

COMPOSITE MINUTES OF THE 2017 AUTUMN TERM AREA MEETINGS OF THE LA AND ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION

North East	Wednesday 8 November 2017
South	Thursday 9 November 2017
West	Wednesday 15 November 2017
Mid	Thursday 16 November 2017

Action

1. WELCOME, THANK YOU AND NOTICES

- a) Clare Kershaw, Director for Education (West and Mid meetings) and Alison Fiala interim Head of Primary Improvement, (North East and South meetings), and the Area Chairs, welcomed those present to the meetings, extending a particular **welcome** to the new (or new in post) headteachers in each area, who are:

North East

Lehla Abbott	St George's Infants & Nursery
Rachel Anderson	Harwich Primary
Elizabeth Bartholomew	The Mayflower Primary
Tracey Caffull	Frinton-on-Sea Primary
Lisa Corby	Iceni Academy
Ruth Cornell	Kings Ford Infants & Nursery
Sarah Dukelow	Alresford Primary
Lisa Finch	St Andrew's CE Primary, Weeley
David Girdlestone	Sir Martin Frobisher Academy
James Gough	Cherry Tree Primary (Head of School)
Alison Grigg	Broomgrove Infants (Interim)
Julia Hunt	Brightlingsea Juniors
Christine Kemp Hall	Hamford Primary (Executive Headteacher)
David Milligan	Gosbecks Primary
Martin Moriarty	St Luke's CE Primary, Tiptree
Stephanie Newland	Rolph CE Primary
Paula Pemberton	Hazelmere Juniors
Clare Sampson	Roach Vale Primary
Susan Shipp	Friars Grove Primary
Rita Tingle	Prettygate Juniors
Rebecca McCutcheon	Monkwick Juniors
Dawn Walton-Steed	Stanways Fiveways Academy

South

Luke Bulpett	Brightside Primary
Emma Campkin	Kingswood Primary (Acting)
Sue Clarke	Barling Magna Academy (Head of School)
Leanne Gray	Downham CE Primary (co-head)
Ian Hampshire	Greensted Juniors
Michael Wade	Quilters Infants (Interim)

West

George Athanasiou	Great Sampford Primary
Debbie Attridge	Ongar Primary
Claire Berry	Birchanger CE Primary
Emma Bloomfield	Potter Street Academy
Laura Ciftci	Jerounds Primary

Andrew Cosslett	Takeley Primary
Lisa Gibbs	Leverton Primary
Kim Hall	Henham and Ugley Primary and Nursery
Chris Jarman	St John's CE Primary, Buckhurst Hill
Lee Kooyman	High Ongar Primary
Julie Puxley	Katherine Semar Juniors
Fiona Reid	Dr Walker's CE Primary, Fyfield (Interim)
Linda Todd	Radwinter Primary

Mid

Sarah Cottee	Ford End CE Primary (Head of School)
Sharon Derbyshire	St Pius X Catholic Primary
Mel Gaskin	Westlands Primary
Elizabeth Maycock	Ford End CE Primary (Executive head)
Dominic Mulholland	Mildmay Juniors
Vanessa Thomas	St Margaret's CE Primary, Toppesfield
Vicky Walker	Barnes Farm Infants
Debs Watson	Tanglewood Nursery
Mike Williams	Trinity St Mary's CE Primary, South Woodham Ferrers
Michael Wood	Elm Hall Primary

- b) Thank you and farewell** to those headteachers and LA Officers who are retiring or leaving their current post at the end of term:

North East

Linda Gildea	Spring Meadow Primary
Ryan Kendall	Hamford Primary
Jane Simmons	All Saints CE Primary, Great Oakley

West

Victoria Haylock	Nazeing Primary
Christine Tonkins	St Mary's CE Primary, Stansted

Mid

Sarah Fletcher	Shalford Primary
Debbie Gayler	Kings Road Primary
Vicky Walker	Barnes Farm Infants

LA Officers

Graham Lancaster
Louise Evers
Steve Mellors

2 LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE

Dave Hill, Executive Director, Social Care and Education (North East and South meetings)

Clare Kershaw, Director of Education (West and Mid meetings)

Alison Fiala, Head of Primary Improvement (North East and South meetings)

Ralph Holloway, SEND Transformation Manager (North East meeting)

Nicola Woolf (West meeting)

Lisa Fergus (South meeting)

Lyn Wright (North East meeting)

a) OUTCOMES 2017

The headline provisional data is

- Early Years - Good Level of Development - 74% - top quartile
- Key Stage 2 - At least the expected standard in Reading, Writing & Maths combined - 63%
- Ofsted Primary* - Schools judged good or outstanding - 92%
- Ofsted Primary* - Pupils attending a school judged good or outstanding - 92%
- Key Stage 4 provisional Progress 8 - -0.03
- Key Stage 4 provisional Attainment 8 – 46.4
- Ofsted Secondary* - Schools judged good or outstanding - 95%
- Ofsted Secondary* - Pupils attending a school judged good or outstanding - 95%
- Ofsted All* - Schools judged good or outstanding - 93%
- Ofsted All* - Pupils attending a school judged good or outstanding - 91%

* As at July 17.

