**South East Regional Education Data Group Meeting**

**Online via Microsoft Teams - Thursday 12th November 2020**

**In Attendance**

* Daryl Perilli – Brighton & Hove
* Alastair Lee – East Sussex
* Katherine Eastland – Brighton & Hove
* Allistare Smedley – Brighton & Hove
* Charlie Watson - Slough
* Dan Harper - Medway
* Julie Darch – Surrey
* Matt King – West Sussex
* Rachel Nijjer - Medway
* Paul Stowe – Bracknell Forrest
* Penny Austin – West Sussex
* Rosie Gossage – Windsor & Maidenhead

• Sarah Sangha – Surrey

* Edd Shackleton – Southampton
* Liam Skinner – IOW
* Michael Steen - Reading
* Sudeshna Banerjee - Wokingham
* Alison Wallis – Oxfordshire
* Nas Peerbux– Kent
* Mark Nunns – East Sussex
* Samantha Moss - Kent
* Donna Ross – ESCC and NCER
* Andre Merel - Portsmouth

**Apologies/Non-Attendees**

* Hampshire
* Buckinghamshire
* West Berkshire

**Not a Member**

* Milton Keynes (no representative)

**Minutes and Matters Arising**

* The minutes were reviewed and agreed
* Virtual School Data Network – **Action Daryl** **to send out the list of LAs who are included in this network**

**Regional Round Up & Key Issues**

**Colleagues were prompted to include an update on the following:**

* *What has the impact of Covid been in your area?*
* *How has your LA responded to this?*
* *Reporting Attendance Data in your LA. Using tools such as GroupCall, XVault.*
* *Impact of Covid on child poverty and feeding children*
* *Fines for non-attendance*
* *Which Data Visualisation Tools are you using? Tableau, Power BI etc.*

**Slough (sent by e mail from Charlie)**

* Increase in referrals put extra pressure on staff to provide the required level of care needed to each case. Through lockdown, the inability to provide home visits had an impact however this was relieved slightly with the introduction of PPE and the easing of lockdown rules. All mandatory visits were maintained during the lockdown, then incrementally easing non-statutory elements such as Early Help back.  EHE’s have increased in the new term from September due to COVID, increase of approximately 60%.
* Specific education and social care task force, chaired by the director of Children Services and supported by the Associate Director for Childrens and Families. From an education perspective, connected with all phases of school education. With the connection came the opportunity to resolve issues and challenges and implement the government guidance. In relation to social care, opportunity to liaise with senior leaders across social care to mitigate for COVID associated challenges and to plan for the implementation for BAU. Joint response in relation to education and social care was the scope to align interventions for vulnerable children and children of key workers
* We use Capita One and pull attendance out using crystal reports
* LA mobilised incredibly quickly with community and voluntary sector partners to establish the ‘One Slough’ in response to residents needs so food parcels, medicines and other priority supplies were coordinated and through networks were delivered to vulnerable families including delivery of food vouchers, weekly support calls, and ongoing support for identified vulnerable residents
* Fines for non-attendance temporarily suspended and due to second lockdown are likely to be introduced in the new year
* Currently use Excel workbooks, however the Corporate team are experimenting with using Power BI and the is an appetite for Power BI to be used within Childrens and Families area

**Medway**

* Using the DfE daily attendance collection for data, although it is not always the same schools reporting each day. Attendance between 80-90%
* Continued working with Social Care and Health to monitor to identify and monitor the most vulnerable children
* Use Synergy, for Early Help, SEND and Attendance/Inclusions.
* There has been a surge in Social Care referrals – looking at which school have the most cases
* Reporting attendance from census data via NEXUS
* Making provision for feeding children in the hols
* Not sure if non-attendance fines are being issued at the moment
* Using mainly Power BI and a bit of the free Tableau in FFT

**Surrey**

* Social care referrals have certainly gone up
* Attendance is collected via a communication portal directly between schools and the LA
* There has been an impact from workforce sickness levels – having to cover other work

**West Sussex**

* Using the DfE daily attendance collection for data, although it is not always the same schools reporting each day. The response rate is around 70% of settings
* There has been an increase is requests for FSM data – sometimes the data requests have not been as focussed as they should, asking for data that isn’t needed for the task
* CLA data had been brought back in-house and Welfare Call contract not renewed.
* Using a VBA script. Schools complete an excel template and the data is collated via a ‘button’
* The School Census issues due to DfE and MIS supplier errors have been frustrating, causing more work
* Phonics collection – can foresee that there may be a lot of chasing for the data
* Still mainly using Excel for visuals, but looking to use Power BI going forwards. Training it in is the issue, as there does not seem to be formal support for this **– there was a brief discussion about how this is being done in other LAs**
* Post-16 tracking data is not as robust and timely as we would like
* Still issuing non-attendance fines, predominantly for holidays in term time
* There has been a significant recent increase in EHE
* Still using Impulse, but there is a working group looking at Synergy, using a Power BI feed for education data (Medway and Reading confirmed they use Synergy)
* Having to manage referrals via spreadsheets as Impulse is not fit for purpose

