



Access to Education Group	
Date:	5 th Mar 2026
Chair:	Ming Zhang (Wokingham)
Attendees: Katy Daly (BFC), Cathy Shaw (M Keynes), Vidyu Narayan (ESCC), Pauline Martin Ellis and Helen Loveday (Hants), James Fowler (Bucks), Neil Stevenson (Portsmouth), Rosie Gossage (RBWM), Anjali Sidhu (Slough), Carole Vernon (Wokingham), Maria Langford & Katie Johnson (Surrey), Katy Daly & Annette Borg (BFC), Rachel Williams (IoW), Zoe Snow (Southampton), Chris Owen.	
Apologies: Gavin Thomas (BHCC), Sarah Speedie (ESCC), Cathy Edwards, Simon Smith (Kent), Melissa Perry (W Berks), Emma Block & Chrissie Clarke (Medway), Jas Didially (Oxfordshire), Olly May (BFC), Sarah Hughes (W Sussex), Colin Mayo (MKC), Natalie Smith & Jon Willcocks (Hants),	
Notes	
Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise with Education Directors the importance of s19 data and how these are reported to senior officers in LAs. SESLIP to establish list with A2E Group: which LAs collect termly s19 data and which include these in routine reporting to DMT / SEND Board / etc • Explore extent of concerns of SEND colleagues about PEx and suspensions. 	
1. Welcome and matters arising	
The notes from January were reviewed and agreed as accurate. Matters arising:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LGCSO FAQs note was circulated to the group and the EHE presentations from Jan. 	
2. Suspensions and exclusions	
James outlined from Bucks the direction of trends in the county together with some of the strategies and challenges. Broadly PEx and suspensions have plateau'd since 2023-24, although the LA finds itself actively intervening following PEx, many of which are then overturned. Groups of concern include: the small but significant number of primary children with series of suspensions and/or PEx and the proportion of PEx with an EHCP. 'Team are the child' is central to the response and support from the LA.	
<u>Themes:</u>	
- <u>Numbers of primary exclusions and limited options for support:</u> General increase in the small but significant number of these exclusions. What are options for primaries to access support for the families earlier?	
- <u>Vulnerable KS2 pupils, often with EHCNA underway:</u> Some mainstream schools are facing challenge with supporting these children and maintaining education while needs assessment process is underway. ESCC raised the Primary Behaviour Panel they had developed with their schools (significantly school-led). Cases are brought by schools to explore possible strategies and there is the option of additional resource being agreed.	
- <u>Sharing data for suspensions and PEx across all schools:</u> IoW and Portsmouth routinely do this and see it as an enabler for peer challenge when individual schools might be quickly to go down this route.	
- <u>Concerns about the capability of governors / trustees to robustly conduct appeals:</u> It is an unattractive role for governors and they can find it difficult to challenge the school's leadership team.	
<u>Actions:</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquire to what extent SEND colleagues share the concerns about pupils with SEND and PEx and levels of suspensions? 	
3. EHE – CME Dashboard	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks to all for complete return of EHE and CME data from Jan census. 	



- Check-in about certain LAs with changes in their data. Confirmation that, especially for CME data, this reflects LA systems or changes rather than a particular trend.
- Concerns expressed about defining which cases to include in s19 numbers (clearly not include 'day 6' pupils) and extent these are used to inform decision-making. Chris and Ming to raise this with Education Directors.

4. First thoughts on the DfE Schools White Paper & SEND Reform consultation

Chris gave a quick overview presentation. Then discussion about first thoughts. Welcome for much of the tone and content about inclusion. Detail awaited, however, on much of this to see how changes are to be shaped and resourced.

There is an amount of focus on data and dashboards, from the DfE, to be drivers of change. Will these build on the attendance dashboards and learn lessons from the evolution of these?

DfE clarification about inclusion and what its vision / expectation of schools is needed.

5. AP Task-and-Finish Group

The group aims to produce a pack of case examples and learning themes for the QA of non-school AP by April 2026, which will be shared with the Education Directors and this group.

Questioning whether there is space in the time availability for LAs for a regional AP group. Thinking is, instead, to explore a set of webinars during 2026-27 and to review again once the landscape for LAs and education has become clearer as the policy direction develops and embeds.

For a future meeting:

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Agenda Items for Next meeting:

- Exploration of link between de-registrations from school and s19 provision request.

Next Meetings:

Future meetings: 25th June (10am); 9th Oct (provisional)

