

## AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING

21<sup>st</sup> March 2025

### Notes of meeting

Present: Sarah Daly (Portsmouth CC), Duane Chappell (Bracknell), Ming Zhang (Wokingham), Natalie Smith (Hants), Michelle Stanley (Kent), Clive Haines (RBWM), Trudy Pyatt (Surrey), Georgina Clarke-Green (BHCC), Sarah Clarke (W Sussex), Elizabeth Funge (ESCC), Clodagh Freeston (Southampton), Marie Denny (MKC), Brian Grady (Reading), Neil Hoskinson and Steve Nyakatawa (Slough).

Apologies: Christine McInnes (Kent), Julia Katherine (Surrey), Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Michael Jarrett & Gareth Drawmer (Bucks), Claire Hayes (W Sussex), Naomi Carter (IoW), Kate Reynolds (Ox).

ITEM	Actions
<b>1. Welcome, notes and matters arising</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LG Ombudsman progress: continued support from spme RIAs (latest from Y&amp;H). <i>Following the meeting:</i> ADCS raised EOTAS with LGO through its president's annual meeting. LG Ombudsman was not receptive to discussion "it's about upholding the law". ADCS is saying that is all it can do and issues should now be raised with DfE in terms of clarification guidance.</li> <li>LAC with an EHCP element 3 payment consultation paper: passed to the SEND Network. Discussion that the uncertainty is problematic because it can slow funding being put in place for individuals. Recognition that a SE agreement is only part of the picture since some children are placed further afield and not covered by an agreement. There is also some legal advice that runs counter to the current position in guidance from the DfE and the Dept has undertaken to seek clarification. One or two LAs that had signed the South-east agreement are now moving to fit with DfE guidance. Sarah will ask to raise with DCSs about how this is a hurdle to decision-making and to press the DfE for definitive guidance.</li> <li>The Ofsted and (limited) DfE RISE slides have been circulated. CO raised that other RIAs have expressed similar concerns about the RISE proposals and the value of better join-up and collaboration with LAs.</li> </ul>	SD
<b>2. From CME Group: demand for 'suitable education' under s19</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natalie introduced that the CME Group proposes to focus on s19 challenges over forthcoming meetings. The aim is to improve consistency of approach across the region and for peer learning to support decision-making by LAs, thus reduce the likelihood of drift (which has been a valid challenge in some LGO determinations). The AD Network is in support of this focus.</li> <li>Discussion about AV1s as a resource to support continuity of learning. One LA has received strong push-back from teacher unions about their use. Areas like Bracknell and Oxfordshire with wide usage can share their experiences if that helps.</li> <li>Funding clawback for s19: recognition that although the power is in place, rarely taken up as an approach. One LA has taken papers to Schools Forum to propose there is now systematic clawback from the home school.</li> <li>Other uncertainties flagged are NHS England's reorganisation and the disbanding of ICBs and safeguarding arrangements in a few unreg APs.</li> <li>LA CME-related staffing levels – an information gathering request has been agreed with the CME Group. Findings will be shared; some ADs might be asked to hurry member(s) of their team responding to the request.</li> </ul>	CO / all
<b>3. School places and sufficiency planning – SEND in mainstream</b> Approaches and challenges: Milton Keynes and Reading shared strategies they have planned and are implementing. Similar aspirations: to facilitate a more inclusive school system	

ITEM	Actions
<p>through more specialist places in SEN units in mainstream. Milton Keynes overview of the aims and invitation to schools had been shared before the meeting, whilst links to strategy papers which have now been approved by members in Reading will be circulated after the meeting.</p> <p>As a result of increase in SEN unit places, MKC has already been able to move children from special schools into SEN units and others from out-of-area placements into local specials. This has produced early cost savings on SEND top-ups and home-school transport. Parents have been positive about their child attending school nearer to home, and, in one case, with their siblings.</p> <p>Reading meanwhile has developed a vision with LA leaders and school leaders for an inclusive system with clusters of schools where all children are within walking distance of their school and that ensure all schools have access to SEN units. This will be implemented through an increase of about 300 places in units, thus making expertise available to mainstream staff as well as additional specialist capacity. A plan of capital works for 'inclusive campuses' is set out in the papers to help with turning this vision into a reality. There is also plans for a new AP which will be central to processes to reduce exclusions and rates of suspensions.</p>	CO
<p><b>4. Preparations for next meeting:</b></p> <p>a. Discussions with DfE about RISE: Kate Dethridge is no longer available on 9<sup>th</sup> May. Members state that RISE is a priority for the AD Education Network. Agreed to swap the London in-person meeting to 27<sup>th</sup> June (with Paul Schofield) and 9<sup>th</sup> May will be via Teams. Members wish to work together on thinking about what their local school improvement offer should look like and, with reference to their local system and priorities, shaping this with school leaders and DfE. Potentially develop a framework for shaping and resourcing the local, universal, school improvement offer based around a set of first principles. Chris will arrange to meet with Marie, Brian, Natalie to develop a draft and points to share / discuss in May.</p> <p>b. SESLIP EHE-CME Dashboard: 100% responses so far this academic year which is appreciated. Timely to consider the dashboard's potential as a tool for ADs. Ming and Duane agreed to meet with Chris to advise on this.</p>	CO  CO/NS/BG/MD  CO/DC/MZ
<p><u>Dates of future meetings:</u>            9<sup>th</sup> May 2025; 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025 (London); 26<sup>th</sup> September.</p>	