Clare reminded headteachers that it is always difficult to move the data forward in a local authority the size of Essex, given the number of children and young people in school. Many more children need to reach the thresholds than in the smaller unitary authorities. She congratulated headteachers and school staff across the county for their hard work and commitment, which have had such impressive results.

Ofsted outcomes – schools

Rank	Area	or	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
1	Thurrock 37 school(s)	97.3%	8.1%	89.2%	2.7%	0%
2	Southend-on-Sea 31 school(s)	96.8%	16.1%	80.6%	3.2%	0%
3	Bedford Borough 52 school(s)	94.2%	19.2%	75%	5.8%	0%
4	Essex 407 school(s)	93.4%	16.5%	76.9%	6.1%	0.5%
5	Central Bedfordshire 93 school(s)	92.5%	30.1%	62.4%	6.5%	1.1%
6	Hertfordshire 398 school(s)	92.5%	20.6%	71.9%	6.8%	0.8%
7	East of England 1834 school(s)	91.1%	16.2%	74.8%	8.1%	0.8%
8	Norfolk 309 school(s)	90.9%	12.6%	78.3%	8.4%	0.6%
9	England	90.8%	19%	71.9%	8.1%	1.1%

At the time of the meetings, Essex had had 25 inspections since September and 23 of these resulted in a judgement of “good” or “outstanding”

Ofsted outcomes – pupils

Rank	Area	or ▼	Outstanding	Good	Improvement	Inadequate
1	Thurrock <i>17563 pupils in 37 school(s)</i>	97.3%	7.6%	89.7%	2.7%	0%
2	Southend-on-Sea <i>14201 pupils in 31 school(s)</i>	94.6%	13.2%	81.4%	5.4%	0%
3	Essex <i>107239 pupils in 407 school(s)</i>	93.5%	17.4%	76.2%	5.9%	0.5%
4	Bedford Borough <i>13665 pupils in 52 school(s)</i>	93.5%	17.1%	76.4%	6.5%	0%
5	Hertfordshire <i>105846 pupils in 398 school(s)</i>	92.2%	21.6%	70.6%	6.9%	0.9%
6	Norfolk <i>57570 pupils in 309 school(s)</i>	91.5%	12.9%	78.5%	8.1%	0.4%
7	East of England <i>476625 pupils in 1834 school(s)</i>	90.6%	15.5%	75.1%	8.6%	0.8%
8	England <i>4515514 pupils in 16109 school(s)</i> ▲	90.5%	19.9%	70.6%	8.3%	1.1%

NB The number of schools refers to those that are eligible for inspection.

b) PRIORITIES FOR THE YEAR:

Inclusive Essex – securing positive outcomes for all through partnership working.

1. SEND:

- Transformation of SEND services
- All education leaders to champion inclusion in every school
- Increase partnership working and increase mutual support and challenge
- Review of Alternative Provision

2. Establish a School-led Improvement System across the county.

- The successful establishment of the LA Initiated MAT – EMAT
- Making full use of the Strategic School Improvement Fund

3. Outcomes for vulnerable children, particularly disadvantaged

4. Ensuring there are sufficient school places in Essex.

The pupil projection forecast indicates that an additional 3000 places will be needed over the next few years, although this is slightly fewer than previously thought. The 10-year plan is being updated and will be shared with schools soon.

5. All schools to be judged good or better.

6. Teacher recruitment and retention.

Nicola Woolf will take over the responsibility for the Recruitment and Retention Strategy Group when Graham Lancaster retires at the end of term.

c) SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Clare attended the Inspiring Leaders conference in the summer, and shared a couple of slides from a presentation given by Pazzi Solzberg: Why education systems fail?

- Competition
 - Test Based accountability
 - De-professionalisation
 - Addiction to reform
 - Excellence
- = Standardization

Why some education systems do better?

- Collaboration
 - Trust based responsibility
 - Leader professionalisation
 - Sustained improvement
 - Equity
- = Creativity

Clare recognised that much of current education policy focuses on the first agenda, leading to standardisation, but she argued that the Local Authority and schools in Essex are working hard to meet the systems that lead to creativity.

Referring to the need to ensure equity for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, she shared the following slide.

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

d) SEND STRATEGY UPDATE

Clare reminded headteachers that the number one priority for the Local Authority this year is to achieve greater inclusion and effective support for children with special educational needs. She noted that the recent meetings with primary-phase West and North East Headteachers and SENCOs were helpful, and that similar meetings are being organised in Mid and South. A Headteacher Round Table has been established with a particular focus on the challenges of SEND in mainstream schools, but also considering how Special School outreach should be developed.

Clare stressed that there was a duty to ensure that every school is equally inclusive and effective at supporting special education needs; at the moment some schools are more effective than others, and some schools are more reluctant to admit children with SEND.

There needs to be a focus on earlier intervention, for example for pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion. Currently enormous sums of money are spent on individual children who have been excluded, and this money should and could be better spent working with them to avoid exclusion. The LA wants to develop the GROW and Thrive models and to expand successful strategies such as Super-SENCOs and MITA. It was noted that EWMHS is a key partner and should be involved in the development of a SEND strategy.

It was suggested that a SEND Strategy must include Early Years, as many issues start to be identified when a child is in pre-school. It was argued that a common language for SEND needs to be developed across all partners, including schools, early years, Local Authority Services, health and social care, so that there is a common understanding of special educational needs and a consistent approach to support and provision.

