



Education Directors Network	
Date:	8 th May 2026
Chair:	Sarah Daly (Portsmouth)
Attendees:	Nathan Caine (Portsmouth), Ashley Milum (W Berks), Dan Barton (Bucks), Elizabeth Funge (ESCC), Matthew Rixson (Surrey), Natalie Smith (Hants), Ming Zhang (Wokingham), Clodagh Freeston (Southampton), Donna Tandy (Southampton), Matthew Rixson (Surrey), Chris Owen. In attendance: Hayden Ginns (Portsmouth), Chris Baird (SESLIP)
Apologies:	Claire Hayes & Sarah Clark (W Sussex), Michelle Stanley (Kent), Duane Chappell (BFC), Christine McInnes (Kent), Julia Katherine (Surrey), Kim Wilson (Oxfordshire), Clive Haines (RBWM), Brian Grady (Reading).
Notes	
Actions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note about SESLIP balancing its range of offers and groups with demands on LA officer time and local priorities. Chris & Sarah to draft and share with DCS steering group before conference on 22nd May. Report from the task-and-finish group on the QA of non-school AP to be published on SESLIP website. Chris and co-chairs of A2E Group to discuss options and priorities for taking forwards. SESLIP targeted support: documents on the offer of coaching and lean systems to be circulated. Ed directors to consider how to make the most of the targeted support offer. Chris to contact Data to Insight about their work on SEND data and what was offered for AP data (including non-school AP). RISE is to be a standing agenda item for the forthcoming meetings. Chris to brief DfE RISE colleagues about items to address at Jun 19th meeting. Chris to invite Lee Selby from Ofsted to present as an agenda item too. Poll of Access to Education Group members to find out whether or not their LA collates s19 data and reports to directorate management. Chris to chase those not yet responded and report before 19th June. LA established trusts meetings: to update the group on 19th June. 	
1. Welcome, introductions and matters arising	
Notes from March were agreed as accurate.	
Matters arising:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All leads for local SEND reform plans had been contacted and invited to an initial networking meeting via Teams. Other support, including doc sharing is being coordinated by Sonia Dayal and Sheelagh Sullivan at SESLIP. 	
2. SESLIP SENDAP Targeted Support Offer.	
Chris Baird (lead for this programme and the Courageous Conversations) drew the Directors' attention to the publications shared reporting on targeted support delivered in 2025-26 and opportunities for 2026-27. Although, like others in SESLIP, we are still awaiting any indication from the DfE about funding for RIAs to support SENDAP improvement in LAs, there is sufficient budget to commit to delivery of targeted support in the summer term at least. Colleagues are encouraged to contact Chris B with ideas / proposals. Experience from last year is that projects with elements of peer work and learning across more than one LA have been particularly impactful.	
There are new offers with a focus on coaching / mentoring and on lean systems that will be circulated following the meeting.	
Key discussions:	



- Hants, Portsmouth and Southampton had been supported on a project to shape future service alignment with LGR. This had been positive and seen as a valuable option for other LAs affected by proposals for LGR.
- A tip is to maintain a list of projects that could perhaps be unblocked or furthered as a result of funding or initiatives like Targeted Support.
- Discussion of Targeted Support led to a discussion about the perceived extensive range of SESLIP projects and groups. Requests include:
 - an easy-to-read (and access) overview (for directors and particularly useful for leaders new into this region)
 - clarification of purpose and goals of SESLIP's different projects and groups and, from this, to take steps to avoid duplication and to focus on making the best use of LA officer (limited) time
 - information about how SESLIP aligns with other improvement offers from ADCS, LGA, CCN, even DfE, was requested.

Actions:

- CO to circulate the information about the additional targeted support offers.
- Education Directors to consider ways Targeted Support could support improvement priorities for their LA.
- CO and Sarah to draft a note about SESLIP's offers for the Steering Group and to raise the requests for summary and clarifications before the SESLIP Day Conference on 22nd May.

