

Children, Young People & Education

Agenda: PRU Heads and Chairs Meeting
Date: Tuesday, 12th February 2019
Location: Room 2.40, Sessions House
Time: 14:00 – 15.30

Attendees

Stuart Collins (SC)	Director Integrated Children's Services (Early Help)
Celia Buxton (CB)	Principal School Improvement Adviser
Ming Zhang (MZ)	Head of Service for PRUs, Inclusion & Attendance,
Scott Bagshaw (ScB)	Head of Service for Fair Access
Karen Brookes (KB)	Vice-Chair of Two Bridges
Sue Beauchamp (SuB)	Head of Two Bridges School
David Adams (DA)	Area Education Officer (South)
Philip Wicker (PW)	Canterbury Executive Committee Chair
Rachel Meehan (RM)	Head of Birchwood PRU
Sonette Schwartz (SS)	Chair of Birchwood PRU
David Elliot (DE)	School Improvement Consultant
Marie Woolston (MWO)	Head of Service , North West Kent Alternative Provision Service
Peter Stewart (PS)	The Education People
Marisa White (MWh)	Area Education Officer (East)
Susie Burden (SBu)	Swale Inclusion Collaboration
Richard Billings (RB)	Ashford Inclusion Collaboration
Lee Kane (LK)	ELA MC
Michaela Clay (MC)	Executive Head of ELA
Hannah Killeen (HK)	Senior Support Officer to Ming Zhang (Minutes)

Apologies

Louise Langley (LL)	Head of Service for SEN
Natalie Willbourn (NW)	Chair of NWKAPS
Rosemary Joyce (RJ)	Chair of Two Bridges

1	Welcome and Introductions	SC
2	PRU Consultation Preliminary Results	All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SC introduced the summarised results of the consultation, emphasising that these were preliminary. There would still need to be discussion on the detail of the proposals, and how they should be implemented. He apologised that the numerical results had been sent out in error. These were something of a blunt instrument and did not give the nuances and caveats provided by the comments (distributed in the meeting). He then proposed addressing the questions in turn. <p>Q1 – Keeping the current formula for district allocations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was near unanimous support for this. <p>Q2 – Using PAN rather than census figures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses were split on this, with some nuancing in areas where schools were under PAN. Finance was working up a formula that would use either 	

PAN or the census, whichever was greater. DA suggested this should be done within district, rather than county-wide. SC confirmed this was the intention.

Q3 – How grammar schools should contribute

- There was strong support for maintaining the status quo, with grammar schools giving up their share to others, on the proviso that they had free access to provision if needed. SC noted that this should be formalised in the contracts.

Q4 – Providing an LA chair for IYFA panels

- There was strong disagreement with the LA chairing IYFA panels, but strong support for an LA presence and admin support. SC and CB proposed providing a consistent clerk and admin officer for all panels across the county. The clerk's role would be to advise the chair on points of procedure, and governance etc.; suggest solutions from best practice elsewhere; and ensure consistency of approach across the county. This would allow the Chair to stay with the members, and rotate, where that was the preferred practice, without the disruption of the admin and record-keeping role rotating likewise.
- SuB (with support from others) was concerned about how this post would be funded, saying that not all panels necessarily needed the support, and that she would not want to see PRU funds reduced to pay for this post. The Inclusion and Attendance Advisers (IAAs) already provided effective support and advice on behalf of the LA. Perhaps individual panels could pay for further support themselves if needed.
- CB said that the intention was not(not) to fund them from the PRU budget. SC added that he couldn't absolutely confirm until final costings had been done, allowing an alternative funding source to be identified. He underlined again the desire for county-wide consistency.
- MZ noted that, while the IAAs from his teams could of course continue to advise on specific points in their area of expertise, they did not have all the expertise and authority to perform the role that was envisaged by SC.

Q5 – Challenging schools that do not co-operate

- There is support for this in principle, but concerns around how it would be implemented, and nervousness that it would destroy current good collaboration. People were also asking for more detail, particularly around where the fines would go.
- DA said that the money needed to follow the child, and that Management Committees (MCs) would have to work out their own procedures for implementing the system.
- SuB raised timescales, emphasising that the outcome for the child should not be delayed by discussions over fines.
- MW raised a specific cross-border issue with Kent children being excluded from Bexley schools and having to be provided for by NWKAP – occupying places need for children from Kent schools. Would be unfair to fine Kent schools for failures with Bexley's inclusion policies. CB noted this would be an issue for the details stage, and SC suggested it would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Qs 6-9 – contracts

- Again there is some support for this, but many concerns around the detail and clarity of the proposals. Areas where collaboration is more difficult support the idea of stability of funding. There are concerns about how a one-size-fits-all contract could cover both devolved systems and those with a physical PRU.
- CB clarified that contracts would be between the LA and individual schools, but that the MC would have to agree the detail of the contract to suit the

	<p>arrangements in their specific area, with all schools in the area being expected to sign up to the same terms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SC emphasised that there is no desire for change for the sake of it, and where the system is working, that should be maintained. The intention is to bring more consistency and stability by formalising arrangements, ensuring schools are signed up, and collaboration is not vulnerable to e.g. changes of Head etc. PW supported. • SC further clarified that fines should come out of the school's base budget, not their PRU allocation, and the money should follow the child. • The issue was raised of PEx from schools that are not LA-controlled further education college. SC said this would need further discussion, but that the basic principle was that Kent schools have to find space for Kent children. <p>Q10 – Voting system for MCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents said this was not a concern in their area. <p>Q11 – LA presence on MCs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was something that had been included at the request of Heads and Chairs. <p>Q12 – Commissioned places totalling 0.42%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads and Chairs raised the need for flexibility around deprivation levels. Not fair to apply to same percentage to all areas regardless of need. • SC noted that this had been qualified in the revised consultation document following concerns from the group. The 0.42% was intended as a county-wide level, but would vary across districts according to need. It also only covered the commissioned places. <p>Q13 – Consistent fines across the county</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a general concern around the size of the fine. £18,000 might be too much, and would encourage some schools to use RTT, off-site provision, or forced EHE to avoid being fined for PEx. <p>Conclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The issue of KS2/primary provision was raised, but there was no time to discuss. • SC concluded that there was more work to be done on the responses to the consultation. He reiterated that the aim was consistency, and to hold schools to account, where they were not co-operating. He would welcome Heads and Chair's input into the detail of the contracts, figures, and criteria. • The aim was to take this to the Schools Funding Forum on 11th March. With that in mind, he would send a written response to heads and Chairs within the next two weeks. 	
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Next Meeting: Thursday 16th May, 10am, Swale 1, Sessions House.