SEND provision

- £115m, 400 additional places and 100 new boarding places plus investment in the PRU estate
- 8 Autism Support Centres have opened in mainstream schools (4 primary and 4 secondary supported by 4 special schools)
- 10 primary schools will host SEMH provision, revenue funding is in place and capital investment is taking place now
- Approval for the expansion of a number of special schools has been given – new places will be created at Glenwood, Kingswode Hoe, Lexden Springs, Oak View and Ramsden Hall.
- New boarding places at Glenwood and Lexden Springs
- 2 new ASD schools (Chatten in Witham and Hawthorne in Chelmsford)
- 2 new SEMH schools (Chelmsford and Harlow).

EHCPs

- Average completion time is 21.3 weeks – *still not meeting the statutory timeframe of 20 weeks, but a considerable improvement on this time a year ago.*
- On target to complete the majority of transfer reviews by March 2018
- Schools do not need to wait for the EHCP to be completed before funding can be released. The SEND Code of Practice talks about :
 - A 'timely provision of services'. It requires the LA to put provision in place as soon as we understand and agree what is required. This may become evident at the beginning, or at any point through the EHC needs assessment process. The LA no longer have to wait until a final plan is

issued to make provision **if** everyone is agreed on the provision required. Where a child's school placement is at risk our teams would always consider putting interim funding in place if asked.

Co-Production

- Joint Commissioning Framework in place with CCGs
- New Autism Strategy under consultation.
- Headteacher Roundtable first meeting 7th November
 - Purpose to develop a joint toolkit around SEND and introduce common language
 - Promote and champion inclusion and provide support and expertise
 - Proposal is to establish 4 quadrant Headteacher Roundtables as a follow up to the recent SEND quadrant meetings
- Develop an Outcomes Framework
- Support the growth of the Super SENCo and MITA projects
- Strategic School Improvement Fund bid submitted for round 2 looking at support in mainstream for pupils with SEMH
- All co-produced with schools.

SEND data – and the challenges

- Essex SEND population 3.3% compared to national average of 2.8%
- Current number of EHC Plans = 7723
- Increase in requests for a EHCP Needs Assessment
- 33% of Essex pupils with SEND have moderate learning difficulties, national is 23%
- 2017/18 half term over 30 permanent exclusions – many in NE Essex
- Outcomes for children and SEND (SEN support and those with EHCPs are too low)
- Key outcomes from the headteacher meetings
 - Issues with funding
 - Communication with SAS and the process of 'naming schools'
 - Transition between EYFS and schools
 - Support for schools – Heads and SENCos
 - Clarity is required on provision and support

A response will be developed and discussed at the Headteacher Roundtable

At the various meetings the challenges faced by schools in relation to SEND were discussed, and the following points were made:

SEND data

Headteachers asked if the increase in the number of children identified as having special educational and additional needs has increased in line with the increased number of school-age children in the county, or whether it reflects the increase of challenging and complex behaviour. It was felt that both were true, and the raising of pupil outcomes expectations and the curriculum, and the narrowing of the wider curriculum, contributed to the numbers of children who are not coping in mainstream school.

Funding

The £6,000 in-school SEND budget simply does not go far enough. Schools are admitting some extremely challenging children who need 1:1 supervision simply to keep them and other children and adults safe. However, even if 1:1 supervision can be provided, the cost is far greater than just one member of support staff – the management of such a child extends to the school leadership team and other staff as well.

It was felt that it is very difficult to access IPRA funding and schools are being told that it is only available for a limited period of time. One headteacher has admitted a child into Reception with one term of IPRA funding; she has been told that this will end at Christmas, and fears that without this support the child may end up being excluded.

One headteacher stressed the need for everyone to understand the available funding and the process schools must follow to access funding (and who to contact), as currently the access is consistent and depends too much on “what and who” you know.

Ralph Holloway confirmed that a review of the High Needs Block funding is underway, and it is essential that this funding is spent effectively and has the best possible impact.

Improving support for schools

Another headteacher reiterated that all schools are coping with children who simply don't fit into mainstream schools, and who are not getting a good education as a result. Ralph noted that in-school provision offers much better value for money than alternative solutions, but accepted that there is a need for mainstream schools and in-school specialist provision to receive better support from special schools, the Specialist Teacher Team and other SEN teams. A headteacher argued that schools have plenty of strategies to manage children with moderate learning difficulties, but the children with the most complex needs are soaking up the resources and capacity of staff.

One headteacher questioned the process for quality assuring the specialist teachers in the STT. It was noted that too often their advice is poor, out of date or does not reflect the complexity of the special educational needs of many children in mainstream schools. It was stressed that schools need specialist teachers who understand the pressures in schools and regularly work with pupils in the classroom.

Ralph referred to the review of STT and SAS undertaken last year, which highlighted these issues and the inconsistency of the service. Some individuals in the team are highly valued but the quality of advice is not consistent.

Cost of permanent exclusion

Currently, if a pupil is permanently excluded, their AWPU follows them to new provision, plus £5,500 per secondary school pupil (paid by the excluding school). The average cost of a PRU place is £16 – 18,000.

