

# South East Sector-led Improvement Partnership

## South East Children Missing Education Group

Notes: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021

Attending: Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Debbie Bell (Oxfordshire), Hilary Alford & David Boyd (Kent), Katy Daly (Bracknell), Gill Dunlop (Reading), Carole Vernon (Wokingham), Dave Harvey (Hants), Beth Armstrong (E Sussex), Linda Curtis (W Berks), Rosie Gossage (RBWM), Bryn Roberts (Southampton), Lynn Sims (Medway), Andrew Parker (W Sussex), Farah Malik (Slough), Gavin Thomas (B&H), James Fowler (Bucks), Chris Owen (SESLIP).

Apologies: Mark Keiller (Surrey), Christine Clarke (Medway), Melissa Perry (Wokingham), Simon Sims (Milton Keynes).

	Item	Actions
1.	<b>Welcome &amp; introductions</b>	
2.	<p><b>Notes of last meeting and matters arising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mike introduced Brian Pope, Assistant Director, Education &amp; Inclusion for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and welcomed him as co-chair of the group.</li> <li>• Data dashboard: Linda is in contact with Daryl Perilli; Farah and Chris will chase Daryl up about assisting Slough with submitting data.</li> <li>• Still no information from the DfE about whether there is any financial support for SESLIP for 2021-22.</li> <li>• Notes agreed.</li> <li>• Karl Dixon-Myers had to postpone his presentation and we have rescheduled his session for 9<sup>th</sup> June. Key questions to be confirmed beforehand.</li> </ul>	<p>FM / CO</p> <p>CO</p>
3.	<p><b>Development activity: in-year fair access.</b></p> <p>Debbie introduced and talked through the report prepared by the group.</p> <p>This covers analysis of existing in-year protocols, testing appetite for South East-wide agreements, pointers for best practice and recommendations to be reported to the AD Education Network meeting. Acknowledgement was given that an updated Admissions Code is expected in the near future from the DfE.</p> <p>Discussions included: managed moves, managed transfers and trial placements; protocols with schools about readmissions for pupils moved to EHE but whose parents changed their minds, voting systems at FAP panels, timescale for ESFA responses (academies), accountability of MATs / academies running their own appeals arrangements (role of RSCs?).</p>	

	Item	Actions
	<p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mike will take the report to the AD Education Group, including the recommendations of issues to raise with the DfE (with a view to the new Admissions Code).</li> <li>• DB will edit and reformat report for circulation to the Education ADs.</li> </ul>	<p>MS</p> <p>DB</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Development activity: elective home education policies</b></p> <p>Summary of the contents of the EHE policies shared with the group from 12 LAs. A lot of similar content; areas of development could include agreed procedures with social care colleagues, local protocols with schools for readmission of EHE children, strengthen governance and accountability of EHE policies.</p> <p>Draft model framework for EHE policies was shared, including reframed wording about ‘child and parents’ rights / responsibilities’ and ‘LA expectations and responsibilities’. Members invited to email further comments / edits to Chris by 6-5-21.</p> <p>EHE group is working on vignettes of practice of supporting and working with parents who home educate too.</p> <p>Parent lobbying groups: Educational Freedom have been vociferous and are the work of two people who are not accountable or representative.</p> <p>Flexi-schooling: DH is keen to develop alignment between LA EHE policies and flexi-schooling. For increasing numbers of children who have been moved to EHE, flexi-schooling could greatly help their learning or maintain them on roll. If so, DfE should provide an attendance code if there is a flexi-school arrangement.</p> <p>Ofsted letter to AEHEP: Sean Harford has written to express Ofsted’s view that LAs should be given legal power to run a register of all EHE children and that they were keen for LAs to exercise all their existing powers. AEHEP has been in discussion with the DfE about a new EHE advice note for LAs and are optimistic that the DfE is considering registration powers for LAs. This could be a precursor to updated statutory guidance from the DfE.</p> <p>Portsmouth judicial review: PCC has faced JR from a local home education group because the LA does not accept parents’ written reports as sufficient evidence of suitable education. An initial written judgement has found against the parents and considered LAs should exercise their reasonable responsibilities to seek evidence. The oral hearing is scheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> April.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group will fine-tune the EHE model policy and develop vignettes and share these at the 9<sup>th</sup> June meeting, to then take a report to the AD Education Network.</li> </ul>	<p>All</p> <p>GD / NS</p>

