

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER 2016 at 11.00 am – 12.30 pm at Chelmsford City Football Club

Distribution	*Lehla Abbott	North East Vice-Chair
	*Cheryl Allard	Mid Chair/Chelmsford South
	*Lois Ashforth	Dengie
	Dawn Baker	Chelmsford West/Mid Treasurer
	*Sue Bardetti	Tendring South
	*Nicky Barrand	South Vice-Chair/Basildon East & Pitsea
	Isobel Barron	West Chair
	*Amanda Buckland-Garnett	South Woodham Ferrers
	Rachel Callaghan	Uttlesford North
	*Claire Claydon	Tendring Mid
	*John Clements	Uttlesford South
	*Anna Conley	Witham
	Lyn Corderoy	South Treasurer/Wickford
	*Brenda Dalley	South Chair/ Castle Point & Benfleet
	Sue Dodd	Maldon
	*Sarah Donnelly	Halstead
	*Fiona Dorey	Braintree
	*Helen Dudley-Smith	Colchester East
	Melissa Eades	Billericay
	Mary Jo Hall	West Treasurer
	Bridget Harris	North East Treasurer
	*Shelagh Harvey	Brentwood
	*Nigel Hookway	EPHA Executive Director
	*Nick Hutchings	EPHA Vice-Chair/North East Chair/ Colchester West
	*Ceri Jones	Mid Vice-Chair
	*Pam Langmead	EPHA Professional Officer/County Treasurer
	*Lesley Lewis	Epping Forest Rural
	Julie Lorkins	West Vice-Chair
	*Jacqu Martin	Colchester South
	*Kate Mills	Braintree
	*Hayley O'Dea	Rochford
	*Donna Parker	Tendring North
	*Lorna Pigram	Rayleigh
	*Harriet Phelps-Knights	EPHA Chair
	Amanda Reid	Chelmsford North
	Angela Russell	Basildon West
	*Karen Tucker	Canvey Island
	*Janice Tunney	Epping Forest South
	Jonathan Tye	Harlow

Kay Wills

Harwich and Dovercourt

* indicates attendance

Also in attendance

Simon Carpenter

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Action

Harriet Phelps-Knights, the EPHA Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from:

Dawn Baker	Chelmsford West/Mid Treasurer
Isobel Barron	West Chair
Rachel Callaghan	Uttlesford North
Lyn Corderoy	South Treasurer/Wickford
Melissa Eades	Billericay
Julie Lorkins	West Vice-Chair
Amanda Reid	Chelmsford North
Angela Russell	Basildon West
Jonathan Tye	Harlow
Kay Wills	Harwich and Dovercourt

2. BUSINESS INTERESTS REGISTER

Any Executive members who have not yet completed a business interests form

Completed business interest forms (including nil returns) were returned to the EPHA Professional Officer, who will hold them on file for inspection if required; those members of the Executive who have not completed a form were asked to do so and forward it to the EPHA Professional Officer.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 5 May 2016 were confirmed as an accurate record. The following matters arising from the minutes was discussed:

i) EHCPs and IPRA funding (Minute 2a refers)

The discussion at the previous meeting had noted that some schools were finding it difficult to access IPRA (individual pupil resourcing agreement) funding. This matter was raised at the meeting with LA Officers on 5 May and one headteacher reported that she is now finding the process easier.

One headteacher complained that her new SEC had challenged the number of Education, Health and Care Plans in her school and had used this information as a basis for changing the school's RAG rating; another headteacher noted that she had been questioned in the same way. It was **AGREED** that this matter would be raised at the meeting with LA Officers later in the day.

Meeting with LA Officers
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ii) Validity of independent Educational Psychologist reports

A headteacher noted that at a recent SENCo meeting a representative from the Statutory Assessment Service stated that independent Educational Psychologist reports would be regarded as less valid than those from the ECC EP Service or NHS reports. It was argued that this could constitute restrictive practice. It was **AGREED** that this matter would be raised at the meeting with LA Officers later in the day.

4. REVIEW OF THE SPECIALIST TEACHER TEAM AND STATUTORY ASSESSMENT SERVICE

Simon Carpenter was welcomed to the meeting. Simon is a former secondary school headteacher who has been commissioned by the Local Authority to conduct a review of the Specialist Teacher team (STT) and the Statutory Assessment Service (SAS).

Simon explained that he is conducting interviews with the Headteacher Associations, headteachers and SENCos in primary, secondary and special schools, enhanced provision settings and alternative provision, to gather a broad range of views and opinions of the services. He is also meeting with Local Authority staff in these departments and system leaders and is conducting a survey of schools.

Simon noted that, while much of the evidence he gathers will be anecdotal, his assumption is that if he hears something many times, there is likely to be some truth in the view.

