

AD EDUCATION NETWORK MEETING

9th May 2025

Meeting notes

Present: Mike Stoneman (Portsmouth CC; chair), James Fowler (Bucks), Brian Grady (Reading), Natalie Smith (Hants), Marie Denny (MKC), Ming Zhang (Wokingham), Elizabeth Funge (ESCC), Julia Katherine (Surrey), Michelle Stanley (Kent), Sarah Clark (WSCC), Georgina Clarke-Green (BHCC),

Apologies: Sarah Daly (Portsmouth), Michael Jarrett & Gareth Drawmer (Bucks), Neil Goddard (W Berks), Christine McInnes (Kent), Clive Haines (RBWM), Naomi Carter (IoW).

Topic	Action
<p>1. Notes and matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mike kindly stepped in to chair and welcomed colleagues to the meeting. LAC with SEND element 3 payment protocol: SD took this to SESLIP DCSs and, following a further period for comments (none were received), South-east LAs have confirmed to revert to the DfE HNFB operational guidance: costs fall to the LA of residence. For example, ESCC plan implement this from 1st June. Further clarification about virtual school and high needs children are anticipated through this year. 	
<p>2. Local school improvement offer: a strategic & more collaborative approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The draft paper, and its thinking, were shared. General agreement that LAs were disappointed by the lack of early engagement by the DfE Regions team as the roll-out of RISE targeted intervention so far. Concerns were expressed that this did not bode well for the development of the coordinated universal offer. The Network's position is that through collaboration there is a better chance of making the most of the limited resource available. Such collaboration would build on the strengths of local partnerships and the LA's engagement with, and knowledge and local intelligence of, academies and maintained schools. We seek more clarity about accountabilities for targeted interventions, as well, so that LAs can fulfil their duties and reporting. Looking towards the development of the universal offer, a specific offer from LAs is to help with mapping existing local, school improvement infrastructure. Members report finding marked differences in their experiences of targeted interventions, from one RISE adviser to another. One adviser made early contact and sought to collaborate and reshape existing improvement planning, whereas another largely rebuffed the offer of a conversation in favour of themselves diagnosing the 'problems' for the school. Key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To seek a joint protocol / rules of engagement for targeted interventions. With the purpose of ensuring consistent lines and approaches with the school and to make the best use of local resources. Accountabilities: recognition of LA responsibilities for all children and, particularly, for vulnerable children (including to local members); clarity about more transparent DfE accountabilities and reporting. LA has a strategic role with academies and their children as well as with maintained schools. The ADs' aspiration is for RISE to contribute to local system strengthening as well as improve the quality of education in targeted schools. <p><u>Actions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CO / NS / MD / BG to meet and further revise the draft principles paper, including the 'rules of engagement' following comment from RISE adviser. To arrange a further opportunity for a (short) online meeting for ADs to review the SESLIP paper and for this to be shared with Paul Schofield before the June meeting. 	<p>CO</p> <p>CO</p> <p>CO / EF</p>

Topic	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise concerns from LAs in the South-east via ADCS. CO to do this with ADCS nationally and EF to request it is discussed by their Education Policy committee that she sits on. To hold in reserve the option to approach the educational press with concerns. 	
<p>3. LG Ombudsman and complaints (alternative provision / s19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The view of the LG Ombudsman as communicated from a meeting with the ADCS president: “There was an unequivocal view from the Ombudsman that her role is to uphold and enforce the law and both Andy and Rachael said there did not seem to be any room for discussion here.” In contrast a joint DfE and LGO, South-east regional briefing about promoting school attendance was reported to offer the position that the LGO were open to cooperation with LAs, especially to avoid unintended consequences. Reaching out to Evan Lerwill appears to offer an option for a dialogue. ADs raised the connection between the LGO and volumes of complaints generally in children’s services and that most feature an aspect of SEND need. Could we explore with the SE19 networks, whether there is value in build an overview of numbers of complaints during recent years and appetite to raise with DCSs? <u>Actions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CME Group continue its focus on s19 practice-sharing and with the aim of enabling clearer responsibilities for cases and more timely decision-making across LAs CO to make an approach to Evan Lerwill (at LGO) about a possible dialogue. CO to raise about the possibility of a joint focus on complaints with the SE 19 coordinator. Could this be touched upon if there is some element of meeting jointly in London on 27th June? 	<p>NS / MZ CO CO</p>
<p>4. Proposed updated terms of reference for CME Group</p> <p>The draft updated ToFR were reviewed and agreed by the AD Education Network and members were supportive of the group exploring a change of name (e.g the ‘Access to Education’ Group).</p> <p><u>Action:</u> A decision about a change of name will be reached at the next CME Group meeting.</p>	<p>CO / MZ</p>
<p>5. CME-related staffing:</p> <p>Summary paper was shared for information. It offers an informative snapshot, but there was agreement that there are limitations with the methodology and, especially, readers should exercise caution if making any comparisons between LAs.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> CO to sense check numbers with one or two further LAs and finalise the paper. It should then have limited circulation for internal reference only.</p>	<p>CO</p>
<p>6. EHE-CME Dashboard: ideas to add value</p> <p>CO thanked MZ and Bracknell reps for their time to review the dashboard.</p> <p>Feedback points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibly draft one or two vignettes about CME cases to bring the basic stats to life. Can the charts offer filtering for a limited number of LAs? Approve the ambition to expand to include s19 data for September. <p><u>Actions:</u> CO to approach the SESLIP Early Help Network about drawing the dashboard to their attention and how to share with these LA leaders.</p>	<p>CO</p>
<p>Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For future agenda: school place sufficiency and strategies where there are insufficient specialist school places and post-16 places and surplus capacity in primary. <p><u>Dates of future meetings:</u> 27th June 2025 (London); 26th September.</p>	