



Guidance on consortium working

This paper sets out some of the most successful ideas and practices to be found in current ECaR/ECC consortium working around the country. It is also intended to provide support and guidance to new ECaR/ECC consortia which are now beginning their work in the 2009 -10 cohort.

What is a consortium?

For the Every Child a Reader (ECaR) and Every Child Counts (ECC) programmes a consortium is an association of two or more Local Authorities (LAs) sharing and pooling their resources and expertise to achieve some common goals:

- a) That every school is a great school by ensuring that effective layered intervention, including Reading Recovery and Numbers Count, is matched to need across a consortium area
- b) To improve literacy and numeracy outcomes
- c) To narrow the gaps by ensuring that those children with the greatest needs have access to proven approaches

The resources may be human and material to achieve maximum benefit to the greatest number of children.

Why are we working in consortia?

Teacher Leaders (TLs) train, develop and help to deploy and quality assure Reading Recovery Teachers (RR) or Numbers Count Teachers (NC). The design of the ECaR and ECC roll out models is predicated on maximising the reach of the programmes to individual children. In order to achieve this and maximise the available resources, both LAs and schools need to work in clusters – sharing the expertise of both Teacher Leaders and RR/NC teachers. This means that not every LA will be allocated funding to support a trained Teacher Leader. Neither the capacity of the national trainers nor the available national funding will allow a Teacher Leader to be trained and funded in every LA. However, it is the principle of ECaR and ECC that schools and children should be able to access training in the neighbouring LAs which do have Teacher Leaders. In practice, therefore, the majority of LAs are operating in consortia, although for employment and Standards Fund allocation purposes each Teacher Leader will need to be based in a named LA – referred to in this paper as the 'host' LA. For reasons of size or geography, 11 of the 148 LAs operate on their own. The remaining 137 LAs are members of a consortium.

What does a consortium do?

- Meet to agree, monitor and review the strategic aims and principles of the consortium.
- Ensure that the required numbers of TLs, RR/NC teachers are trained, deployed and supported appropriately.

- Ensure there is systematic approaches to identification, selection and support for schools and families of schools engaged in the ECaR and ECC programmes.
- Disseminate learning from the programme.
- Map provision for interventions across the consortium to ensure that approaches and resources are used to maximum effect and minimum duplication.

How often should a consortium meet?

This is for each consortium to determine but our suggestion would be at least once a term. Within ECaR and ECC each term brings new expectations and challenges. The consortium should be meeting regularly to discuss these and to be prepared for the following term and ensure progress on the above agenda.

Who should attend consortium meetings?

Consortium meetings should enable both strategic and operational decision making. Attendance at consortium meetings is not restricted to one person per LA. However, the person who attends regularly should be in a strategic position in the LA and able to make decisions (usually the Primary Strategy Manager). Actual attendance is a decision for the consortium itself and may vary from meeting to meeting depending on the focus. Teacher Leaders are pivotal to the effective working of consortia and may need to attend most meetings. However, there may be some meetings where their attendance is not necessary.

At some meetings you may want someone for the National Strategies (usually a member of the regional team) or the Institute of Education (IoE) to attend and this can usually be arranged with sufficient notice.

Who leads the consortium?

The membership of the consortium should agree a lead Local Authority. This does not have to be the LA with the TL and it should not be the TL who leads the consortium. The lead LA should chair the meetings and ensure that minutes are taken, agreed and distributed. It may be helpful for meetings of the consortia to be hosted by LAs on a rota basis or at the relevant ECaR/ECC training room facilities.

Who sets the agenda?

The agenda belongs to the consortium and should be agreed in advance of the meeting. The National Strategies may, from time to time, propose suggested agenda items for discussion but will not be leading consortium in the setting of agendas.

What should happen at consortium meetings?

This will depend on the phase at which you have entered the ECaR or ECC programme.

