

## South-East Sector-led Improvement Partnership South-East Children Missing Education Group Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 2pm – 4pm

Present: Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth, chair), Rosie Gossage (RBWM), Jon Willcocks and Pauline Ellis (Hants), James Fowler (Bucks), Bryn Roberts (Southampton), Simon Smith (Kent), Melissa Perry (W Berks), Vidyu Narayan (E Sussex), Jo Goodey (Oxfordshire), Christine Clarke (Medway), Carole Vernon (Wokingham), Ian Fraser (M Keynes), Fiona Hostler (Reading), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Katy Daly and Olly May (Bracknell), Mark Keiller (Surrey), Anjali Sidhu (Slough), Natalie Smith (Hants), Chris Owen

Apologies: Clare Raffaelli (RBWM), Gavin Thomas (B&H).

In attendance: Eliza Johnson (Southampton), Matt Malone (ESCC)

Item	Actions
<p><b>Welcome and introductions</b></p> <p>Mike Stoneman welcomed colleagues, especially those giving presentations.  <i>Notes of the January meeting were agreed as accurate.</i></p> <p><i>Matters arising:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chris and Bryn have both tested the CME restricted documents option on the SESLIP website. Agreed that it appears easier to use than in the previous version. CO will upload managed moved docs shared with him and inform colleagues and encourage you to make use of the shared documents and also inform CO if there are out of date items that need removing or replacing.</li> <li>• Jon has had some meetings with other LAs to consider SLAs for attendance support to schools. He has found several different approaches and aims to bring a summary to the April meeting.</li> <li>• SESLIP EHE_CME Dashboard: this term's data request has been circulated by Daniel and CO asked colleagues to check they have responded. CO had circulated a summary of the South-east data published by the DfE for information. The latest attendance guidance mandates this return to the DfE, alongside mandating school to return their attendance data.</li> </ul>	<p>CO All</p> <p>JW</p> <p>All</p>
<p><b>2. CME processes and procedures</b></p> <p>Bryn and Eliza from Southampton shared the processes they have established to monitor their numbers who are CME. This, plus comments from other LAs, highlighted that CME numbers yo-yo through the year, for example due to the schools admissions process when parents do not get their preferred school place (exacerbated by the current pressure on secondary places). This needs to be born in mind when looking at published data.</p> <p>The sharing of the process in Southampton was appreciated and Eliza was thanked. Chris will circulate the slides to the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other LAs shared similar challenges such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Improvements to recording by the admissions team resulting in CME numbers rising significantly, although few being at risk cases.</li> <li>○ The accessibility of different databases within children's services leading to some difficulties with QA of records or notifications.</li> <li>○ Liaison with visa and immigration colleagues to identify when families have travelled abroad; some variation. EJ will share her channels of communication with visa and immigration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Processes about whether or not to close 'whereabouts unknown' cases was discussed and the importance of police, health and social care input so that all avenues for checking have been followed. Oxfordshire hold a termly panel with police, health and social care to review 'hard to find' cases and there is a partnership agreement if cases are to be closed due to 'whereabouts unknown'.</li> </ul>	<p>EJ / CO</p> <p>EJ</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAs have different procedures with their MASH about whether the CME team or MASH ‘holds’ cases where they are, or have, undertaking ‘reasonable enquiries’ due to concerns about safeguarding.</li> </ul> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CO to circulate presentation once sent to him by EJ.</li> <li>Review SESLIP EHE_CME Dashboard when next updated. Should it offer more guidance about the limitations of comparisons between LAs and the importance of trends over time (longer than from term to term).</li> </ul>	CO
<p><b>3. Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints, with a focus on s19 arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by BR. This an increasing pressure on time and resources for LAs. A recent article circulated by CO reported that the numbers of LGO complaints had increased threefold since 2018-19 and that the overwhelming majority are found in favour of the claimant. SESLIP reps confirmed this is their experience too.</li> <li>Reasons for flagging concerns is not about some complaints that are legitimate and necessary, rather it is about an increasing number where there is a sense of a minority of parents using ‘standardised wording’ for complaints in connection with their view of that the LA should provide a tailored education for their child.</li> <li>Secondly, the LGO’s interpretation of the provision of suitable education, is that this is entirely down to the LA, even when a school or academy has been culpable (e.g. use of incorrect registration codes, not informing the LA of absence beyond 15 days, poor communication with parents with little focus on partnership work to support the child). This both penalises the LA and also has minimal impact on poor practice in a minority of schools.