Headteachers suggested that if this level of funding could be given to schools earlier to support challenging pupils then there may be fewer exclusions. Ralph agreed that a model needs to be developed to release more funding to schools at an earlier opportunity – at the moment, the majority of funding is used to fund the LA's statutory functions and so can't be released to schools. The Alternative Provision review will consider how this might change.

Ralph was asked what percentage of children/young people who were excluded last academic year were able to continue in mainstream schools, and how many needed to find alternative provision. He noted that it was a relatively small percentage where the pupil has an EHCP. In secondary schools there are more one-off incidents that result in permanent exclusion (such as drug offences), whilst in primary schools the reasons for exclusion have often accumulated over a relatively long period. He noted that an increasing number of pupils are moved to PRUs and other provision such as GROW, and a decreasing number move to special school.

One headteacher argued that funding is a separate issue from actual need. Schools –

and primary phase schools in particular - have to take into account the impact of the child on the rest of the school (and parents), taking into consideration safeguarding and ensuring that the other pupils' education does not suffer.

Working with health

At every meeting it was stressed that there is a need to work closely and cooperatively with Health, as decisions and diagnoses are sometimes made without the knowledge of schools. Too often parents are told by health professionals that schools have the resources, expertise and capacity to resolve their child's problems, which may not always be the case.

Headteachers were reminded that meetings have been organised in the Mid and South to discuss concerns and issues in relation to SEND. The minutes of meetings that have taken place in West and North East are available on the EPHA website <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/send-strategy/>

e) EDUCATION RESTRUCTURE

Dave Hill (North East and South meetings) and Clare Kershaw (West and Mid meetings) explained that the next stage of the education restructure is in part driven by a new ECC strategy and also the need for the Council to save further funding (there is still a £30m gap). They have been leading the process, reviewing what works well as well as which LA services could work more effectively. The feedback from last year's reviews of the Statutory Assessment Service and the Specialist Teacher Team will feed into this restructure.

There will now be a restructure of the whole education team aimed at re-configuring services within quadrants, to work around schools. They shared a proposed structure chart.

Dave Hill remains as Executive Director Social Care and Education, with Clare Kershaw as Director of Education.

Four Education teams – one per quadrant – will include the following services:

- Statutory Assessment Service
- Education Psychology
- Specialist Teacher Service
- School Improvement
- Early Years and Childcare
- School Attendance
- Alternative education

The quadrant structure enables services to be delivered in an integrated way nearer to schools, children and their families.

Alongside these quadrant teams will be a number of other teams:

Education Advice and Guidance – co-located with the Children and Families Operations hub. This will provide access to advice and guidance, and some intervention, for families and schools, via both digital and online channels. Dave and Clare emphasised the importance of schools seeking early help about concerns. They asked headteachers to help design the service, to ensure that it met the needs of schools.

Specialist Education Services – county wide, to include:

- Alternative provision
- Virtual service
- Children Missing in education
- Youth services
- Safeguarding
- SEND IASS

Strategy, performance and Planning

Services will include:

- Sufficiency and sustainability (EY)
School place planning
- Quality performance
- Monitoring and review
- Data intelligence
- Workforce and business development
- School crossing patrols
- School meals (*service under review*)
- Child Employment and entertainment licensing
- Dance theatre

SEND Strategy team

Services to include SEN Tribunal and legal, and dedicated resources to deliver the SEND provision and support.

Timeline of the restructure process

Phase 1 – following consultation early this term – recruitment to new leadership roles

Phase 2 – recruitment to teams

Phase 3 - implementation.

The restructure will involve a significant shift in the ways that teams currently work and it is accepted that the make-up of the quadrant teams will be critical. The size of the quadrant teams will vary according to the needs of the area, and it is accepted that there will need to be consistency of quality and provision in each of the teams. The main changes will be at leadership level and the restructure is not aimed to reduce staff, but to make the services more effective and responsive, and to move the structure towards early intervention.

Questions and suggestions in relation to the restructure

During the meetings headteachers asked a number of questions in relation to the restructure.

The role of Assistant Directors

Headteachers in South asked why there is a need for an additional leadership role in each of the four quadrants – the Assistant Director. The four Lead School Effectiveness Partners have just been appointed, and it was felt they are doing an excellent job. Heads argued that there is a need for more team members able to support schools, rather than increasing the numbers of leaders and layers of bureaucracy.

Headteachers asked to see the job descriptions and salary for these new posts, and asked for reassurance that the successful appointees would be experienced educationalists. Dave Hill confirmed that the roles would be filled by those already

working in education, and may even be serving headteachers. He stressed that he does not see the role as bureaucratic, but as part of an emphasis on early and preventative support and provision.

Early advice and support telephone line

Headteachers asked that this should not be called a “hub” as this has negative connotations for some.

The idea of such an advice line was seen as positive, as long as it staffed by knowledgeable and capable staff, and there are sufficient lines so that schools are not simply navigating another phone service where they are put on hold or, worse, are told to make an enquiry by email. Dave Hill noted that the service would definitely be a phone line, and if this became an email service he would personally close it down. He explained that the advice line will not be manned by unqualified staff, but instead would utilise existing officers within the LA, who will have the knowledge and experience to know how to respond to queries, or how to redirect callers to the right person or department. However, this was a matter of concern for some, who felt that these would further reduce the capacity for a reducing number of LA officers to do their day to day job.

