

SESLIP

South East Children Missing Education Group

Notes: 19th January 2022

Attending: Brian Pope (Hants), Debbie Bell (Oxfordshire), Hilary Alford (Kent), Andrew Parker (W Sussex), Melissa Perry and Carole Vernon (Wokingham), Fiona Hostler (Reading), Anjali Sidhu (Slough), Beth Armstrong (E Sussex), Rosie Gossage and Claire Raffaelli (RBWM), James Fowler (Bucks), Katy Daly (Bracknell), Chris Owen.

Apologies: Simon Sims (Milton Keynes), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Gavin Thomas (B&H).

	Item	Actions
1.	Welcome & introductions	
2.	Notes of last meeting and matters arising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes from the November meeting were formally reviewed and confirmed as accurate. • Matters arising are all covered in the agenda 	
3.	Suspensions and exclusions. A wide ranging discussion of trends in LAs and of some strategies being adopted. Summary points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All LAs present are finding number of suspensions are increasing this academic year. PEx: some have had increases in rate of PEx, others it is about the same. • Noticed increases in suspensions for peer physical assault (some of which are serious) and for sexual harassment (linked to greater focus on this?). • Most schools are committed to inclusion and avoiding PEx wherever possible (might be that avoiding PEx is behind some increase in suspensions). A minority of schools / MATs are disproportionately responsible for many PEx and suspensions; these are largely secondary academies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Experiences with less inclusive schools usually involves poor communication with the LA; examples are where the first knowledge of a vulnerable student in LA is when PEx is notified. Another LA has had to take an academy to task about not following due process and DfE guidance. ○ Can there be better coordinated strategies across LA, Ofsted and RSC for the small number of schools with higher exclusions? Better sharing of up-to-date data? • Whilst those at SEN support make up a disproportionate number of PEx and suspensions. Some areas have increasing numbers of students with EHCPs in both categories, including from some special schools. The latter can be symptomatic of the school struggling generally. • One LA shared using information about school balances (when a large surplus) to challenge school threatening to exclude a SEND student who needed too much support. Arranging suitable support is not only to be found from SEN budgets. Current academy finances can be harder to access, however. • Some concerns about teaching staff morale and being over-stretched; resulting in higher numbers of PEx / suspensions. 	

	Item	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of ongoing role of LA is needed from the Education White Paper that is expected. <p><u>Action:</u> summary points to be fed back to AD Education Network. Inclusion / exclusion as a topic at joint meeting with RSCs?</p>	BP / CO
4.	<p>Proposed activities from the Building Back Better funding</p> <p>Proposal for a research / insights project were discussed.</p> <p>Challenges of the project include: whether it could be at a sufficient scale, survey fatigue (though this is not a major component) and of recruiting parents across the range, rather than the vocal, negative minority. Suggestions included focusing on parents who have recently made the move to EHE or back into school.</p> <p>Is it possible to include some parallel discussions with schools, about their processes with parents thinking of EHE and how they find liaison / cooperation with the LA?</p> <p>Recruiting parents would need to be via LAs, since the LA is not at liberty to give out contact details without permission.</p> <p>Among LAs happy to help with engaging parents: Hampshire, E Sussex, Reading, Kent, Windsor & Maidenhead.</p> <p>Action: Chris and Brian to tweak the proposed brief to reflect the above. Report to AD Education Network and start feasibility of finding researcher or company to carry out the project.</p>	BP / CO
5.	<p>Update Medical Needs project</p> <p>GT has had to send apologies having to attend a meeting about a Children’s Commissioner project on school attendance this morning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit: reminder that the focus is on remote learners not those in-patient or other care institution. 6 responses to audit so far: mental health by far the largest group of CYP; numbers went down during 2020-21; then quite a range: reintegration average ranges between 2 terms and 4 terms, tuition offer ranges from 5 hours per week to 18 hours per week. Costs hard to compare. <p><u>Action:</u> If you’ve not yet responded to audit, please do with what data you have available. GT is working with the group to share case examples of learners in order to inform referral pathways and challenges.</p>	All GT
6.	<p>SESLIP CME / EHE Benchmarking</p> <p>Reminder about autumn 2021 data collection has just been requested. Can we aim for 2021 – 22 to gather a complete set of data across all SESLIP LAs?</p> <p>EHE at best plateauing for LAs, for others there’s continued increase.</p> <p>CME as a consequence of covid-19 was a discussion and the value of wider partnership working. Frustration expressed about DWP and Home Office not sharing a focus on these vulnerable children (to share information if travelled abroad or supporting children into school).</p> <p>Action: CO to ask what SESLIP Safeguarding network has explored with DWP and whether they have engaged when concerns about vulnerable families / children.</p>	CO

	Item	Actions
	<p>Dates of future meetings</p> <p><u>9th March, 2pm – 4pm</u> – with a main focus on attendance, including working with virtual school about children missing out on education. What are local trends with vulnerable pupils? What local strategies are paying off?</p> <p>27th April, 10am – midday</p> <p>23rd June, 2pm – 4pm</p> <p>22nd Sept, 10am - midday</p>	<p>All</p>