Emerging themes following interviews and discussions so far:

- The (often problematic) link to EHCPs
- Currency – how current (up to date) is the expertise in the service?
- Consistency of staff and delivery across the county
- Outcomes – positive or negative?
- What links are there to other sources of support (from special schools, teaching school alliances, enhanced provisions)?
- What will the future of support look like when the LA loses much of its funding?
- The transition of EHCPs from pre-school to primary

Statutory Assessment Services bullet points:

- Schools frequently told “You’ve got the first £6,000 in your budget”;
- (In-)consistency of decision making, criteria and feedback;
- The time the process takes;
- Overly -bureaucratic and legalistic;
- EHCP – common concerns around the lack of engagement of Health;
- A desire for joint decision making;
- Too dependent on the quality of personal relationships between the SAS and SENCo;
- A continuing perception that there is a need to have an EHCP in order to source

LA support and engagement.

The EPHA Executive members discussed the services and headteachers offered the following observations:

A big issue is the **quality of staff**. One head's experience is that her own staff are often more knowledgeable in terms of support strategies than the Specialist Teacher Team (particularly in Behaviour Support)

Linked to this is the problem that children are getting more and more complex at a younger age; the STT doesn't seem equipped to cope with this.

One Executive member reiterated that the Behaviour Support team is really out of date and their expensive reports are increasingly worthless.

Another head argued that staff in schools have as much expertise as should be expected – an external adviser would not be likely to be able to transform a child's behaviour based on a brief visit.

One headteacher stated that she was given incorrect and inaccurate advice by the STT and ended up facing a SEND tribunal.

It was noted that the input and support from specialist teams supporting learning difficulties is good, and another headteacher felt the same about the autism team – however, the experience of this was inconsistent. One head felt that the advice from the STT was out of date and the support from her local Special School was much more up to date and proactive. Simon accepted that there are often conflicting views about teams as a whole, and also the different individual Specialist Teachers within a team.

There is **little or no input from Health**. There is poor communication across the services.

One headteacher gave an example of two pupils in her school, both with life-limiting illnesses, where the consultant refused to initiate an EHCP arguing that it is the school's responsibility.

There is tension where CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups) don't align with education areas. The CCGs seem to have little understanding of how the system should work.

GPs are self-employed and have a direct disincentive to take on responsibility for initiating time-consuming EHCPs.

There is a **lack of clarity about funding**, and it is easy for schools to over-spend.

Simon explained his next steps:

- Continuing the interviews
- Survey at <http://simoncarpenter.co.uk/essex-send-survey/>

The survey questions are deliberately open, in order to gather as much information and opinion as possible.

- Final report to Clare Kershaw

5. EPHA EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 2016/17 YEAR

Getting Schools Broadband right

The report conducted by ECC stated that the service offered good value for money, but failed to address the ongoing concerns about the service. It was stressed that it is important that schools feedback their concerns or complaints to the Schools Broadband team, as otherwise they will assume everything is fine.

The Schools Forum sub-group is looking at future pricing structures and EPHA (represented by the Executive Director and Professional Officer, and other headteachers on occasion) has stressed that there is a moral imperative for the service to support and be cost-effective for small, rural schools, as well as those that are easily accessible.

Nigel Hookway is meeting with Virgin to see if there is a viable alternative to the Schools Broadband service in the future.

Recruitment and retention

With a stronger focus on retention, and not just short term ideas that only offer small fixes. It is recognised that this is a national as well as local issue, and will be a priority for the Executive Director lobbying at national level.

**Executive
Director**

Future of primary services

The LA is using the feedback of the primary services consultation conducted by EPHA to design the future of LA services.

Collaboration, partnerships and academisation

Primary assessment enquiry and the future of testing

Headteacher well-being and support

Designing the area meetings to improve the experience for headteachers

6. REPRESENTATION ON WORKING GROUPS AND COMMITTEES

a) Professional Officer's report of attendance at meetings

Pam Langmead circulated a report with the agenda for the meeting, detailing the meetings that she has attended and the implications for primary heads. She is currently representing EPHA on the following groups/attending the following meetings:

- Schools Forum (as an observer and substitute when necessary)
- Schools Forum SEN Sub-group (as a substitute when necessary)
- Schools Forum Finance Sub-group (as a substitute when necessary)
- Schools Forum Broadband Sub-group (as a substitute when necessary)
- Schools Forum Early Years Sub-group (as a substitute when necessary)
- Chairs and Professional Officer meetings

- EPHA Leadership Group
- Schools Led Improvement System Project Board and funding group
- Teaching Schools Alliance strategic group
- Children's Partnership Board
- Essex Safeguarding Children's Board
- Attendance code of conduct steering group
- Recruitment and Retention task and finish group
- Alternative provision and behaviour support
- SEND IASS (Information Advisory Support Service)
- School Led SEND Project Steering group
- Strategic Hate Crime Partnership
- Headteacher briefings to various clusters

Pam reminded the Executive to feed their views and opinions to her and Nigel, in order to inform their discussions at meetings

b) Executive Director's report of attendance at meetings

Nigel Hookway circulated a report with the agenda for the meeting, detailing the meetings that he has attended and the implications for primary heads.