Concerns were raised about consistency of response, and the accountability and liability of the advice that is given.

A headteacher in the West reminded colleagues of a former employee in the LA who acted as a Customer Care Officer. She was able to advise both schools and parents and acted as a knowledgeable and supportive link between the two. She also had responsibility for keeping the Complaints Toolkit up to date, which is much missed by schools. This headteacher asked if a similar role could be reinstated as this provided valuable support to schools.

It was noted that it hasn't yet been determined who would have access to or use the line – i.e. is this just for headteachers, or for all staff, governors, pupils, parents and the public?

The Local Authority is keen to work with headteachers and asked for volunteers to help design the advice line.

Social care issues

At the North East meeting there was a lengthy discussion about Social Care. Dave Hill noted that he has been Director of Children's Services since 2010 (and is now also responsible for adult services). He noted that seven years ago only those children that suffered extreme harm had access to social care, and that this is no longer the case.

A number of headteachers disagreed with this statement, and argued that this continues to be the case, and only the most urgent cases are able to access Social Care.

DH replied that the LA has invested massively in Social Care in the last 7 years. In 2010 there were 2000 unallocated child protection cases, in addition to 1430 open cases.

In July Social Care was judged to be good, with outstanding leadership. He stated that to suggest that Social Care had not improved was simply wrong.

Nonetheless, headteachers disagreed that the systems and relations with Social Care are entirely satisfactory. Many heads experience difficulties with the Family Operations

Hub, which DH felt was working well. Headteachers and schools staff often feel that they are not trusted as fellow professionals by Social Care staff, are not notified of meetings or given information, and are then criticised by Social Care for not being involved.

DH said that he was not aware of these concerns from schools and suggested that the Director for Local Delivery should be invited to a headteacher meeting to discuss the issues that were raised. The EPHA Professional Officer noted that the Deputy Director for Social Care, Sukriti Sen, had attended the EPHA Executive meeting on 12 October when these and other concerns were discussed.

Home education

Headteachers are worried about many children who are home educated. Clare accepted that this area is a concern, and that Local Authorities do not have statutory responsibility for children whose parents have elected to home educate. In the restructure the Missing Education and Child Employment Service is being redesigned, so that attendance and children missing education are managed by different teams.

f) School crossing patrol service

Clare noted that she has taken on the responsibility for the school crossing patrol service and explained that this service is problematic. Schools crossing patrol officers are difficult to recruit and some are abused or even injured by road users. The service is not currently fit for purpose and is being reviewed.

g) GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

The Data Protection Act 2017 Bill continues to progress through Parliament. The bulk of the Act will be the GDPR regulations, *but*

- Will cover additional areas of privacy law not covered by GDPR
- GDPR will not be amended by this process, only expanded and defined
- Where the EU have allowed Member States to define their own approach to certain aspects of GDPR, DPA 2017 will make these decisions.

Schools Forum has raised the issue about the potential cost to schools – for example, if all Essex schools bought into the DPO service offered by the IGS (within groups of 18 schools) it would equate to £900,000 from the school's block.

The School Effectiveness Team will continue to work with IGS to develop guidance to schools, taking into account the final shape of UK Privacy Law as it relates to schools.

In the meantime, the EPHA Professional Officer noted that she has set up a dedicated webpage on the EPHA website focusing on data protection.

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/data-protection/>

On the webpage there is a Data Protection checklist aimed to ensure that schools are complying with current requirements, as well as model privacy notices, policies and staff training materials. EPHA has sourced information from GDPR in Schools, including a GDPR readiness checklist and information about the Data Protection Officer.

It is important to stress that GDPR is going ahead– the new Data Protection Bill is currently going through parliament but this won't substantially change the impact of GDPR (if at all). The advice is: **Do Prepare, but Don't Panic!**

h) SMALL SCHOOLS STRATEGY

A task group (including the EPHA Executive Director) was set up in Spring term 17 as a proactive strategy to produce a review which

a) explores the issues facing small schools:

- *Financial considerations - budget pressures*
- *Recruitment and Retention*
- *School Standards*
- *Importance to communities*
- *Diminishing populations in rural areas in Essex, leading to falling rolls* and

b) to make recommendations to the Director of Education via a Small Schools' Strategy to ensure that where viable, small schools are able to take proactive decisions to secure their future and provide a high quality education. An output of the task group was to produce a toolkit to support governors, headteachers and ECC officers to inform future options for sustainability.

For this review small schools are defined as schools with less than 120 pupils on roll. Of these 62 schools, 37 are Church of England schools (22 voluntary controlled and 15 voluntary aided) and 13 are Community schools. 12 of the small schools are Academies, all but one belonging to a Multi-Academy Trust.

Recommendations include:

- Carry out a risk assessment of schools using budget projections and pupil numbers
- Pilot school based reviews with a subset of small schools to inform ECC and the Diocese on the specific issues facing the schools in the next 2 years and make recommendations to support schools to be sustainable in the future
- Produce an options paper summarising structured solutions and, where no sustainable options exist, the process for consultation on closure (as last resort).
- Provide a process map for each option with implications for ECC, the school and the wider community
- Communicate the review findings with all schools and send a letter to the LA maintained schools in the review.

LA Officers have met with around 10 schools so far, that are considered the highest priority and have discussed plans to secure their future.

