**S.E.19 SEND Network: DfE Briefing no. 6**

**24th February 2021**

**Notes of meeting**

| **Local Authority/ Organisation** | **Attendees** |
| --- | --- |
| Brighton and Hove | Georgina Clarke-Green |
| Brighton and Hove | Rhianedd Hughes |
| Buckinghamshire | Sarah Tilston (DCO) |
| Buckinghamshire | Lucy Perren |
| Buckinghamshire | Ian Peters |
| East Berkshire | Sharon Ballantyne on behalf of Lynette Jones-Jardine (DCO) |
| East Sussex | Rachel Atkinson (DMO) |
| HIOW | Matthew Powell (DCO) |
| Isle of Wight | Alistair Hines |
| Isle of Wight | Kate Symes |
| Kent | Rosemary Henn-Macrae |
| Kent | Louise Hickman |
| Kent and Medway | Sue Gibbons (DCO) |
| Medway | Wendy Vincent |
| Milton Keynes | Nina Broderick |
| Oxfordshire | Catherine Clarke |
| Oxfordshire | Janet Bailey |
| Oxfordshire | Kate Bradley |
| Portsmouth | Julia Katherine |
| Portsmouth | Karen Spencer |
| RB Windsor & Maidenhead | David Griffiths |
| Reading (Brighter Futures for Children) | Hester Collicutt |
| Reading (Brighter Futures for Children) | Nikki Stevens |
| Slough | Debs Bowers |
| Southampton | Tania Emery (DCO) |
| Surrey | Andrea Ferns (DCO) |
| Surrey | Sharon Scott |
| Surrey | Paula Vyze (DCO) |
| Surrey | Hayley Connor |
| West Berkshire | Jane Seymour |
| West Sussex | Helen Johns |
| West Sussex | Natalie McNeill (DSCO) |
| West Sussex | Rachael Lee (DCO) |
| Wokingham | Sonia Aulak |
| Wokingham | Elaine Munro (PEP) |
| SE NNPCF | Sarah Clarke |
| DfE SEN and Disability Professional Adviser | André Imich |
| DfE S.E. Region SEND Adviser | Liz Flaherty |
| NHSE/I Transformation & Quality Improvement Manager | Jacqui Stillwell |
| S.E.19 SEND Network Co-ordinator | Tracey Maytas |

Julia Katherine, Portsmouth, opened the meeting and noted that the meeting agenda consists of a presentation from André Imich, DfE SEN and Disability Professional Adviser, followed by a Q&A session.

André talked to the presentation (embedded and attached to email)



He highlighted that regular school attendance needs to be encouraged. Conversations are to be held with those who are reluctant to go back in order to support them on the return to school.

There will be more guidance around testing, (now available; to be found on this [link](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-full-opening-special-schools-and-other-specialist-settings/mass-asymptomatic-testing-in-specialist-settings).)

André thanked local authorities for completing the LA SEND survey. The data has started to be analysed and it should be sent in the next 10 days. He noted that there has been an increase in EHE for those with EHCPs from the data collected in October.

The High Needs Operational guidance has just been published. André encouraged LAs to look at the annexes.

The engagement model is statutory from September 2021. There is a concern that not many schools have engaged in the training.

Liberty Protection Safeguards will replace Deprivation of Liberty Schemes from next April. It will also be inspected by Ofsted in due course but it is not confirmed yet if it will be under the SEND inspection.

Assessment reviews - reminder about the 31st March. He stated that a reminder has been put in a newsletter to colleges of their role in this process and their duty to cooperate with local authorities in the local authority performance of this task.

Opportunity: The Growing Up Well project related to family hubs is aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable children. They want 3 LAs to be part of it for 2 years. If you are interested in finding out more, click [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-hubs-growing-up-well-submit-an-expression-of-interest).

Comments and questions followed:

* What is the guidance on HI/VI educational establishments re: face coverings?

André replied that transparent face coverings can be worn, but there is limited evidence on their safety/effectiveness.

* In terms of the HI element, Helen Johns, West Sussex, explained that they have sourced medical transparent masks. They can give the addresses of the providers to schools but not source the masks for them. Since the guidance is not clear, what would be the best way to proceed?

André replied that we need to keep prompting schools.

Wendy Vincent, Medway, noted that some of their HI/VI children have challenged schools themselves, supported by HI teachers.

The following links to transparent mask providers were shared:

* + [Clear Mask](https://www.theclearmask.com/user-manual)
  + [CSSEF](http://www.cssef.org.uk/covid-19.html)
* Are EP's and advisory HI/VI teachers classed as "health and social care staff" in the guidance re visiting professionals?

There is no definitive list of who is defined as any of those. It is a local decision.

* Therapists are reporting anxiety from schools around risks posed by therapists moving between bubbles, mainly in mainstream schools, and reluctance to allow in.

André has received feedback from some schools which were concerned about therapists not being in. This needs to be addressed on a case by case basis.

* What about access to testing for specialist staff?

Schools can provide testing for visiting staff.

* Rachel Atkinson, East Sussex showed concern about the academic emphasis for children as they come back; there will be many non-academic issues that will need addressing as well.

André stated that it is really important that children get quality education.

* Nina Broderick, Milton Keynes, asked if there is flexibility on the guidance following 8th March for children and young people with emotional based attendance issues in terms of supporting schools to continue the use of remote learning as part of their transition plan?

André remarked that there is nothing at the moment apart from the mandatory expectation to attend school from 8th March. Every effort needs to be made for children and young people to go back to school as soon as possible. For individual cases, schools need to work with the families to identify what will make this possible.

* Wendy Vincent mentioned an initiative for the 2 weeks of half-term and the 4 weeks of summer holidays as a response from the Department of Health against hunger on children. It could be run by schools or providers. She asked what the budget for this project is.

André had not heard about it and he agreed to look into it.

**Action:** André/ Liz to feed back

* A question was posed around when will apprenticeships and supported internships be able to resume.

André replied that it will be down to the employers. He agreed to pick it up with their post-16 team to see what is happening on that front.

**Action:** André/ Liz to feed back

* Progress with the SEND review; André stated that it is on course to be published in spring.

Julia thanked André. It is helpful to have these updates from the DfE and being able to ask questions.

Date of next meeting: 10th March, 12:30 to 13:30. Contact Tracey Maytas if there is an agenda item you would like to add.