I retired from Headship at Highwoods Community Primary School on the 31st of August and on the 1st of September found myself on the film set of Jimmy Doherty and Jamie Oliver's Friday Night Feast representing EPHA! What a way to start my time as Executive Director. The filming took place at Prince Avenue Primary Academy in Southend. The school made everyone very welcome and I was impressed by how friendly Jamie and Jimmy were. The programme focused on 'holiday hunger' for children who have free school meals normally. Jamie's latest crusade and certainly as I pointed out when interviewed on behalf of EPHA many schools already have holiday clubs that target support for children from vulnerable backgrounds in Essex. I was also at pains to point out that this should be a choice for schools to engage in this type of holiday support. The filming took place in the morning and they were moving onto the pier to film with Tom Daley in the afternoon. The programme goes out in December or January but I will try to let colleagues know when it goes out.

5th Sept am - (County Hall) – Met with Clare Kershaw to discuss my role and latest issues facing Essex Schools.

7th Sept pm - (Braintree)– Met with Simon Thompson (ASHE) to discuss the term ahead and discussed results published in both sectors over the summer. It is good to have a close working relationship with ASHE.

12th Sept pm – (Janet Duke PS) Met with Harriet and Pam to discuss issues and EPHA strategy going forward for this academic year.

14th Sept am – (Hylands House) Attended the Schools Forum Sub-group looking at responses to the proposals by the DfE to changes in Early Years Funding. EPHA Super Executive meeting at Hylands House to discuss up coming EPHA executive and Head's meetings for autumn term

15th Sept am – (Chelmsford College) Attended the Essex Employment and Skills Board. Presentations from various sectors. Discussion about careers events for young people over the year. Discussion about Young Engineers project for Primary schools.

19th Sept am – (County Hall) – SLIS sub group looking at Leadership capacity in Essex. Chaired by Graham Lancaster, other attendees were Simon Thompson (ASHE) and Simon Rea (ISOS)

21st Sept all day – (Essex Records Office) – Whole ESSEX Information Sharing Forum Annual Conference. A range of speakers and discussion about data protocols and whether all institutions are following DP regulations as outlined in the 1998 Act

23rd Sept am– (Manor of Groves) – WEPHA Conference with Natasha Devon speaking about self-image in young people.

23rd Sept pm – (Marconi Club) – The SLIS Improvement board looked at the skills and direction of the board in the future. There were four groups looking at different types of system leadership for the board to be successful over the next few years.

26th Sept am– (County Hall) – Broadband sub group of Schools Forum. Pam, Nick and I attended a difficult but eventually useful meeting getting the broadband team at County Hall to work on solutions in the future for Broadband provision and payments for schools. It was agreed after looking at various options that Sian and her team would come back to this group in October with more detail looking at just two options.

27th Sept pm– (County Hall) Recruitment and retention task and finish group. Graham Lancaster chaired the first of our meetings since the summer break. We had a pitch from a TSA in North Essex to ask for funds to start their own recruitment agency. We were all disappointed with this as there seemed to be very little detail behind the brief document supplied. It was agreed that Graham would alert all TSA's to the opportunities available and ask the TSA from North Essex to return with more detail. We looked at accommodation supporting teachers in Essex and we heard about ITT providers and their struggles with the DfE.

28th Sept am– (Essex Records Office) I was asked by Clare Kershaw to represent EPHA to work with Lesley Cheshire on Personal Budgets connected to EHCs. There were representatives from parent groups, CCGs, Social Care, Disability groups, Ralph Holloway and Andrew Hunt from the DfE. Andrew led a brilliant session on personal budgets and then we had to look at the challenges facing the implementation of these budgets in Essex. The meeting took three hours but we all felt that there is a lot more work to do in formulating an Essex policy. There will be further working groups over the next few months.

28th Sept pm– (Sandon High) – Meeting of the Chairs and Professional Officers, ASHE, ESETT and EPHA. This meeting is very useful for sharing of information. We also had Gary Smith (Market Field Head) on facetime representing ESETT. The meeting looked at results from different sectors, pressures on schools, DfE policy, RSC policy and other local issues.

I have enjoyed my first half term as EPHA Executive Director and look forward to supporting schools and Heads in particular going forward. Harriet and Pam are a great team to work with however I do not feel I have made enough impact yet but it is early in the school year and I am working with lots of different groups including NAHT on shifting policy at the DfE. It has been challenging attending so many different groups (I know Pam takes this in her stride!) and I feel in the first year it is better to visit as many

groups as possible and then take a view at the end of the school year with Harriet and Pam.