It was agreed that representative headteachers (from faith and non-faith schools) will be invited to join the strategy group to make further recommendations on a Small School Strategy for Essex – Spring 18.

For further information, please contact Alison Fiala, Lead School Effectiveness Partner Alison.fiala@essex.gov.uk. or Joseph Chell, Lead School Organisation Officer on school.organisation@essex.gov.uk

i) SCHOOL-LED IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE

The vast majority of Essex schools are now working in partnerships – all partnerships have been allocated days from the LA and supported by a School Effectiveness Partner

Partnership Leads

Throughout 2017/18 we will be developing their role through termly meetings in partnership with the Education Development Trust – Maggie Farrar. These will be an opportunity for leads to be kept up to date with developments of this strategy, hear about the work of other partnerships and develop further the role of the Lead of a Partnership.

Continuing to work in partnership with the Education Development Trust

County Project Board overseeing the School Led Improvement Strategy

- Membership reviewed July 2017
- Independent Chair appointed

Tools to support Partnership working

- Peer Review including governance
- Partnership Evaluation and Development Tool

First roll out June17- 19 Partnerships attended

Second roll out November – 12 Partnerships attended

Developing a proposal for Quadrant Meetings with Leads of Partnerships and TSAs with a focus on school improvement

j) STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUND (SSIF)

- The £140 million over the next two years announced by the DfE to support school improvement.
- **Round 1** in June there 197 bids submitted nationally – 56 were successful.
- In total 6 bids were submitted across Essex, Thurrock and Southend with only 1 bid being successful.
- The Essex Local Authority in collaboration with the Teaching School Alliances' application for £500,000 bid is focused on improving boys reading across Key Stages 1 to 3.
- There are three main programmes each one is specifically targeted at each key stage – phonics, reading, comprehension and fluency.
- Nearly 80 schools including secondary and feeder primary schools have been invited to be part of this two year project.

Lyn Wright is leading on this and she submitted a successful bid for £500,000. The first round of bids closed on 1st June – the ECC joint bid with the Teaching School Alliances was one of 33 bids in the Eastern region, only 8 of which were successful.

The criteria for the grant is improving boys' reading in KS1/KS2/KS3. There will be a focus on 80 schools –13 secondaries and their maintained school feeders. TSAs involved are Lyons Hall, Priory (Colchester) and Coast2Coast.

The next step is to put in a larger bid for an additional grant around disadvantaged and SEND, followed by a bid for funding to work with junior schools on their progress outcomes. One (infant) headteacher noted that it was also key to work with infant schools to ensure that they are not inadvertently contributing to any issues around junior school outcomes.

k) HEADTEACHER FEEDBACK ON PRIMARY DATA SUMMARY REPORTS

The Schools Effectiveness Team is conducting a survey for headteachers, seeking feedback on the Primary data summary reports available via Perspective Lite.

<http://surveys.essexinsight.org.uk/2017primaryreports>

The survey will be open until 22 November 17.

The full presentation is available on the EPHA website (look for EPHA LA Termly meetings Autumn 2017)

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/meetings/termly-area/composite/>

3. GINGERBREAD

Gordon Malcolm (North East and South meetings)
Rebecca Fitzgerald (West and Mid meetings)

Gingerbread has supported single parent families since its first meeting on 14 February 1918 – then known as the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child. In the aftermath of the First World War, more women than ever found themselves without a partner to help raise their children. Single parent families received little protection from government, and many faced a life of poverty. Responding to the need she saw around her, Lettice Fisher, a former social worker and economist, decided to act. She formed the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child on 14 February 1918. Throughout the 1990s, the two charities continued to provide services for single parent families – Gingerbread, focused on local support, and The National Council for One Parent Families, had a dual focus on campaigning and services.

In 2000, JK Rowling – bestselling author of the Harry Potter books and former single parent – joined the National Council for One Parent Families as an ambassador, later becoming their President.

In 2007, the charities merged, creating one organisation with a powerful mix of campaigning experts, highly respected support services, and extensive grassroots reach among single parents.

Gingerbread helps single parents to develop the skills and confidence they need to get back into work. Through their training courses, running in locations across England and Wales, they support single parents to explore what type of job might suit them and provide practical support to help them get there – including work experience with a range of leading businesses and help with childcare and travel costs. The Gingerbread ethos is to find out and help single parents achieve whatever success means to *them*, and is an inclusive and free service.

Around 1000 single parents join a training programme each year, and 800,000 access the online information.

There are 89 support groups across England, but only two in Essex – Gordon and Rebecca are keen to establish more.

Gingerbread has received funding from the National Lottery and EU Social Fund of £1.7million, to support projects in Kent and Essex. Gordon and Rebecca have been employed as project officers and are very happy to visit schools to talk to single parents and to offer support and advice.

Gingerbread is working in partnership with Marks and Spencers, to offer a 3-day employability training course in an M&S store. This may lead to employment with M&S, or will help support a single parent into other work or training – or may just improve their confidence. Schools were asked to promote Gingerbread to their single parents.

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4. **EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE (EWMHS)**

Ben Smith, Clinical Psychologist

Sam Morgan, North East Team Lead, and Schools Project manager

Jonathan Large, Educational Psychologist, seconded to EWHMS

At each meeting, members of the local team were in attendance.

