

South-East Sector-led Improvement Partnership South-East Children Missing Education Group Meeting

12th March 2025 Record of meeting

Present: Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth), Jon Willcocks, Pauline Martin Ellis (Hants), James Fowler (Bucks), Bryn Roberts (Southampton), Ian Fraser (M Keynes), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Katy Daly (Bracknell), Cathy Edwards, Simon Smith & Jesse Reis (Kent), Melissa Perry (W Berks), Andrew Parker (W Sussex), Claire Raffaelli (RBWM), Jo Goodey (Oxfordshire), Fiona Hostler (Reading), Chris Owen.

Apologies: Gavin Thomas (BHCC), Annette Taylor (RBWM), Vidyu Narayan (ESCC), Natalie Smith (Hants).

Item	Actions
1. Welcome and introductions and matters arising	
 Notes were agreed as an accurate record. Mike reminded that today would be his last meeting as co-chair and that Ming Zhang from Wokingham would be taking over the role. 	
 LG Ombudsman complaints – Chris is still liaising with ADCS about their proposal for a meeting with the LGO. Slow progress because there are so many children's services 	Chris
 policy areas under discussion currently. Contacts shared with DCO network; and the DCOs network would welcome a joint meeting too. Chris to try to progress this with Louise Needham. 	Chris
 Staffing profiles: comments on the draft included can the totals be compared with rate of EHE (as well as rate per 10,000 pupils)? And a request for comment on the most pressing challenge locally will be added. Chris to circulate; members to respond by 28th March. 	Chris / all
2. Ofsted thematic visit – children with SEND not in education	
Melissa shared reflections on W Berks' recent Ofsted / CQC thematic visit. Overall: very demanding and largely reinforced what the LA was aware of already. Key expectation was for the local area to demonstrate it knows these children well and can back this up with data / records. Also the inspection team had a particular interest in children with SEND in AP (including p-t) and QA systems in place.	
Some key learning points:	
 To strive for '1 child; 1 file' record-keeping; which could also serve to support good 	
communication across the area.	
 Gaps in offer of some important therapeutic interventions (e.g. OT, SALT) and / or waiting lists for these. 	
 Continuing lack of clarity about a working scope of "full-time education". Some LAs using around 18 hours (equivalent to maximum offer from unregistered schools) as part-time timetable; beyond this pupil should be on transition back to full-time hours. Ofsted could offer no clarification and this was agreed as continuing to be an unclear area across the group. LAs have limited capacity to monitor progress back to full-time education and there is often a need to remind the home school that they are responsible to monitor safeguarding even when pupil not at school. Bracknell are trialling an electronic report form for schools to use to keep the LA informed about pupils on reduced timetables. Melissa was thanked for helpful feedback. 	
3. S19 / EOTAS packages & practice sharing	
Draft summary: the aim is to offer an overview of pieces of practice to be shared and / or	
developed during this term and next. Agreement about the need to distinguish between	
EOTAS (for children with SEND and largely codified in an EHC plan) and section 19, which is in response to prolonged school absence and is for 'a period'. Section 19 practice and	
the pressures from increasing numbers of families seeking this and being willing to	
pursue complaint and legal redress to achieve it. This is further complicated by the lack of	



	rovement Programme
evidence about such LA funded education being in the long-term interests of the child.	
Our core questions are:	
 what are the issues: current and emerging? How do we triage / make decisions and 	
how does this translate into next steps?	
 what solutions are LAs developing / employing / wanting to develop to each of the 	
issues? Including how do we support our schools with these CYP?	
o how are our solutions funded?	
We will revisit these at future meetings when there is a focus on each theme.	
• In terms of developments, group members are invited to offer to work with others or to	
volunteer their practice to share; Chris will aim to link with those in each theme and	
support the preparation of summaries. There are already a number of aspects of practice	
that have been shared through recent meetings.	
Chris will circulate an updated summary and a table for colleagues to return about the	Chris / all
themes to get involved with. Mike will update ADs about planned work on this theme.	
themes to get involved with time will aparte / 155 about planned work on this theme.	
4. Local practice with NHS colleagues	
E Berkshire LAs fed back from their involvement in the local general practice conference	
and Hants shared a presentation that had been used with general practice, plus progress	
with HMRC on information-sharing about current addresses of CME who the LA are not	
sure they have the latest home address for. The slides will be circulated.	Chris
	Ciliis
Key points:	
 Hants slides included a list of a range of 'ordinarily available' options that GPs can 	
either signpost parents to or even 'prescribe'. They reported that (anonymised)	
examples of unhelpful letters from GPs were also a positive discussion starter with	
colleagues in primary care.	
Looking to develop joint guidelines with LMCs in the area.	
o In E Berks, there is considerable push-back from GPs worried about the additional	
workload involved in using LA templates or checking to find options for these families	
LMC is recommending that there should be a contract payment which is slowing roll-	
out pending agreement with ICBs.	
 The extent of 'problematic' letters from GPs is hard to pin-point, because schools do 	
not routinely share these and, because there is no formal arrangement with the ICB,	
NHS does not monitor the scale. Is this something that the NHS can work on / audit?	
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Reminder that to achieve a shift where all GPs no longer attempt sign children off	
from school without having seen the child, is one of our baselines.	
 This area will form part of discussions with the DCO network. Private assessments is 	
likely to be another topic.	
5. SESLIP CME Dashboard	
 We have had 100% response for this academic year; Chris thanked colleagues. And asked 	
for key points to include in the explanatory points for ADs.	
 An example of a system change that can impact on numbers: Reading gave access to 	
their CME records to the admissions team and better cross-checking of those newly on-	
roll and follow-up with other families reduced total cases.	
Chris will share the dashboard with the AD Network.	Chris
AOB	
Group members thanked Mike for his chairing and championing of the group for the six years he	
has been involved as chair / co-chair.	
Dates of future meetings:	
30 th April 10am; 12 th June 10am; 17 th Sept 10am.	
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