

South-East Sector-led Improvement Partnership
South-East Children Missing Education Group Meeting
 13th November 2024, 2pm

Attendance: Mike Stoneman (chair – Portsmouth), Jon Willcocks, Pauline Martin Ellis (Hants), James Fowler (Bucks), Bryn Roberts (Southampton), Ian Fraser (M Keynes), Carole Vernon (Wokingham), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Katy Daly (Bracknell), Simon Smith and Jesse Reiss (Kent), Gavin Thomas (B&H), Mark Keiller (Surrey), Melissa Perry (W Berks), Heather Morris (IoW), Claire Raffaelli (RBWM), Chris Owen. Apologies: Rosie Gossage (RBWM), Olly May (BFC), Anjli Sidhu (Slough), Vidyu Narayan (ESCC), Jo Goodey (Oxfordshire),

Item	Action
<p>1. Notes of September meeting and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes passed and actions all in the agenda. Protocols with NHS: materials from Bracknell circulated, continuing liaison with DCO group / ICB request. 	
<p>2. Attendance arrangements: progress and challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance hubs and targeted support meetings – colleagues from Hants shared a presentation about the arrangements that have been put in place – largely around 12, phase-specific hubs that meet termly. There has been some progress as a result, as well as challenges (such as capacity – e.g. there are 20,000 pupils who have action plans [to move from being persistently or severely absent]). Active support from strategic leaders, including the DCS briefing members and local MPs, has been an important feature. School have followed on, with all schools now sharing their attendance returns (though there are concerns about the quality / accuracy of these from a minority of schools). Discussion: coding of attendance / absence and unintended consequences for example around code b. The competing pressures around inclusion: attendance does not necessarily equate to engagement in learning. 	
<p>3. Progress with LG Ombudsman complaints concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update: CO had a meeting with DfE attendance team. They were interested to hear the challenges set out. Their main engagement had been with a series of complaints found against Central Bedfordshire LA. They committed to contact LGO and offer a further update about the implementation of school attendance statutory guidance. <i>From DfE: what extent have daily data attendance feed helped and school regs change (that schools must report attendance concerns to LA) helped?</i> Response: is it too early to say yet. Agreed to keep this on the agenda and to update the DfE as changes bed-in. 	Chris
<p>4. Local s19 policy advice summary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> W Berks: shared insights from their research about key elements of a S19 policy. <u>Key points:</u> in the policy to define and delineate related pathways for assessment and then responsibility for arrangements for suitable education (SEND EHC needs assessment, EOTAS, poor attendance, S19). As part of this, setting out circumstances of absence that lie outside of s19. The list drafted with W Berks has been shared. Together these help to avert 'drift and delay', which are key area of criticism from LGO. 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bracknell: s19 Policy as overarching policy / links with other LA policies; and have focused on reporting forms and communication so schools provide all relevant information (& health partners) so decision-making can be timely. Caseworkers oversee suitable education arrangements with schools (which can be supported by an SLA) – as part of maintaining continuity with school-based learning as much as possible. Agreement that core EOTAS cases are the most challenging to make arrangements for. Is there value in a regional set of ‘typical packages’ for EOTAS – to try to manage unreasonable demands from a few parents? - Discuss in January. • Next steps: circulation of file with BFC’s pro-forma for schools; • Other s19 policies: send to Chris to circulate • Further comments on the “within s19 and outside s19” list – send to Chris to update 	<p>Chris</p> <p>Chris</p> <p>All</p>
<p>5. Section 19 data (in EHE dashboard)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S19 totals etc. Although s19 numbers are the best bet in the future. Until local policies are updated to align with guidance, there is inconsistent collation for some LAs. Whilst ‘medical needs’ numbers tend to be recorded; this then hits the different definitions operated with by different LAs. • Decision: Pause requesting s19 data in the dashboard until next academic year. 	
<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft GP / paediatrician flowchart was shared from Southampton, informed by a flowchart from Torbay. Update about joint protocols with NHS. E Berks arrangement was under scrutiny from LMCs worried about additional workload. Their preference is that a payment arrangement is set up with the ICB. Action: this further highlights the value of a agreed set of principles to be agreed with ICBs in the region. <p>Dates of future meetings: 29th Jan 2025 at 10am</p>	<p>Chris / Mike</p>