	Item	Actions
5.	<p><b>Summer term challenges and issues</b></p> <p>a. <b><u>Enforcement action.</u></b></p> <p>Most LAs have or are restarting process of enforcement that potentially could result in attendance penalty notices. Most schools are both requesting this and are in a better position to provide sufficient evidence. A couple of LAs report taking a ‘softly, softly’ approach and not making any announcements about possible penalty notices until after the first May bank holiday.</p> <p>WSx has done some analysis of pupils being raised by schools and has found that the large majority are from families that are already on their radar regarding poor attendance. Covid-19 might be adding to existing reasons for non-attendance rather than pushing many new families in this way.</p> <p>b. <b><u>Overseas stays.</u></b></p> <p>Significant focus presently, especially as a result of ‘no notice’ request from the DfE for detailed numbers. Oxfordshire managed to get a response from a third of their schools and were notified of over 100 children in this category.</p> <p>Slough, and others, are finding issues with parents in ‘red list’ countries who are not prepared to return due to UK quarantine requirements. Should schools be offering remote learning to these students in that case? View was that if they are on roll, and should not be removed, then the school should offer temporary remote learning.</p> <p>Reminder that the advice from DfE lawyers is that if a child is abroad and the family has not informed of a return date, they should not be unilaterally removed from a school roll.</p> <p>DH said that AEWM are raising this with DfE this afternoon and anticipate guidance being produced by the DfE in the next week or two. DH will give an update from this meeting which can be circulated to the group (below).</p> <p><i>Update: DfE confirmed work is going on and they have asked all LAs for numbers – problem being without asking schools how many are abroad we do not know. LAs are in the process of collating and sharing data with DfE who will then hopefully produce guidance, but no timescale was offered. For the time being all pupils should remain on roll.</i></p> <p>c. <b><u>Exclusion pressures</u></b></p> <p>Several LAs report the start of increasing numbers of suspensions (fixed period exclusions) and some of increasing expulsions (permanent exclusions) too.</p> <p>d. <b><u>Year 11 finish date</u></b></p> <p>DfE is not being clear about whether year 11s should stay on beyond the end of May. As a result, many secondary schools are planning year 11s leaving at half-term, which is viewed about a lost opportunity for some transition work in preparation for post-16 programmes. LS shared the following advice received from DfE: “That schools and</p>	DH

	Item	Actions
	<p>colleges will retain the flexibility to make their own arrangements for years 11-13 (and FE equivalents) in the last half of the summer term but to strongly encourage them to engage students in activities that will support them in their progression to FE, HE, employment or training. That secondary legislation that governs when a pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age is not changed (meaning that attendance would not be mandatory after 25 June for pupils who turn 16 this school year).”</p> <p><b>e. <u>Summer schools</u></b></p> <p>Some secondary schools appear to be meeting to coordinate bids for funds - allocations by DfE to be made shortly but secondary schools will have to register. Some LAs are looking to work with secondary schools to take advantage of joint working through the Holiday Activities Fund, to take advantage of any economies of scale.</p>	
6.	<p><b>Education prosecution policies and AOB</b></p> <p>a. Bucks have been advised by their legal department to have an ‘education prosecutions’ policy statement. JF requesting whether other LAs have one and, if so, if these could be shared with him.</p> <p>b. SESLIP data dashboard: Daryl Perilli is due to circulate a request for spring term CME and EHE data. Is there a view about supplying these data (accuracy and availability)? View in the chat is that these data have been maintained and can be submitted to the Education Data Sub-group. Chris will confirm this with Daryl.</p> <p>c. Request for any intelligence about what focus on EHE / CME Ofsted might have in an ILACS, from Bryn? JF shared thoughts from Bucks’ experience in Feb. That EHE / CME was a topic and explored how much the LA had dug down into data to look at distribution and to think through potential implications for schools should families choose to return to school from Sept.</p> <p>d. Referral of children with medical needs from GP: Southampton having increasing numbers referred due to anxiety. Group agreed GP referral is a dilemma. B&amp;H do not accept referral solely from GP. These referrals are considered by panel that includes paediatrician and CAMHS practitioner who make the final call on referrals.</p> <p>Oxfordshire: feel cannot refuse but request details, including treatment plan, reviews, planned outcomes, before considering for education for medical needs.</p> <p>e. Thoughts and preparations for DfE presentation on 9<sup>th</sup> June. MS feels there is considerable ground to cover with Karl Dixon-Myers. CO will draft a bullet list of points / questions and circulate to the group to ensure a record of all areas and so these can be shared with Karl before the meeting.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>CO</p> <p>CO</p>
	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>9<sup>th</sup> June 2021, 2pm – 4pm (virtual meeting)</p>	All

