Case study: Developing the South Hub

SCiP hubs aim to bring people together to support, and learn from, practitioners that work with young people from service families- aiming to champion the educational progression of these young people.

Meeting the challenge of establishing a hub

As Hub Leads, we all know the challenges of bringing together a diverse network of stakeholders. The South Hub was established in 2019, and over the past three years we have been identifying and addressing a number of key challenges to developing the hub so that it can operate effectively.

Not withstanding two years of a pandemic, these main challenges include;

- The hub initially being co-hosted by two HEIs without clear delineation of roles and responsibilities
- Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders, across a very large geographical region (the hub has 50-60 people registered to receive our updates, but only achieves an average meeting attendance of 15)
- Ensuring the hub adds value to existing and overlapping groups and networks
- Understanding how we can identify intended outcomes monitor against those outcomes

Taking a member-led approach

In April 2021, we hosted a successful Thriving Lives conference attracting 155 registrations and demonstrating just how many practitioners are invested in and passionate about supporting service children locally.

This led us to want to better understand how the South hub could be structured and led to capitalise on this knowledge and expertise in the local area. We started a light-touch consultation with our hub members, conducted via three hub meetings spanning summer term 2021-spring term 2022 and focused on 'shaping the future of the South Hub'.

The key questions we were seeking to answer were:

- What do practitioners want from the hub (considering other existing local/regional groups)?
- Can we identify key strands of focus or activity to help structure the hub moving forwards?
- What are the high priority areas of focus, and what would this look like in action?

These consultation conversations happened during hub meetings. As hub meetings were happening online, we used the collaborative tool Jamboard to collect members' views and opinions, which we were able to refer back to in each successive meeting - providing continuity throughout the process and ensuring a feedback loop between hub lead(s) and hub members. Although the average meeting attendance was 15 members, we took their views as representative of the wider hub membership.

Appendix B provides examples of the Jamboard discussions, but the sequence of the consultation is detailed below:

Timeline	Activity
July 2021 (Hub Meeting)	Reflections on the Thriving Lives Conference Feedback on what practitioners would like/feel they need from the SCiP South Hub, to support them in their roles and to support the young service children they work with.
July-Dec 2021	Hub lead(s) reviewed feedback and grouped into 5 strands of possible areas of focus or activity
Dec 2021 (hub meeting)	Revisit feedback from July hub meeting and introduce the 5 strands that emerged What would success look like for each area of focus? What should the role of the hub be in meeting or delivering on focus area? Identify top 3 areas of focus for the hub moving forwards
Dec 21 - Mar 22	Hub Lead(s) reviewed feedback and developed co-lead roles to support leadership of the hub moving forwards Call to Action for hub members to co-lead, aligned to each of the priority focus areas Started work with co-leads to address administrative processes that will support them in their role (digital communications, co-leads planning, engaging new stakeholders)
March 2022 (hub meeting)	Formally introduced new hub structure and co-leads Shared ToR for hub members Co-leads all led an agenda discussion to begin to build upon their area of focus, with continued input from all hub members

Key outcomes

The main tangible outcomes of the light-touch consultation were to do with hub structure and leadership, to ensure a strong foundation to build upon. Development of an action plan, and identification of measurable outcomes is, and should be, a continuous process of collaboration with the hub members and co-leads.

The main outcomes by March 2022 have been:
- Establishing a hub lead/chair and co-leads, with clear areas of responsibility, including input into hub meeting agendas (and opportunity for between meeting working groups where appropriate). **See Appendix A.**
- Identifying a host-organisation for the hub to streamline and coordinate digital communications more effectively. This will be the University of Portsmouth, as that is where the hub lead and co-lead for communication both work.
- Identifying a communications and reporting plan. Hub meetings, activity, and members' data will be hosted and managed by the University of Portsmouth via a CRM system ensuring consistent digital communications and a greater ability to report on hub engagement.
- Identifying three main areas of focus, based on member consultation, to help give purpose to the hub and to help engage a greater range of stakeholders / increase regular engagement in hub meetings and activity.

