foster</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 14/9/22</p>

Name of Local Authority	Nottingham City Council
Director of Children's Services	<p>Catherine Underwood</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 13 September 2022</p>
Lead Member for Children's Services	<p>Cllr Cheryl Barnard</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 13 September 2022</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p>Mel Barrett</p> <p>Signature:</p>  <p>Date 14 September 2022</p>

Name of Local Authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Director of Children's Services	<p>Colin Pettigrew</p> <p>Signature</p>  <p>Date 13/09/2022</p>

Lead Member for Children's Services	<p>Cllr Tracey Taylor</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 13/09/2022</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p>Adrian Smith</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 13/09/2022</p>

Name of Local Authority	Rutland County Council
Director of Children's Services	<p>Dawn Godfrey</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 10 August 2022</p>
Lead Member for Children's Services	<p>Cllr David Wilby</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 10 August 2022</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p>Mark Andrews</p> <p>Signature </p> <p>Date 10 August 2022</p>

Name of Local Authority	West Northamptonshire Council
Director of Children's Services	<p data-bbox="639 271 831 300">Stuart Lackenby</p> <p data-bbox="639 461 756 490">Signature </p> <p data-bbox="639 568 839 598">Date 26.09.2022</p>
Lead Member for Children's Services	<p data-bbox="639 658 783 687">Fiona Baker</p> <p data-bbox="639 817 756 846">Signature </p> <p data-bbox="639 925 839 954">Date 26.09.2022</p>
Chief Executive of the Council	<p data-bbox="639 1014 826 1043">Anna Earnshaw</p> <p data-bbox="639 1115 756 1144">Signature </p> <p data-bbox="639 1223 839 1252">Date 26.09.2022</p>
CEO of the Northamptonshire Children's Trust	<p data-bbox="639 1308 783 1337">Colin Foster</p> <p data-bbox="639 1379 756 1408">Signature </p> <p data-bbox="639 1626 839 1655">Date 26.09.2022</p>

Data Appendix PTO

Data Appendix

The following data items are those to be shared within the terms of Section 6 of this MoU.

Dataset 1:

RIIA 24 Indicators (collected quarterly, anonymised data aggregated to LA level)

Only the **green font** items are new data for the EM region to start collecting during 2022

1. Initial contacts (number and rate per 10,000)
2. Referrals total, and referrals by source (number and rate per 10,000)
3. Repeat referrals (number and percent of referrals)
4. Assessments started in the period (number and rate per 10,000)
5. Assessments completed in the period (number and rate per 10,000)
6. Assessments completed in 45 days in the period (number and percentage)
7. Current Children in Need (number and rate per 10,000)
8. S47 enquiries (number and rate per 10,000)
9. ICPCs completed within 15 days of S47 (number and percent of S47s)
10. New CPPs (number and rate per 10,000)
11. Current CPP (number and rate per 10,000)
12. CPPs ceasing (number and rate per 10,000)
13. Repeat CPPs (ever) (number and percentage of plans starting in period)
14. Repeat CPPs (2 years) (number and percentage of plans starting in period)
15. Current CLA (number and rate per 10,000)
16. New CLA (number and rate per 10,000)
17. CLA ceasing (number and rate per 10,000)
18. **Current CLA UASC** (number and rate per 10,000)
19. Care leavers (number and rate per 10,000)
20. **UASC care leavers** (number and percentage of care leavers)
21. **EHE children** (number and rate per 10,000)
22. **Requests for EHCP assessments** (number and rate per 10,000)
23. **EHCP assessments** (number and rate per 10,000)
24. **EHCPs issued** (number and rate per 10,000)

Dataset 2:

Additional social care data

Collected over recent years following in-region requests, being reviewed summer 2022

1. Care Leavers in EET
2. Care Leavers in suitable accommodation
3. Stability of placements of looked after children: 3+ moves
4. Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement
5. Percentage of LAC whose immunisations were up to date
6. Percentage of LAC who had their teeth checked by a dentist
7. Percentage of LAC who had their annual health assessment
8. Percentage of LAC whose development assessments were up to date
9. LAC adopted in year
10. LAC in in-house foster provision

11. Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)
12. Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family
13. Children who wait less than 14 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family
14. Number of Open Early Help cases
15. Number of new Early Help Assessments in quarter
16. Number of Early Help Step Ups to Social Care
17. Number of Early Help cases Stepped Down from Social Care
18. Number and % of CLA with a missing incident
19. Number and % of Missing children offered a return interview
20. Number and % of Missing children accepting a return interview
21. Number of children identified as at risk of CSE during the quarter
22. Risk assessment tools completed

Dataset 3:

Social Care Workforce Data

Collected and analysed by the regional group in managing the social work memorandum

1. Permanent job titles and salary ranges
2. Rewards and benefits for permanent staff
3. Names of agencies being used
4. Number of agency workers
5. Agency payments for different job roles
6. Nature of agency arrangements and degree of satisfaction

Dataset 4:

SEND Regional Commissioning Dashboard Independent, non-maintained sector placements

Pseudonymised data, including price, for all placements

Dataset 5:

School Exclusion Dashboard

Termly, pseudonymised data of single exclusions records

Files submitted by LAs include lists of exclusions, school leavers and school joiners

Closely limited access

Dataset 6:

Local NCER education data for CLA

Annual collection, anonymised data, aggregated to LA level

Published until superseded by DfE release

Dataset 7:

Provisional Education Outcomes

Annual collection, anonymised data, aggregated to LA level

Published until superseded by DfE release