Consortia in their first year

In the **Autumn** term some LAs/consortia will be in their **first year** of joining the programme and will have appointed their Teacher Leader who will be starting their training at the Institute of Education or Edge Hill University. At this point, there may

be no RR/NC teachers being trained (unless the consortium has had access to an already trained TL elsewhere). However, this is a good time for a consortium to meet to plan how they are going to recruit schools and specialist teachers into the programme and how they will work as a consortium.

LAs should know their indicative numbers of RR/NC teachers to be recruited a year in advance. These numbers are based on analysis of data indicating the levels of children in need of support in each LA. Consortia should meet to decide and agree on recruitment numbers and the allocation of training places to support the TL's workload, taking account of travel, familiarity with the partner LAs and the need to establish relationships with leaders and managers in partner LAs.

Working together as a consortium can help support the recruitment of RR/NC teachers by building in a degree of flexibility, as shown in the ECaR example below.

For example,

LA	Teacher Leaders in training 09/10	Total number of RRTs required overall	RRTs trained	RRTs for 2009	RRTs for 2010	RRTs still needed
1		10	0	0	5	5
2	1	16	0	0	5	9
3		9	0	0	5	4
4		12	0	0	5	7
		47			20	27

Because RRTs are trained in groups of 10 - 12, LA1 may feel that they would like to have all their RRTs trained at the same time and so would prefer to delay training to 2011. If the consortium agreed to this they could use the places allocated to LA1 in a number of agreed ways:

1. LA3 may like to take 4 of the places and train all of their RRTs in '09 and LA4 may wish to take the last place
OR
2. LA2 may like to take all of the places and have a training group of 10 RRTs from their LA
OR
3. LA4 may like to take 3 of the places and LA3 may like the other 2

(This is not a definitive list of possibilities but an example of flexibility.)

There are some guiding principles to this flexibility:

- a) The consortium, as a whole, must recruit to its identified capacity each year (in this case 20).
- b) No LA should recruit beyond their indicative number without prior agreement with The National Strategies. However, additional places on the teacher course may be created, up to a maximum of 12 per training group, to allow for replacement or to allow self funded schools, who are not eligible for ECaR funding, to offer the programme to their children.
- c) Ultimately, all LAs need to recruit to their indicative number.

Funding for teachers will be given to LAs on confirmation of numbers and registration of teachers with the Institute of Education or Edge Hill University.

A host LA employs the TL. However, the other LAs need to contribute to the TL salary and operating costs by paying for the training of RR/NC teachers from their LA. The amount for this is negotiated within consortia, but is currently around £2,500 per teacher (with amounts varying according to local needs such as travel and venue costs). In addition, consortium LAs need to agree the amount that will be contributed to the host LA every year after the first year of RR/NC teacher training to support continuing contact with the teachers and the provision of their entitlement to CPD and quality assure their role.

Consortia in their second year

If a consortium is in the **second year** of joining the programme, in the **Autumn** term new RR/NC teachers will be starting training. This may be a good time to discuss as a consortium the training needed in order to utilise the full range of layered interventions which exist within ECaR/ECC. With the support of the TL the consortium should map out what expertise already exists within the consortium for training and provision of particular layered interventions for literacy, such as: Better Reading Partnership, FFT Wave 3, Catch up Literacy, Early Literacy Support, Talking Partners etc. For numeracy the layers may include: Catch up Numeracy, Mathematics Recovery, Closing the Gap with Numicom, National Strategies Overcoming the Barriers Materials and Talk for Mathematics. The TL can arrange and facilitate training for the following year but should not be expected to deliver all the training. The training of specialist tutors in other LA services and in LAs across a consortium is highly supportive to overall capacity building.

There may also be a need to discuss the further recruitment of TLs. If your consortium is due to train a TL in the following Autumn term, this may be a good time to have a discussion about who the host LA will be. The National Strategies will have already identified the LA that will host the Teacher Leader, but this could be discussed and altered at a consortium meeting with full agreement of all members.