The contract with NELFT, to deliver the Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Services for children and young people in Essex, started in November 2015. The contract is for 5 years. EPHA has been working closely with NELFT to help design a service that is helpful and supportive for primary schools. The former Tier 2 and 3 support has been amalgamated.

The Department of Health/NHS document, Future in Mind, was published in March 2015 with the aim of “Promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing”. Key themes emerged which provide the structure of the report – and the design of future services:

- Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention
- Improving access to effective support – a system without tiers
- Care for the most vulnerable
- Accountability and transparency
- Developing the workforce

Service transfer

The service transferred on 1 November 2015 with just over 4,000 caseloads. EWMHS currently hold over 6,000 open cases.

Single Point of Access

The SPA - Single Point of Access is manned by Clinical staff who are able to discuss the management of cases and give advice.

Performance data

20,223 total referrals received from April 2016 to September 2017

15.64% of referrals are currently sign-posted

High volume experienced since the new school term started with 1099 referrals received in September 2017

Referrals through SPA:

- GPs – 45%
- Parent/carers and relatives – 24%
- Education – 9%
- Community paediatrics – 6%
- Social Services – 6%
- Other – 10%

Ben explained the process that EWMHS aims for – in the old CAMHS service around 55% of referrals were accepted. Now 75% are accepted.

Urgent assessments, considered life threatening, will be made within 4 hours, at A&E. Routine assessments – the aim is to complete an assessment in 12 weeks.

The target for urgent cases is 2 weeks, but Ben conceded that the service struggles to achieve this. He suggested that if headteachers feel a child is at risk, they should contact their local team.

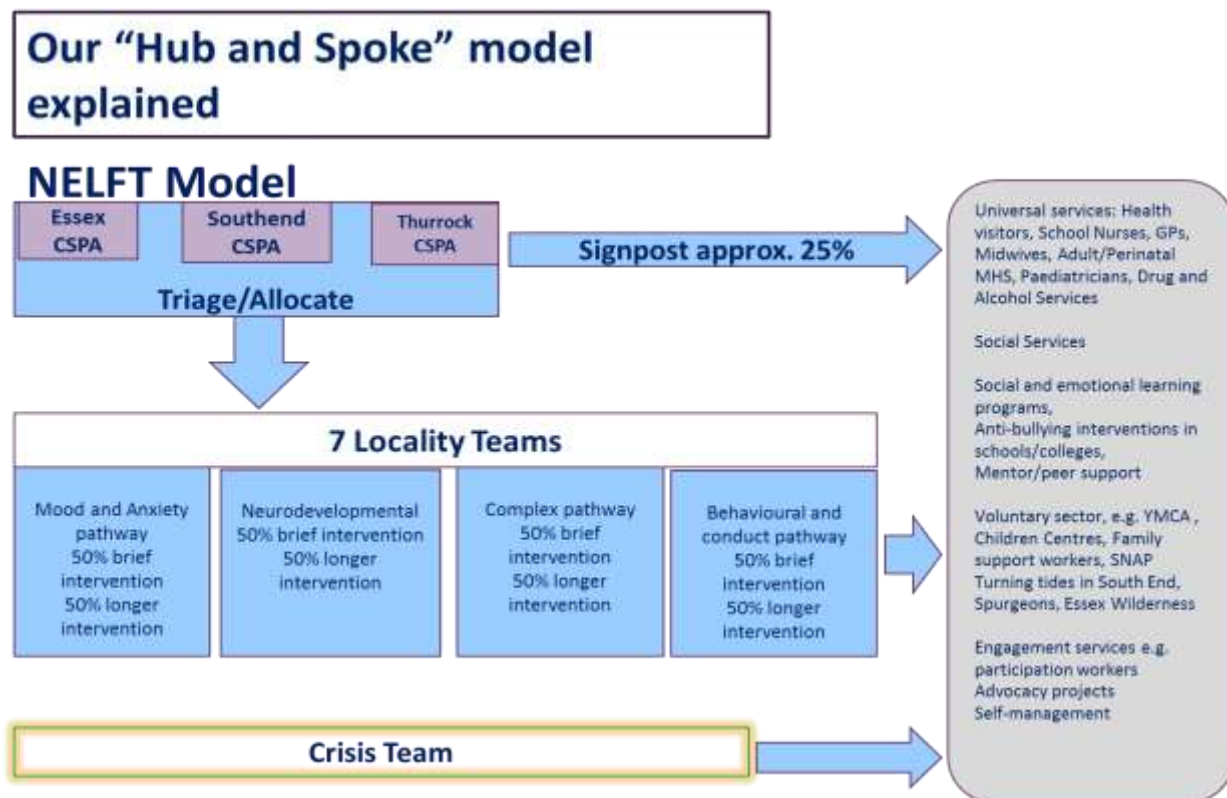
He noted that the DoH aspiration (and funding) is to reach 30% of cases.

Headteachers asked about the link with Social Care, having been told in a meeting (by a Social Worker) that “there’s no way you’ll get support unless the child is on the point of suicide”. Ben noted that this advice is simply wrong, and confirmed that NELFT does liaise and work closely with Social Care. It was suggested that the presentation should be shared with Social Care colleagues.