The educational landscape is shifting rapidly at present with the publication of the Green Paper on Grammar Schools. I feel this is diverting attention away from the real issues of assessment, recruitment/retention, funding, SEND and teacher/headteacher morale. I hope to be meeting with the RSC later this term with Harriet and raising the real issues with Tim Coulson. These meetings are always worthwhile despite the trek to Cambridge.

I look forward to working with you all in the future and please make contact with me if there is a particular issue you wish to discuss or for me to follow up. My email address is nigelhookway@hotmail.com

Nigel noted that he had received information about a funded project to support engineering in primary schools, which will offer a free programme to about 20 schools in Essex. The Executive members agreed that this would be a useful project, but noted that it had already been publicised in that week's edition of Education Essex.

c) Schools Forum

Harriet Phelps-Knights reported that an extraordinary Schools Forum meeting was held on 14 September to formulate a response to the Early Years Funding Formula consultation.

The next Schools Forum meeting is on 12 October and in a pre-meeting to discuss the agenda it was noted that a school that was being required to convert to become a sponsored academy was requesting around £80k to support the financial costs of a proposed restructure of Educational Support Staff at the School. It was explained that, if approved by Schools Forum, the funding would either come from an existing fund that is used to support deficit budgets, or could be top-sliced from the primary DSG in 2017/18. The EPHA Executive discussed the potential cost of maintained schools converting to academy status, which suggests that the Local Authority is required to fund any shortfall on conversion, a cost that is passed on to maintained schools. All 26 headteachers in attendance stated their view that this was unfair and that Schools Forum should refuse to grant the funding.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

a) Asbestos survey programme

It was noted that a number of headteachers have raised concerns about the current asbestos programme of surveys, questioning the cost, value of the survey and health and safety concerns. It was **AGREED** that this matter would be raised at the meeting with LA Officers later in the day.

b) Date for submission of KS2 data in 2017

It was **AGREED** that this question would be asked at the meeting with LA Officers later

**Meeting
with LA
Officers
06/10/16**

**Meeting
with LA
Officers**

in the day.

c) Focus for Standards and Excellence Commissioner questions

Minute 3i refers

06/10/16
Meeting
with LA
Officers
06/10/16

d) Fair Access protocols

A number of concerns about implementation of the Fair Access Protocol were raised, including whether it was being applied fairly, admissions determined during the school holidays, and so on. It was noted that this item was on the agenda for the meeting with LA Officers later in the day and these issues would be discussed in more detail at this point.

Meeting
with LA
Officers
06/10/16

e) Form used for notifying the LA of children entering and leaving schools at non-transition points (CME requirement)

A headteacher argued that the form that the Local Authority has produced for schools to notify them of children entering and leaving their school, in line with CME requirements, has a number of anomalies. It was **AGREED** that this matter would be raised at the meeting with LA Officers later in the day, during the agenda item about attendance.

Meeting
with LA
Officers
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f) Domestic Violence notifications

A headteacher argued that, despite the appointment of a dedicated officer, schools are still not receiving notification of domestic violence incidents affecting their pupils. Schools are sometimes informed by their School Nurse, but this information is not given consistently and is often shared weeks after the event. It was **AGREED** that this matter would be raised at the meeting with LA Officers later in the day.

Meeting
with LA
Officers
06/10/16

8. DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2016/17 SCHOOL YEAR

Executive meetings (Chelmsford City Football Club)

Thursday 6 October 2016

Thursday 26 January 2017

Thursday 4 May 2017

Area Heads Meetings

Autumn term 2016

N-EAST	Wednesday 9 November	Weston Homes Community Stadium
SOUTH	Thursday 10 November	Holiday Inn, Basildon
WEST	Wednesday 16 November	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 17 November	Chelmsford City Football Club

Spring term 2017

SOUTH	Wednesday 22 February	Holiday Inn, Basildon
N-EAST	Thursday 23 February	Weston Homes Community Stadium
WEST	Wednesday 1 March	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 2 March	Chelmsford City Football Club

Summer term 2017

SOUTH	Wednesday 14 June	Holiday Inn, Basildon
N-EAST	Thursday 15 June	Weston Homes Community Stadium
WEST	Wednesday 21 June	Weston Homes Business Centre, Takeley
MID	Thursday 22 June	Chelmsford City Football Club

Conferences

Deputy Headteachers' Conference

Friday 14 October 2016 Weston Community Homes Stadium

Headteachers' Conference

Friday 17 March 2017 Stock Brook Country Club, Nr. Billericay

Deputy Headteachers' Conference

Friday 6 October 2017 Weston Community Homes Stadium

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Harriet Phelps-Knights
Chair of EPHA

Pam Langmead
EPHA Professional Officer