3. Quality Assurance of Non-School AP: report from the task-and-finish group

Report of the T&F Group was summarised by Hayden Ginns (Portsmouth) who had chaired the group. Key points include:

- Change Programme LAs had had access to additional resources to review AP oversight and arrangements as part of their local SENDAP system. The T&F Group was an opportunity to share some of the learning and approaches from this work.
- There was recognition in the T&F Group about the range of responses and positions taken between different LAs to QA of non-school (N-S) AP, since this is not a mandated role of the LA.
- The key components for the LA are:
 - Compliance and frameworks for children placed by the LA (including those on EOTAS and placed by virtual school)
 - Quality assurance on behalf of schools and guidance for when they commission places and directing their own pupils off-site.
- There are large numbers of (often vulnerable) children and young people for whom non-school AP forms part of their education; and this is under-recognised.
- Collaborative work between LAs is a valuable aspect.
- The report presents an option for a summary overview of arrangements and challenges in the 7 participating LAs; is there interest in extending this across the South-east?
- The challenge of partnership with parents had been a topic: accessible information so parents can understand the nature of N-S AP and the importance of minimum standards (H&S, safeguarding).

Discussion:

- Agreement about the value of a focus on N-S AP and the scale across the region.
- Agreement that support for cross-border collaboration would be helpful: including sharing of protocols and arrangements.
- DfE seems quite ignorant of the scale and challenges; hence the value of data gathering by LAs. Some LAs are developing arrangements for live-update reporting via StudyBugs and another in the project requires N-S providers to complete WONDE returns. CO to find out from Data2Insight what they have developed for AP data monitoring.



- Directors expressed interest in making the case to the DfE for mandatory regulation of N-S APs (alongside registration of children not-in-school?).
- Sharing of practice via webinars was supported as was the potential for sub-regional collaboration (once clarification about DfE funds for 2026-27 had been received).

Actions:

- CO to publish the final report of the T&F Group on the SESLIP website.
- CO to meet with the co-chairs of the Access to Education Group about how to progress the proposals and align with the Access to Education group.
- CO to contact Data 2 Insight about work on AP data and seek an update about progress.

4. Collaboration with DfE RISE Programme

Positive that monthly liaison meetings are scheduled and CO summarised latest meeting.

Discussion about DfE representation at local education partnerships. Agreement that this a tangible way for Regions Group to connect with local education systems.

LA-established trusts: although significant interest in certain LAs (especially members, but also some headteachers), there is a lack of clarity. There had been suggestions that DfE might issue further clarification after the end of May.

Actions:

- Topics to ask Paul Schofield and Catherine Turton to address in June:
 - strategic engagement: DfE SE reps at local education partnerships, development of regional boards to include LA representation; what about KS Alliance Group?
 - SE regional RISE plan and alignment with LA school improvement activity / local networks
 - How to join up SE inclusive mainstream support with LA activity set out in local SEND reform plans?
- Strategic discussion with RISE to join up with separate LA led conversations about LA-established trusts initiated by Reading BC. Update at June meeting.

5. Section 19 Progress Report and LA Use of Data

The poll requesting information about the internal use of S19 data by LAs was sent out less than a week ago. CO will update Directors once a complete response from A2E group reps.

Progress report shared with Education Directors and highlight that effective strategies are those where S19 arrangements are integral to local inclusion strategies. Hence any further phase of work awaits DfE funding news and a steer from / alignment with local SEND reform plans.

It was raised that S19 of Education Act 1996 is quite anomalous in the current education system. Yet there has been no indication from the DfE about any consideration to revise legislation.

Actions:

- CO circulate the overview of collation and reporting of S19 data when all responses are received from LAs.

For a future meetings:

- RISE.
- Discussion on falling rolls and school sustainability.

Agenda Items for Next meeting:

- RISE: points to discuss at the June meeting.
- Ofsted: update on amendments to school inspection framework and plans to development a schools trust inspection framework.
- LS established trusts
- Update following SESLIP May 22nd conference / proposals for DfE funding.

Next Meetings:

Future meetings: 19th June (in-person in London), 9th Oct.