</li> </ul> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong agreement that this is a shared concern.</li> <li>The point was made that the LGO has an expectation that the LA ‘joins up’, so if one team is informed about absences from school or similar concerns, that these need to be communicated to the right team who should ensure a coordinated response according to guidance. Oxfordshire has delivered a programme of training to schools and children’s services staff to increase their understanding of responsibilities for CME and improve these internal communications. JG is currently reviewing and will share when available (update at the April meeting).</li> <li>There was discussion about having developed a panel to triage s19 referrals. A few member LAs have this in place currently.</li> </ul> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris and Bryn to convene a group of interested LA reps to summarise collective concerns, themes and possible solutions. Aim to meet once before April so there can be further discussion and thoughts about next steps. Group should consider whether it is practical to collate their own LGO complaint numbers (focused on s19) and whether this is an action to carry out by all group members.</li> </ul>	JG  BR / CO
<p><b>4 AP commissioning and prevention of exclusions</b></p> <p>Rosie from RBWM and Matt from ESCC shared some of the challenges they are finding and arrangements that are in place and being developed in response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In RBWM the number of primary children being PEx has gone up significantly and is beyond the places that had been commissioned for. This has also resulted in work focused on support and education for those excluded rather than work to prevent exclusion. Secondary exclusions are plateauing, and the Pupils At Risk Panel is working well with cases approved as in need of support having access to 50% of the cost via the Panel. AP and LA also have strong strategies to support reintegration of pupils from AP. But there are concerns about those with EHCPs who are being excluded.</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ESCC has had a strategic review of arrangements and agreed with schools and trusts to invest in arrangements to better support inclusion. This is largely channelled through one of three locality Inclusion Partnerships (IP) of secondary schools. These are supported by an Early Intervention Team and have access to some additional funds for cases brought to the IP and accepted as in need of intervention. IPs then monitor progress against outcomes for pupils supported. System has been rolled out since Sept 23. Some IPs are working better than others and there are one or two secondary schools that continue to PEx according to their own systems. The IPs do not cover primary schools and there are now an increasing number of PEx in Primary which is of concern.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration was given to the issue of single or dual registering pupils where there is early intervention / part-time at AP.</li> <li>Reading asked whether other LAs have developed effective prevention of exclusion arrangements with support of funding through DBV.</li> <li>There is a general concern that the numbers of PEx are driving the system, with APs / PRUs being full or beyond commissioned places and little capacity left for AP outreach or other prevention of exclusion.</li> </ul> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CO to circulate ESCC's presentation.</li> <li>Discussion about Ofsted's AP Thematic Review at the next meeting and ways LAs are supporting or responding to increased numbers of exclusions of primary-aged children.</li> </ul>	<p>CO</p>
<p><b>5. Managed Moves: policies and procedures</b></p> <p>Following the revised Exclusions Guidance from the DfE there was interest in whether LAs had revised managed moves policies and what use was being made of direction offsite / trial period placements.</p> <p>Colleagues were thanked for responding to the short survey and for those who had shared managed move policies. CO shared a summary of the findings from the survey, which show a varied picture across the South-east. The slides will be shared with the group and members asked to review and bring thoughts to the April meeting about next steps.</p> <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CO to circulate slides. BR to prepare points for discussion at the next meeting.</li> <li>CO to upload protocols and policies that had been shared to the SESLIP restricted access page and notify the group when these are available to view.</li> </ul>	<p>BR / CO</p> <p>CO</p>
<p><b>AOB and future meetings:</b></p> <p>The idea of a CME Group WhatsApp group was raised and agreed that CO should set this up. Colleagues should email Chris with a mobile number that has access to WhatsApp for him to then invite them to join the group.</p> <p>17th April 2024 at 2pm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LGO complaints related to s19: group to present summary of themes and possible actions / next steps. (BR / CO)</li> <li>Managed moves: review survey information. Any further actions? (BR)</li> <li>Attendance support for schools SLAs (JW)</li> <li>Latest SESLIP EHE_CME Dashboard</li> </ul> <p>12th June 2024 at 9.30am    17th Sept 2024 at 2pm    13th Nov 2024 at 2pm</p>	<p>CO / All</p> <p>BR/CO    BR    JW    CO</p>