

## AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING

27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Present: Sarah Daly (Portsmouth), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Ming Zhang (Wokingham), Clodagh Freeston (Southampton), Elizabeth Funge (E Sussex), Marie Denny (MKC), Sarah Clarke (W Sussex), Natalie Smith (Hants), Michelle Stanley (Kent), Gareth Drawmer (Bucks), Clive Haines (RBWM), Naomi Carter (IoW), Trudy Pyatt (Surrey), Mark Storey and Ashley Seymour-Williams (BHCC), Neil Goddard (W Berks).

Apologies: Kate Reynolds (Oxfordshire), Michael Jarrett (Bucks), Christine McInnes (Kent), Juno Hollyhock (Southampton).

In attendance: Dame Kate Dethridge and Paul Schofield (DfE South-east Regions Group), Steph Murray (Southampton).

Item	Actions
<p><b>1. Discussions with DfE Regions</b></p> <p>Sarah welcomed Dame Kate and Paul and introductions / apologies were given.</p> <p>Discussions between the DfE and AD Network of pressing themes for the schools and early years systems across the South-east. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early years: local sufficiency and capacity and looking towards increasing school nurseries.</li> <li>• Oversight of local school systems in 2024-25, as we move away from one-word judgements and look to greater focus on inclusion.</li> <li>• School and system sustainability: pressure points and strategies to build upon.</li> <li>• Attendance 'bumps in the road'.</li> <li>• Capital and school buildings (incl SEND): local challenges.</li> </ul> <p>Sarah thanked colleagues from the DfE and welcomed the chance to continue these discussions over the coming year.</p>	
<p><b>2. Notes and matters arising</b></p> <p>Notes from June were agreed as being accurate.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sarah had taken the concerns about LG Ombudsman adjudications to SESLIP Steering Group who agreed to pursue these with LGA, ADCS and RIAs. Chris and Richard have circulated a reminder recently to these groups; Helen Watson is following up within the LGA. Chris to continue with this and update in November.</li> </ul>	CO
<p><b>3. Reflections on item 1</b></p> <p>Members were positive about discussions and looking forward to these continuing and for signs of increased representation by LAs at groups leading or advising on changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The practical challenge of overseeing contraction of the school system (primary sector) when there are different procedures and approaches required for maintained schools and for trusts / academies is frustrating for both officers and heads. It is also further fuelling mistrust among parents, who feel primary academies are being treated differently. Among the pressures are a large volume of FOIs which are time-consuming to respond to.</li> <li>• Agreement that more should be done to explain and compare the statutory responsibilities of LAs across the education system with those of academy trusts. Natalie and Marie agreed to share presentations and work on the topic with Chris; to prepare a draft summary for discussion and finalising in Nov.</li> </ul>	CO / NS / MD
<p><b>4. Strategies / protocols to support school attendance with primary health care / ICBs</b></p> <p>Further discussions by the CME Group have demonstrated practice and partnerships developing across parts of the South-east. However, much of the coastal strip (from W Sussex to Kent / Medway) have yet to develop agreements and approaches.</p> <p>Practice-sharing through the CME Group is welcomed and should continue.</p>	

Item	Actions
<p>Agreement that making an approach to ICBs about a joint statement of principles and purpose would assist with consistency across the region.</p> <p>Chris updated that the South-east DCO / DMO network has had similar discussions, under a focus of SEND and emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA). This was also being driven by safeguarding concerns, for instance that GPs should insist on seeing the child concerned not just responding to views expressed by a parent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement that Chris and Louise Needham (DCO Network) draft a short summary of concerns and proposals. Then Sarah can take this forward to SESLIP Steering Group to discuss ways to raise with ICBs.</li> </ul>	CO
<p><b>5. Section 19 policy – update from CME group.</b></p> <p>The CME Group has continued discussions about the challenges faced with increasing numbers of children and young people receiving education under s19. A small group will link together to prepare a summary of key updates from the recent DfE Guidance and core points for consideration when updating a local Children with Medical Needs Policy.</p> <p>Aim to share for the November meeting.</p>	CO
<p><b>Next meetings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22<sup>nd</sup> November: discussions with Lee Selby (Ofsted); SEND demand reduction (Surrey), discussion of responsibilities for schools (maintained vs academy; LA vs trust); Please post topics and themes for Ofsted in the WhatsApp group.</li> <li>• 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025: discussions with DfE Regions Group</li> </ul>	All