**Bracknell Forest**

* As a small authority with only 38 settings, this makes the challenge around Covid more manageable
* Schools are mostly back in full and there have not been many issues with attendance
* Low numbers means that cases and absence can look worse that it is. Around 3,000 children have had to have at least on period of isolation. Not concerned as schools are managing thing well
* The School Census went well and pleasantly surprised that the DfE made the BF academy data available sooner than usual
* Also looking at Synergy (using Capita One at the moment). Use Mosaic for Social Care data, but as budgets are under pressure not much available for new systems purchases

**Windsor & Maidenhead**

* 21/64 settings were affected by Covid, in the first Autumn half term
* The impact of managing school staff and on staff resilience is significant with Heads and Deputies teaching, bubbles collapsing and lots of risk assessments
* EHE has increased and fair access referrals have also increased
* Still issuing a small number of non-attendance fines for holidays in term time – on a case-by-case basis
* Some children where there are welfare concerns are not yet back in school – colleagues working hard to ease parental anxieties around the virus
* Data visualisation – other colleagues are best placed to update on this and will be at future meetings

**Southampton**

* Attendance recording – using DfE return - response rate about 75% - varies daily depending on which schools are returning but attendance around 90%
* Analysis is done by extracting absence and exclusions from the database, putting it into a report and matching this to the census at school and LA level
* Census data is imported into NEXUS for schools via Perspective Lite
* More schools are moving away from SIMS – Arbor is the main alternative in Southampton
* Census and Workforce Census – no major issues – a couple of schools were closed in deadline week but still got their returns in
* Analysis is done in Power BI but reporting has not transitioned to that yet as it is combined with SLA work

**Isle of Wight**

* Social Care referrals have increased leading to more LAC – local media have picked up on this
* Received weekly attendance data from EMS. All but 3 schools are using SIMS
* There has been multi-agency work to get vulnerable children back in school
* There is a lead ‘Learning Partner in’ each school supporting this work
* FSM numbers are up a lot – a holiday support initiative is being rolled out – Lack of tourism has had a big impact
* Not currently fining for non-attendance – trying to be supportive
* Using Power BI for data. Social Care are moving to MOSAIC next year

**Reading (Brighton Futures for Children)**

* There has been a big Covid impact on school attendance. The DfE data is imported into Power BI and dashboards for leaders and schools are produced, via B2B
* Around ¾ of schools still using SIMS
* Social Workers & EWOS use an attendance tracker with a list of pupils missing 30 sessions or more
* Social care cases have increased 10% since lockdown and EHE cases have increased
* There are a lot of stakeholders involved in the FSM initiative to provide meals during half term
* Also supported the computers to schools initiative
* Each day there are around half of all schools affected by Covid cases
* Not fining for non-attendance, but focussing resources on supporting families instead
* Reporting is done via Capita One – looking at Synergy, but it is very expensive to change over. Have stopped using Welfare Call
* Power BI and a bit of the free Tableau in FFT, connecting to MOSAIC and Capita One databases for reporting

**Wokingham**

* Attendance recording – using the daily DfE data, although the quality of this is questionable (in terms of what schools are putting in)
* EHE data has increased and is monitored via Excel spreadsheets
* There has been an issue about collecting data in clinically vulnerable teachers – **Action All – please advise how your LAs are collecting/monitoring this data**
* There is a daily social care report, monitoring domestic abuse cases, reasons for referral etc
* Still using Welfare Call – it’s meeting needs at the moment
* There has been a big increase of FOIs since September
* Sudeshna kindly collated a list of systems used by the group – **Action Sudeshna to send this to Daryl for sharing with the Group**
* Many schools are going to Scholarpack, (although one School has changed MIS back to SIMS again) so their data is not imported via B2B. Getting the complete data is a challenge
* New visualisation tools have been promised but not delivered

**Oxfordshire**

* A task group working with public health has been set up to support schools – this is helping in minimising disruption and stops schools from being closed unnecessarily
* Around 80% of school are sending in the DfE daily return, but not always the same set of schools. Alison has noticed that if you run a report before 9 am then after 9 am some settings disappear from it – a URN issue? A query has been raised with the DfE
* The attendance team are chasing up school DfE returns on a daily basis
* There has been a massive increase in the numbers of EHE (200 additional children), mainly being driven by cases in primary aged children. There has been a lot of effort put into mediation and numbers would be even higher had it not
* Still fining for attendance and the numbers are higher than last year, however permanent and fixed term exclusion rates have gone right down
* Still use mainly Excel for visualisation, however Social Care have started using Power BI

