



Hounslow Education Partnership
Subject Networks

Subject Networks

2021/22

Report



Hounslow Education Partnership Subject Networks

2020/21 was a transition year for Subject Networks (SNs); London Borough of Hounslow (LBH) supported the facilitation alongside HEP. From September 2022 this will be entirely owned by HEP. As a school-led improvement partnership, we will support those expert practitioners identified by their SLT, as Leads to deliver termly meetings. Continuing to foster the collaboration of middle leaders from 18 schools across 25 subjects.

What did HEP address from the 2020/21 report?

The success of SNs relies on correct contact details. A new shared Google sheets system gathers up-to-date contact information from SLTL representatives, which then generates registers for Leads. Leads use this to record attendance, which can then be reported back to SLTL more quickly for in-school follow-up.

HEP has further supported Leads by gathering information, creating shared drives and liaising with external speakers.

SNs feature on SLTL agendas as a standing item. This, along with quicker turnaround of registers, and meeting dates communicated early for inclusion in school calendars has ensured clear flow of information. SLTL oversight enabled new ideas to boost the SN offer, for example creating Health and Social Care and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) networks.

For new Leads it was suggested that an *'opportunity to help establish the expectations of the role and about the HEP set up'* would be useful. This year all new Leads have been offered a meeting/call with HEP ahead of the Leads meeting in September. As well as being able to make clear the support available to them from HEP, this has been a useful exercise in building relationships.



Hounslow Education Partnership Subject Networks

Two surveys were published onto the HEP website on Tuesday 14th June; one for Members and one for Leads and were available for three weeks. (see Appendix 1 for survey completion across subjects).

Feedback from Subject Network Leads - where members agree or strongly agree

	2020/21	2021/22
Attendance at all of my meetings was high, apologies were sent when colleagues couldn't attend.	64%	80%
Members' engagement within meetings is high, contributing ideas and sharing best practice.	82%	93%
Members contribute to the direction of the meetings by adding agenda items or suggestions for discussion.	36%	53%
Members communicate with each other outside of calendared meetings to ask questions.	82%	53%
I have organised high quality and effective outside speakers or extra opportunities beyond the three calendared meetings.	36%	53%
I feel supported in delivering my network by my in school SLTL representative.	82%	58%

What can HEP do to support you to deliver Subject Network meetings more effectively?

Agendas:

- *'As a group we really struggle to come up with new agenda items, any generic suggestions would be welcome'*
- *'More support in agenda setting would be helpful. I get some requests for agenda items when I ask but from most members there is no contribution'*

The autonomy of SNs is what allows them to meet the needs of members, however it is clear there is a need for more input and sharing of practice to ensure agendas are *'relevant and helpful, not vague and repetitive'*.

Attendance and contribution from all is still a frustration for Leads:

- *'A few schools do not mind if their staff do not attend meetings, it's then left to the faithful few to participate'*
- *'It would be good if more schools were represented at our meeting'*
- *'It is clear there is a massive disparity between the importance schools put on attendance. I am always disappointed by the attendance and treatment of this directed time by particular colleagues'*
- *'I have been using Google Forms to gather ideas and information, but these have not been filled in by many schools. Perhaps you could pass on the need for some members to be more engaged to ensure the effectiveness of what we are trying to put in place'*

Some Leads suggested there should be additional incentives for running their SN:

- *'A stipend for the person running the network would absolutely improve the role. I know this happens/happened in Ealing'*
- *'In other local authorities there is a small payment for colleagues running SN. It might be a bigger incentive for colleagues to take on this role and run it effectively if this was considered'*
- *'Encourage schools to give a directed hour prior to the meeting to organise agendas/speakers etc'*



Hounslow Education Partnership Subject Networks

What ideas do you have to evolve and further develop Subject Network meetings?

It was agreed at SLTL that meeting in-person in November, as requested by Leads, followed by two virtual meetings would be the model for 2022/23. This will allow initial face to face introductions as *'due to COVID/teacher turnaround relationships are quite disjointed'*. Leads have novel ideas to boost collaboration between meetings, for example: *'We are also starting a borough debate league to create stronger links within the borough.'* Networks are free to arrange more meetings beyond those scheduled, or set up email/WhatsApp groups should they wish to have further layers of interaction.

In line with feedback from members, Leads are keen to explore *'ways to share resources easily'*. For example by building *'a repository of best practice resources that can be accessed by all'*. HEP can support this.

'I plan to involve more external speakers' was a common theme in the Leads feedback. Members' appreciation for that training input was also clear. There is funding available to all networks. HEP can support necessary logistics, finance arrangements, etc however, Leads are best placed to source those experts in their specific subject.



Feedback from Subject Network Members - where members agree or strongly agree

		2020/21	2021/22
Meeting organisation	The joining instructions were clear and communicated ahead of time.	96%	96%
	I was provided with an agenda prior to the meeting which allowed me to prepare my contributions.	95%	97%
	The online logistics met my expectations.	90%	93%
Meeting content	Subject Network meetings helped me develop links with colleagues from other schools.	81%	84%
	Subject Network meetings provided me with examples of best practice from other schools.	82%	81%
	Subject Network meetings gave me ideas for developing new approaches.	78%	81%
Outside meetings	I would email my network outside of calendared meetings with questions or for support.	65%	69%
	In school my SLTL representative seeks my reflections on Subject Network meetings.	51%	62%

What do you really appreciate from Subject Network meetings that makes a difference to your practice as a Subject leader, to your team in school and students you teach?