Consortia in their third and subsequent years

If your consortium has been **in the programme for some time**, you may have some RR/NC teachers starting training this **Autumn** term, you may be seeking additional places to replace teachers no longer delivering RR or NC, or all your RR/NC teachers may be trained. Some of the above discussion items may still be pertinent to you. Consortium partners should begin to build expertise in schools to deliver layers of intervention to match children's differing levels of need. Other areas for discussion may include:

- the monitoring and quality assurance of the implementation
- sharing information on tracking children and maintaining the gains after their ECaR/ECC interventions
- the impact that ECaR/ECC is having on school standards and pupils' progress rates
- communicating ECaR/ECC to other services in the LA to facilitate joined up working
- completion of the self-evaluation documents and the return to National Strategies of the Annual Progress Report

In addition to the above suggestions, by the **Spring** term all consortia should have discussed and be recruiting new RR/NC teachers and, where appropriate, new TLs and have a clear plan of how this will happen.

In the **Summer** term all consortia should be confirming the take up of teacher training places or alerting each other to vacancies in case other LAs are in a position to recruit more.

Is the consortium just for ECaR or ECC?

No. Where possible, the same LA consortia will run both the Every Child a Reader and the Every Child Counts programmes which operate along almost identical lines. The training of Teacher Leaders and either RRTs or NCTs follows a similar pattern to each other. It is therefore practical and sensible for the consortium to develop a good working relationship for both programmes.

What does an effective consortium look like?

Where consortia are working effectively they have agreed aims, principles, roles and responsibilities as well as agreeing financial protocols.

In addition some further examples of good practice might include:

- A commitment from all parties to making the consortium a success.
- Open and honest discussion to enable issues to be resolved.
- A united voice and consistent message across the consortium.
- Regular meetings with clear agendas and the opportunity for all members to contribute as an equal partner, share good ideas and emerging developments.
- Common aims for the promotion of ECaR/ECC practice with positive impact on school improvement and pupils' progress across the region.
- Opportunities for teachers across LAs to share practice and participate in joint training sessions.
- Schools developing good practice identified across LAs with the opportunity to visit these schools.
- Opportunities for all RR/NC teachers across the LAs to meet.
- Forums for head teachers to meet across LAs.
- Newsletters from the consortium.
- RR/NC teachers providing outreach support to schools that do not have a specialist teacher and to share good practice with them.

Are there any issues that have arisen from consortia working?

In the main, consortia are working well. However, consortium working has not been without its challenges. Ensuring that communication is effective seems to be the most prevalent area of challenge. Other issues include:

- Teacher Leaders often have less familiarity with the systems and structures in other LAs. They need therefore to work hard at establishing relationships with senior leaders in schools of other LAs and need support from the SMT of the partner LAs to do this.
- Partner LAs have not always made their structures clear and available to Teacher Leaders, so that TLs are unsure who to refer to should they encounter issues which require discussion with or guidance from the LA. TLs

need a named contact, who is accessible on a regular basis and who can provide support with the TL's negotiations with schools

- The issue of travel for Teacher Leaders - particularly across large geographical areas - has to be effectively managed by the consortium in order to ensure effective use of the TL's time. This may necessitate the strategic location of schools invited to train in a given year or the development of more than one training centre in a consortium.
- It is essential that consortium working takes into account the need for TLs to be able to commit to training on a regular basis.

Further examples of good practice

The partners within Every Child a Reader and Every Child Counts (The National Strategies, The Institute of Education, Edge Hill University, The Every Child a Chance Trust and DCSF) will continue to find examples of good working practice from consortia. These will be shared on a regular basis through newsletters and case studies on the WWW website.

Contacts:

To arrange an attendee from the National Strategies contact your SSIA/DSIA or angela.molyneux@nationalstrategies.co.uk

To arrange an attendee from the Institute of Education/Reading Recovery Trainer contact: readrec@ioe.ac.uk

To arrange an attendee from Edge Hill University contact: