

AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING

21st June 2024

Present: Sarah Daly (Portsmouth), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Marie Denny and Victoria Courtis (MKC), Claire Hayes and Sarah Clarke (W Sussex), Natalie Smith (Hants), Michelle Stanley (Kent), Michael Jarrett (Bucks), Clive Haines (RBWM), Naomi Carter (IoW), Julia Katherine and Carrie Traill (Surrey), Ashley Seymour-Williams (BHCC), Jane Everton (Wokingham).

Apologies: Kate Reynolds (Oxfordshire), Ming Zhang (Wokingham), Clodagh Freeston (Southampton), Elizabeth Funge (E Sussex).

Item	Actions						
Welcome and introductions / apologies							
<p>1. Notes and matters arising</p> <p>Notes from April were agreed as being accurate.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The staff wellbeing materials shared by Reading have been circulated as well as the summer 2024 iteration of the EHE & CME Dashboard (still awaiting response from a few LAs). • Paul Schofield has confirmed he will attend the September meeting and apologises about today. • The CME Group to be tasked to set up a time-and-finish group to recommend priority updates to sections in local section 19 policies that can be shared across the South-east LAs. • Summary of concerns over some adjudications from LG Ombudsman was reviewed. Approved by the Network. Chris will escalate it to Richard Tyndall to follow-up with LGA, ADCS and RIAs. 	CO						
<p>2. Strategies / protocols to support school attendance with NHS / primary care / ICBs</p> <p>Milton Keynes and Hampshire shared their practice in the development and dissemination of a local agreement with health (GPs, paediatricians and CAMHS) to support school attendance. Marie, Vic and Natalie were thanked for their presentations.</p> <p>Key themes and discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local pathways / protocols / materials build on existing strategic partnerships. MKC stressed this with their ICB and NHS colleagues and this was an area of joint responsibility, akin to SEND and safeguarding. • Protocols and templates co-produced with settings (school, primary care, DCO). Role of the DCO has been key to local arrangements. • Julia recommended raising with the SE19 DCO Group and to explore the possibility of a joint recommendation to SESLIP steering group. • “straw poll” of stage of development of local protocols: <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td>Agreements in place:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Agreements in development:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Early stages / scoping:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20%</td> </tr> </table> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris to reach out to SE19 with Sheelagh to discuss possible joint proposal with DCOs Group. • A view that SEND and safeguarding are equally strong drivers for a strategic steer from ICBs. 	Agreements in place:	30%	Agreements in development:	50%	Early stages / scoping:	20%	CO
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<p>3. Challenges in your local education system.</p> <p>1. Themes from the CME Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance – both the persistent challenges with severely absent pupils and capacity within the LA to deliver statutory support and monitoring as set out in ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’. 							

Item	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worrying that there are continuing increases in numbers excluded in most LAs. • Increasing numbers who are EHE; capacity for LA to support / monitor suitable education <p>2. School sustainability – especially small primary schools and negotiating deficit management plans for maintained schools which are overspent. Naomi shared the challenges on the IoW and the issue of working with members: initially supportive, then start to back-track when closure or merger of a school might be on the cards in their ward(s). Tensions between headteachers wanting clarity ASAP (with an eye towards the academic year) and community / political concerns. Deficit management with small, maintained primaries is a challenge for many LAs (most at the meeting).</p> <p>3. SEND pressures – continuing with increasing demand for EHC needs assessments in nearly all, plus capacity and finance. Surrey has offered to share some of their practice and strategies. Over time, with a workstream on ‘ordinarily available provision’ that developed a “learners single point of access” for schools staffed by SENCOs, they have reached a point where they now report a 10% reduction in EHC needs assessment requests.</p> <p>4. Admissions – as a result of the election. Campaigning requests from journalists plus lobbying from parents purporting to have a child in independent school seeking information about which school their child would be placed in. Recommended responses: “we look forward to receiving you application through the usual admissions processes” (for parents) and “please follow our FOI procedures” for journalists.</p> <p>5. School place planning – increasingly a strategic issue for LAs when an academy or trust unilaterally makes decisions (e.g. to increase PAN in a locality with surplus places). Contributes to the challenging position LAs are in: many of the accountabilities (especially for vulnerable children and young people), yet few of the levers.</p> <p>6. Management Information Systems – Portsmouth are having torrid time with transfer to Synergy. Some similar experiences shared from other LAs, though most glitches overcome in time.</p> <p>7. Flexi-schooling – has been brought up by Ofsted. Chris will circulate previous summary about local policies / position statements developed by the CME Group in 2021.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues to raise with DfE in September: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic school place planning, when trusts / academies work to their own agenda (including PAN); can regions office ‘push back’ against trusts? ○ School sustainability and school system: current policy direction is heading towards a rump of financially stressed maintained schools that trusts will not take on and become ‘forced into failure’ [with consequences for pupils and communities]; what would be better system look like? • Julia to share SEND demand reduction materials from Surrey and offered to present to the September meeting. • School sustainability is a growing challenge; trial having it as a standing agenda item at least for the autumn term meetings. 	<p>JK</p> <p>CO</p> <p>CO</p> <p>JK/ CO</p> <p>CO</p>
<p>Next meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>27th Sept:</u> First half of meeting with Paul Schofield (see item 4). Plus update on LGO and, possibly, on ICBs / s19 guidance and Surrey SEND Strategy and reducing demand. • Chris will book one of the autumn term meetings to be in London. 	<p>CO</p>