- Support from more experienced colleagues:
 - *'Hearing other people's views who have more experience'*
 - *'It's imperative to have something like this when I am relatively new in post and still finding out about schools in the area'*
 - *'A chance to run queries past other experienced Data Managers to check understanding of key topics'*
- Sharing of best practice and resources:
 - *'There are so many useful takeaways from the meeting to help improve T&L and they are things that can be easily put into place after the meeting'*
 - *'Sharing of resources is really helpful in that it has helped me adapt mine and take more risks'*
- Collaboration normally impossible in small departments:
 - *'Interaction and collaboration with colleagues, which is sometimes difficult in small departments like mine'*
- Guest speakers:
 - *'The RE INSETs arranged were really beneficial'*
 - *'This year the D&T group had a speaker on OFSTED deep dives and this was both useful and interesting'*
 - *'The training delivered at meetings 2&3 catered to developing subject knowledge and did an excellent job of it too'*



Hounslow Education Partnership Subject Networks

How can we improve Subject Network meetings for the next year, 2022/23?

What would you like to see done differently, more of or less of?

- CPD - external speakers:
 - *'It would be interesting to occasionally have a visiting speaker'*
 - *'It would be great to have a variety of speakers in the meetings or to attend more courses/CPD'*
- CPD - Leadership training:
 - *'A bit more focus on leadership (managing people, difficult conversations, etc) alongside new pedagogy development'*
- Moderation of coursework:
 - *'Continue doing what we are doing and moderation of coursework would be useful also'*
- Leads being aware of and matching the agendas to the context of the group:
 - *'More focus on KS3/GCSE would be helpful as my school does not have KS5 so feels that some meetings or INSETs don't apply at all'*
- More resource sharing both online and in person:
 - *'More modelled examples of outstanding practice and OFSTED preparation'*
 - *'As a practical subject it would be great to meet in person with people teaching the same specialism at least once a year. To share ideas, look at resources and student work'*
- Promoting inter school activities:
 - *'Developing inter school competitions will encourage and motivate students'*
- Ensuring the meeting time is used wisely and not wasted:
 - *'People (including the session leader) not saying things like 'I'm sure we'll finish early which everyone will appreciate as I'm sure we all have other important things to be doing right now' - this narrative makes the sessions feel like a tick box activity, not a worthwhile use of time'*
 - *'...finishing over half an hour early in a tri-annual meeting feels like a bit of a missed opportunity'*
- Break out rooms:
 - *'More time speaking in specialist areas and less time in a whole group meeting'*
 - *'It can be hard to cater for both Film & Media - it would be good to have opportunities for breakout rooms or smaller groups to discuss their own specific exam board/subject in greater depth during the allocated time'*
 - *'I would find it more helpful if we could cluster into smaller groups and focus on something specific e.g. PE A level for those that teach it'*



Hounslow Education Partnership Subject Networks

Recommendations for 2022/23:

- Continue the use of the shared contact list/register system. SLTL to update one month prior to each meeting for HEP to then distribute up-to-date lists to Leads
- SN Leads meeting to be held in-person with a focus on agenda setting, and understanding the context of your group. Providing support to new Leads, and sharing of good practice from those who are more experienced
- As agreed at SLTL, meeting one to be hosted at the Lead's school, and meetings two and three to be held virtually
- To continue to have SN as a standing item on SLTL agenda
- Agenda planning to be a collaborative effort from the group, and finalised by the Lead. This will be supported by a shared document for full visibility of who is contributing to which section
- Centralised communications sent from HEP (in a similar way to DAT) to induct new HODs with clear expectations of participation and remind those who have participated previously of the purpose of SN meetings, and the expectations on them as members, the Leads and HEP
- HEP to liaise with other Education Partnerships who run SN meetings to explore their offer, identify areas of good practice (including any incentives for Leads that may be offered elsewhere) that can be implemented following discussion and approval by SLTL
- HEP to investigate potential leadership development training that could be used across SN for those newer to the position
- HEP to continue to support inter-school competitions (as with the Yr 12 Debating competition, July 2022)



Hounslow Education Partnership Subject Networks

Appendix 1 - survey completion

Members survey completion:

94 surveys completed in the following subject areas:

Subject	Number of returns	Subject	Number of returns
Business Studies	0	Maths	8
CEIAG	6	MfL	5
Computer Science	5	Music	2
Data Managers	5	PSHE	6
Drama	0	PE	16
EAL	2	Psychology	3
English	8	RE	3
Film & Media	1	Science	7
Geography	2	Sociology	0
Heads of 6th form	0	SEN	3
Health & Social Care	0	Technology	12
History	0	Visual Arts	0

Leads survey completion:

16 surveys completed in the following subject areas:

- Music
- English
- EAL
- Heads of Sixth
- Geography
- Maths
- Health and Social Care
- Religious Studies
- Technology
- Drama
- Computer Science
- Data Managers
- MFL
- CEIAG
- Psychology
- PE