Another head asked what support there is for children that have such severe needs that they can’t access the service – she has been told that because a child has long term needs, they cannot be supported by EWMHS. Ben agreed to follow this case up with the headteacher, as he noted that EWMHS will provide long term support unless this is at Tier 4 – i.e. in-patient service.

Ben was asked what cross-over there was with VirginCare. He noted that the two services do liaise and it was agreed that it would be helpful if a representative was invited to the next EWMHS Strategy Group meeting. Team managers from VirginCare are attending the headteacher meetings in the spring term, giving heads a chance to question the service.

A number of headteachers expressed concerns that some health professionals do not make referrals themselves, but direct parents back to school to ask for a referral. Ben stressed that the referral system should be used by all, including self-referral and parents, and in fact the largest referral group was GPs.



Working with schools

NELFT proposes three levels of support in the EWMHS and schools collaboration:

- Training whole staff teams or smaller groups of pastoral & leadership staff.
- Bespoke training covering self-harm, suicidality, anxiety, and depression
- Consultations on complex cases with groups of pastoral & leadership staff
- Supervision with groups of pastoral staff & school leaders

Within each quadrant team there is someone responsible for working with schools –

the education champion.

In addition, Jonathan Large has been seconded from the EP service to work with schools. He has focused initially on 41 schools in a pilot project. The majority of these are secondary, and the EPHA Headteacher EWHMS Strategy Group has urged him to extend his work into all schools as quickly as possible.

Jon has introduced a weekly telephone helpline, open to all schools on Wednesday afternoons. This is intended as a service for school staff who have concerns about the emotional well-being of children they work with.

It will offer opportunities for consultation, complex case discussion or sharing of concerns in pre-booked 35 minute slots. It can be about individuals (subject to confidentiality) or about relevant general issues arising from your work supporting children.

It is not primarily intended for referrals or signposting as the Children's Single Point of Access teams already offer this. It is also not intended as ongoing regular supervision - though some conversations may have that feel.

The helpline will be run by Jon Large - an Ed Psych who has worked in Essex child mental health and youth offending teams.

It is proposed to offer 8 slots each week at 12.00pm, 12.45pm, 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 3.00pm, 3.45pm, 4.30pm and 5.15pm

These will be booked in advance via jonathan.large@essex.gov.uk - a number to call will be shared once a booking is made/confirmed

We will review these arrangements after 2-3 months to see what's helpful or otherwise with a view to improving the service.

Professional Supervision

EPHA is partnering with Jon to offer (free) workshops focused on "An introduction to professional supervision", with the aim of giving headteachers the knowledge and confidence to support their staff. The dates are:

Tuesday 30 January	1.00 pm – 3.30 pm	Wickford CLC (<i>full</i>)
Wednesday 31 January	1.00 pm – 3.30 pm	Lion Inn, Boreham
Thursday 1 February	9.30 am – 12 noon	Weston Homes Stadium, Colchester
Thursday 8 February	9.30 am – 12 noon	Great Hallingbury Manor

MiLife

- ✓ Early help in collaboration with other services and agencies
- ✓ For young people in school years 7 – 11 –and a primary version to come
- ✓ Safe and secure with 24 hour access
- ✓ Workshops delivered through art and performance
- ✓ Resource and information available for parents and carers

<http://www.milife.org.uk/parents.htm>

My Mind App

- ✓ Interactive
- ✓ Confidential, safe and secure
- ✓ Track recovery and check appointments
- ✓ View and amend care plans
- ✓ Easy access to online resources

<https://apps.nelft.nhs.uk/MyMind>

Our hope is that the EWMHS and schools collaboration will support the drive for early-intervention in schools and foster cultural change in the way schools tackle mental health problems and mental wellbeing.

- This collaboration will support school staff to develop:
- their knowledge of mental wellbeing and the problems affecting young people
- the symptoms to look for
- strategies for supporting children with early signs of mental and emotional stress before a referral to specialist services is needed

Mental Health conference

Thursday 30th November 2017 at Chelmsford City Racecourse. The conference is aimed at raising awareness about the role schools play in supporting children and young people's mental health. The event will see the official launch of a range of digital wellbeing resources, self-harm guidance and will explore how schools can embed mental health as part of the curriculum.

The conference will also play host to a number of high profile key note speakers from a range of local and national organisations such as NELFT, Young Minds, the Department of Health and Mind. There will be interesting workshops during the day including themes around mental health in schools, Selfharm management and toolkit application and digital solutions for young people with emotional wellbeing difficulties.

The conference will also launch new webpages on the Essex schools' Infolink, giving information about emotional wellbeing and mental health resources for schools, professionals and parents.

5. DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Area Heads Meetings

Spring term 2018

SOUTH	Wednesday 21 February	Holiday Inn, Basildon
N-EAST	Thursday 22 February	Weston Homes Community Stadium
WEST	Wednesday 28 February	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 1 March	Chelmsford City Football Club

Summer term 2018

SOUTH	Wednesday 13 June	Holiday Inn, Basildon
N-EAST	Thursday 14 June	Weston Homes Community Stadium
WEST	Wednesday 20 June	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 21 June	Chelmsford City Football Club

EPHA Conferences

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 23 March 2017

Stock Brook Country Club, Nr. Billericay

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference

Friday 5 October 2018

Weston Homes Community Stadium

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