

South-East Sector-led Improvement Partnership

South-East Children Missing Education Group Meeting

27th June 2023

Present: Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Rosie Gossage (RBWM), Katy Daly (Bracknell), Gavin Thomas (B&H), Jon Willcocks (Hants), James Fowler (Bucks), Bryn Roberts (Southampton), Anjli Sidhu (Slough), Cathy Edwards (Kent), Ian Fraser (M Keynes), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Carole Vernon (Wokingham), Kim James (Oxfordshire), Mark Keiller (Surrey), Christine Clark (Medway), Andrew Parker (W Sussex), Chris Owen.
 Apologies: Melissa Perry (W Berks), Fiona Hostler (Reading), Rebecca Smith (Medway),
 Guest: Matt Cunningham (ADCS)

| Item | Actions |
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| Notes of May meeting and matters arising The notes of the May meeting were reviewed and agreed to be accurate. Matters arising not on the agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DfE's AP Census guide had been circulated. • Fair access and numbers referred: thanks to colleagues who had responded to the straw poll. Of these 70% reported that the numbers of pupils passing through Fair Access had increased over the past year. Several LAs reported that secondary places are at a premium and a type of student who had not previously had to pass through Fair Access processes had to now be brought to Panel to place them. A couple of LAs noted that in-year transfers were going up as well. | |
| CME in ILACS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portsmouth and Southampton shared their recent experience of preparations for and experience of inspection of CME arrangements in the ILACS process. Wokingham and W Sussex also contributed their experiences from earlier in 2023 too. • Some variation of focus was reported e.g for some those on reduced timetables or children with SEND were included and others not, or those in AP. A shift was noted towards inspectors asking for examples of good practice or inviting the LA to highlight areas of service delivery. • Pointers for preparation include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Know your children and young people and what the data tells you about them. Including do a dry-run of your data. ○ Ensure links and working arrangements with other teams and services are included e.g. CME who are known to social care / early help. ○ Have a clear position statement about your service area. | |
| 4. Comparative levels of CME Staffing / attendance guidance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike welcomed Matt Cunningham (ADCS). He explained that ADCS is continuing to lobby DfE about the additional burdens for LAs as a result of additional duties in <i>Working Together to Improve School Attendance</i>. DfE has so far been resistant to accepting any additional funding responsibilities for LAs. It had also written to DCSs this month informing that the secondary legislation required for the new guidance had not yet been passed, so the guidance would not yet be statutory in September. • Chris thanked the 11 colleagues who had provided a 2023 update to the broad staffing estimates. He noted that of those who could be compared with 2022, 5 had similar staffing, 4 some increase and 1 a small reduction. • For two LAs increases in staffing were a result of increases in demand for s19 children and young people. • One or two counties with relatively high proportion of independent schools highlighted that the expectations are onerous and holding LAs to account for reviewing attendance in schools which have no responsibility to report attendance is problematic. It was | |

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| <p>suggested that DfE require independent schools to complete attendance returns too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was also highlighted that many LAs can deliver some rotation of meetings around most schools, but there was much less focus on the purpose of these or impacts. Agreement that some seed funding to support the implementation of the new guidance would be welcomed but very unlikely and was in contrast to seed funding for at least two years for extended responsibilities for virtual schools for children known to social care. The DfE currently has a survey to review implementation and members of the group are encouraged to respond: https://dferesearch.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_37WZahCyEsjPdJk . Immediate future: it is anticipated that clarification guidance will accompany statutory powers being implemented. Matt thanked SE LAs for sharing information and said he would keep the group updated on any developments. Mike assured him he could return to the CME Group in the future if that was helpful for his ADCS work. | |
| <p>5. Changes to CME / EHE benchmark dashboard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed that moving to the Collect CME / EHE return data would provide much of the content from the previous dashboard. 10 LAs have provided their data from at least one term this year. CO will now ask Daniel from BHCC to use these to mock a first version of the new style dashboard. If possible, circulate for comment before the end of term. More importantly, please can you provide Chris with the contact names and details for future returns. From his meeting with Daryl and Daniel and the responses from group members it was concluded that the DfE return can result in a similar SE dashboard. In the future it is anticipated that data about numbers of EHE children returning to school and numbers of SAOs will be collected too and this will be added to the Dashboard. We will also look to continue to request data about numbers etc for those with medical needs under s19. | Chris. VN / JW / MP / MK / FH / AP |
| <p>6. Any other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most members reported increased demands for both children and young people with medical needs and increases in EHE. Several have faced LG Ombudsman investigation and the challenge of managing an appeal or even a fine. CO was asked to re-circulate the slides setting out LGO position that had been shared by Hants. The issue of Border Force and liaison and working together was raised. Kim will share a contact who CO can approach about attending a future meeting. Kim highlighted the Oxfordshire Hospital School (the oldest such school in the country) and the online training that is available if you register at this address: https://medicalneedsinschools.co.uk/ DfE appears to be drafting updated EHE guidance, but, in the absence of legislation to implement a register of children not in school, these are expected to be underwhelming. Children who are EHE or educated under s19 who have an EHCP or undergoing EHC needs assessment are a theme too. CO can explore with the SEND Network whether this is an area of mutual interest / to meet. | CO CO |
| <p>Dates of future meetings and themes for discussion:</p> <p><u>Sept 21st</u> 10am: developments to work with schools with those severely absent (Hants) & case examples of commissioning and monitoring AP (CO to link with 3 or 4 member LAs).</p> <p><u>Nov 9th</u> 10am, discussion about permanent exclusions (where are the numbers heading and strategies - RBWM and Wokingham?)</p> <p><u>Jan 16th</u> 10am,</p> <p><u>March 5th</u> 2pm</p> | |

Other potential themes for future discussion:

- A look again at EHE and the rising numbers that most LAs are reporting
- S19 and recent LGO judgements
- Children with medical needs