**Brighton & Hove**

* Attendance data is now being collected weekly directly from most schools via Groupcall and the data is shared with SEN and Social Care teams – it is around 90%. Due to so many Schools moving to Scholarpack, getting them all is becoming a manual time-consuming process
* Impulse in the main system and the product and data quality are poor. There is a meeting with Groupcall to see if automated transfers across MIS can be achieved, but it’s an expensive solution – Bristol were very positive about their enhanced service offering though
* Putting together a Groupcall business case – **Action Daryl to share this with the group once complete**
* Only 30% of setting in any one day are completing the DfE return – there is no LA appetite to chase these up with schools, as there won’t be 100% and the data quality can be quite poor
* EHE numbers are up by a third, year on year
* Non-attendance fines are being issued, but only for term time holidays
* There are still a number of the most vulnerable pupils not attending school
* The late duplicates / responses / DfE releasing Academy data on the School Census, is impacting on a lot of us, and there is a lot of ‘noise’ about it on the DfE forums - **Action Daryl to take this feedback to the STAR Chamber meeting. Update – Daryl has emailed the Star Chamber and asked for this to be discussed at the next meeting on 3rd December.**
* The LA has now signed up to use Power BI

**Kent**

* EHE has seen a massive increase - up 111 cases since September and more officers have been employed
* There are 800 CME cases over the 30 days absence threshold – there is a focus on phone calls to families to ensure as many as possible are contacted and to avoid refusal to engage in person
* Covid cases are rapidly increasing in Swale and Thanet
* The local courts have stopped processing school attendance orders
* The Fair Access Team are sending cases through later so the process is delayed
* Re Synergy and other’s considering it – **Action All to note - advice would be to make sure you get you teams ’on the ground’ to actually look at Synergy first, so you get the product you actually need**
* Using Power BI, but have only just started

**East Sussex**

* Were collecting attendance but now doing a weekly summary from the DfE data as there was no real appetite due to understanding the data quality is poor. Schools not sending in data of where it is clear that data quality is an issue are being chased up though.
* There is increased pressure on Social Care – the cases coming through are of a more ‘severe’ nature and are going on to have child protection plans
* No overall increase in LAC numbers, however the complexity has increased
* Low Covid cases so far – only one school has had to close
* Most work is being done of a school-by-school basis and attendance data is not centrally reported
* Nearly 300 new EHE cases, mostly in KS2 &3
* Using Tableau – early days but finding it very slow. No training – seems to be expected that it will all be self-directed learning
* Liquid Logic’s EYES (Early Years & Education System) has been implemented for SEND & behaviour data. Synergy populates it with the data – just started using it, and there are lots of data issues this has highlighted need to be tidied up

**Portsmouth**

* Covid impact has been significant – it feels ‘frantic’ with lots of random data requests and an increase in FOIs
* There is no secure e mail solution and a lack of experience/resource on attendance monitoring, which is challenging and taking up resources
* There is now an LA ‘Link Co-ordinator’ to support vulnerable pupils and link between the LA and schools
* Schools use a variety of MIS and some have been using the various ’custom’ absence codes developed for the summer term, causing data quality issues
* Aggregate data is not always useful as there is such variance between settings
* Using Capita One Crystal report, Access , Excel FFT Tableau free offer and NCER for Census data (although there was an issue with cropping out 4 year olds attendance)

**Power BI Demo – Dan Harper (Medway)**

* Dan shared the presentation and talked through how they produced the annual report
* There was a lot of work in getting the datasets into the system and everything set up
* He has received positive feedback that it makes the data easier to understand and more ‘visual’
* There is no IT training offer – as others have said already, we seem to be expected to learn for ourselves – this means you must be allowed time to ‘play’ and have confidence to make mistakes
* There is a lot of online info and some support groups out there to help, but it takes time to learn and get used to it
* **Action Dan to send the main PDF with sensitive data removed, for sharing with the group**

**CME, EHE, Reduced Timetables Benchmarking**

* Only a few LAs have returned the data – Daryl will send a chaser e mail – many of us are reliant on other teams providing the data
* This will go to the AD Network on 27th November
* It was agreed that the number of respondents needs to increase for the data to be meaningful and regional
* There was also discussion about sharing a summary from the DfE returns with the ADCS – data quality, accuracy and return rates were raised as concerns, so seeing it in a table of LAs could be misleading

**NCER Update – Donna Ross (Presentation to be shared with the minutes)**

* Donna talked through the presentation
* **Action Donna to send a copy to Daryl to be shared with the minutes**

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**Reflections on Today’s Meeting and Interesting Points Arising**

* The schools migration away from SIMS as their MIS system continues to be a considerable challenge for LA data and IT support teams.
* In some areas, strong Headteachers can culture carriers and lead others away from SIMS to what they are using, so the SIMS abandonment rate increases
* The role of data and analysts has been shown to be vital during a crisis – good for our profiles

**AOB**

* Rosie from Windsor & Maidenhead asked about Post 16 and EHE monitoring – **Action all to send anything relevant to Daryl to collate and share with the group**
* Penny asked what guidance we share about flexi-schooling requests.
* Mike Steen asked about data apprenticeships. **Action – Daryl to send examples of apprenticeships that are being undertaken in Brighton and Hove.**

<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/business-services/professional-development/apprenticeships/digital/index.aspx>

<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/data-analyst/>

**Next Steps/Future Meetings**

* Once things have eased there may be an option to do one of the meetings in person, but for now we will continue via Teams online
* Spring - **Thursday 4th March 2021**