Appendix A: South Hub Co-Lead roles document

Role	Responsibilities	Who?	Institution
Hub Lead	- Chair and facilitate hub meetings - Work with the Hub Co-Leads to ensure progress between meetings - Maintain an overview of hub representation, identify gaps in representation and seek to fill those gaps (in consultation with hub members) - Represent South Hub on the SCiP Hub Leads Group. - Report on progress against hub action plan	Tian Barratt Outreach Manager	University of Portsmouth (South Hub host institution)
Co-Lead: Secretarial and Communication	- Set meeting schedule for the year - Set date/time/location for meetings and circulate agenda at least 1 week prior - Record minutes/actions/resolutions and share - Manage communications across the Hub and any associated online/web content - Co-chair meetings, deputise for Hub Lead where required to chair Hub meetings and represent South Hub on the SCiP Hub Leads Group. - Coordinate a virtual calendar providing a of opportunities for service children and practitioners in the region	Jodie Anthony Outreach Co-ordinator	
Co-Lead: Pupil Tracking	- Identify some key stakeholders to trial implementation of basic approaches to tracking e.g. adding to destinations or enrolment form (stakeholders to include; school sixth form, sixth form college, FE college) - Capture the main challenges and success and key points for learning - Encourage and support partners to engage in student voice activity to add to understanding about student experiences of FE and HE progression - Provide agenda content and co-chair hub meetings where appropriate	Alex Blower Access and Outreach Manager	Arts University Bournemouth
Co-Lead: Supporting practitioners	- Gather and share opportunities for staff development in relation to working with and supporting service children - Signpost supporting resources, organisations and funding opportunities that exist within the region, seeking practitioner feedback on quality and usefulness of resources/services. - Where required/appropriate, coordinate planning and bookings for practitioner CPD - Report on practitioner CPD that has either been facilitated by, or signposted through, the South Hub.	Nadia Morad SUN Project Leader	University of Winchester

Appendix B: South Hub member consultation

July 2021 - Hub Meeting (summary of discussion)

Q: Shaping the future of the South Hub: what do you need from a local hub? Where is this need not being met by other networks?

Member responses:

Sharing of student opportunities across the region	Collaboration between schools, colleges, universities to ensure consistent package of support for service children	Finding out what is happening nationally to ensure we're supporting students locally in the best way	Pilot work with post-16 providers	A platform to share good practice and a safe place to discuss what works and what doesn't
How to capture student voice and use it meaningfully	Hear from different stakeholders within hub meetings - e.g. best practice examples from schools; HEIs, Local Authorities, etc.	Help new stakeholders engage with the service child agenda and how to navigate the various groups/networks that exist	Evidence of impact!	Evergreen resources which are locally based and can be regularly disseminated
Online place for collaboration - a one stop shop for everyone involved in the hub to share resources and communicate	Use hub to gather views on what would be meaningful activity for service children, and to promote it	Members contribute to a guide of applied uses of the thriving lives toolkit - examples of exactly what a school should be doing	Changing legislation and building understanding of SEN and mental health	Engage members from Dorset and Wiltshire

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December 2021 - Hub Meeting (summary of discussion): 5 possible areas of focus developed from member feedback.

Q: What would success look like for each? What would the role of the hub be?

	Student Voice	Opportunities for service children	Practical guide for the toolkit	FE Tracking	Stakeholder engagement
What would success look like?	Forum or focus groups for service children Events for service children to come together Developing a sense of belonging	Audit to show range of opportunities in region Social media presence	Electronic copy of toolkit Teacher testimonials Success stories and examples that support other practitioners	FE providers know who their service children are Consistency across sector in tracking and supporting service children SPOC for service children	Reps from other networks Boost FE and alternative provision representation Young carer projects
What is the role of the hub?	Invite young people to hub meetings Hub-led CF days Facilitating sharing of models of practice Student voice conference Co-production with students	Calendar of opportunities in the region Promotion of opportunities by members and for members	Signposting to training offers for practitioners Collate and share member feedback on use of toolkit Discuss ways to bring about change in 'softer' areas such as mental health	Tailored careers resources FE providers leading service children voice activities Data Pilot practice e.g enrollment tick box LA representation	Reduce duplication Hub video for promo Join up networks and resources and share Shared contact lists

December 2021 - Hub Meeting (summary of discussion): 5 possible areas of focus developed from member feedback.

Q: As a group, which area of focus is most important? Which is least?

Summary of responses in order of priority, from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):

1- FE Tracking
2- Student voice
3- Stakeholder engagement
4- Opportunities for service children (and practitioners)
5 - Practical guide to support Thriving Lives Toolkit

March 2022 - Hub Meeting: Dissemination of information resulting from member consultation

Explanation of how the structure supports the priority focus areas identified by hub members as part of the consultation. Each co-lead facilitated an agenda item based on their area of focus, continuing to seek member input to help formulate actions to move forward.

Co-Lead role	Priority area of focus from member consultation
Hub Lead	Stakeholder engagement
Co-Lead (Secretarial and Communications)	Collating and sharing of opportunities for service children Student voice
Co-Lead (Pupil Tracking)	FE Tracking Student voice
Co-Lead (supporting practitioners)	Opportunities for practitioners Practical support for practitioners