

Consortium Adviser

Offering bespoke support for building consortium capacity for 14-19 Diploma implementation

Who are Consortium Advisers?

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) support package provides a dedicated Consortium Adviser to every consortium. They are appointed and managed by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) and the National College for School Leadership (National College)

Consortium Advisers play a central role in the programme of support for consortium leaders and managers and for consortia more generally. Their focus is to help you put together a **bespoke package of support** to meet your needs and help you to successfully implement Diplomas as part of the 14-19 reforms.

Your Consortium Adviser will:

- support, advise and challenge you to explore your readiness for Diploma delivery, acting as a critical friend
- help you to identify areas for development and to plan the type, level and timing of support you feel you need
- assist you to access support
- facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience with your peers in other consortia, both at regional and national levels.

The bespoke package can draw on a wide range of provision. Your Consortium Adviser will 'represent' all DCSF-funded national support partners and be able to give you information and guidance. Each partner has different expertise that can help you develop relevant aspects of both your consortium's leadership capacity and your practice related to Diploma delivery.

Each Consortium Adviser has extensive experience of the 14-19 context. You can find a profile of your own Adviser on www.14-19support.org/lmdp

"From our point of view it's been absolutely brilliant because... (she's) met with us regularly, has provided access to all sorts of information and access to contacts from other areas.

It's enabled us to keep on track, to review and check where we're up to and to identify where we need some additional support, or where we'll benefit from other programmes that are available."

Feedback from a consortium lead



How does it all work?

At the heart of the interaction with your Consortium Adviser are ‘**consortium support conversations**’ (CSC). Conversations may involve meetings or phone or email contact. From time to time, at appropriate points, most consortia will benefit from a well planned, recorded CSC.

The CSC provides an opportunity to reflect on progress and on your support needs within the context of the 2013 learning entitlement. Conversations will be flexible and respond to where your consortium is in the development process and to your priorities; the discussion will also be robust and challenging. The aim is to enable you to decide the extent and nature of the support you need and plan a bespoke package of training and development for your practitioners, support staff, managers and leaders.

The conversation might indicate needs in areas where the Consortium Adviser can offer additional expertise and support, as described later. Where more specialised help would be of benefit, your Adviser will be able to **facilitate liaison** with **DCSF-funded support programmes** and sources of help, including your **peers in other consortia**.

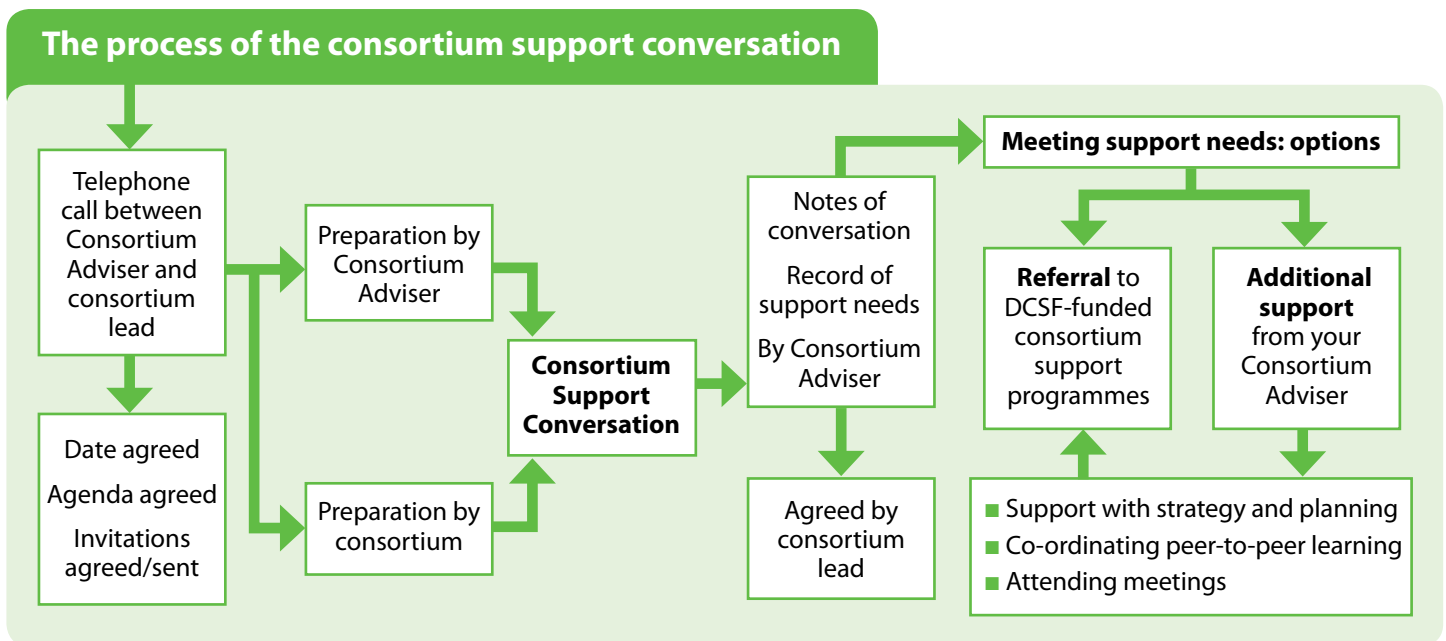
Subsequent conversations may focus on a ‘stock-take’ based on your plan, on learning from your current development strategy or re-planning support to meet emerging needs or follow up on specific aspects.

What will conversations cover?

A conversation will include several elements put together flexibly to reflect your consortium’s situation. It will help you to:

- **review:** how prepared your consortium is for implementation in 2010, the effectiveness of support already in place and any needs emerging
- **explore:** the plans for meeting learners’ 2013 entitlement, how these fit into the local authority’s strategy and how sustainable development will be achieved
- **build up:** a picture of the priorities for your consortium’s support needs across all aspects of Diploma implementation. This will take account of support available from DCSF-funded national partners, the LA and other sources; and identify how the consortium can learn with or from others and what you might offer to others
- **decide:** with the local authority and regional adviser, the extent of support likely to be needed from the Consortium Adviser and whether your consortium can sustain its development within LA resources.

The CSC is not part of any DCSF assessment or monitoring system.



What will happen after a conversation?

- Any requests for support will be passed to national support partners immediately so they can plan how best to help you. They will make contact with you directly, if you indicate you want this
- Your Consortium Adviser will complete notes of the conversation and send a draft to you for checking. It will include the record of the support you are seeking
- Requests in your support plan for LSIS/National College provision will be considered by the LSIS/National College Regional Manager in conjunction with plans from other consortia to decide the extent of support that can be given and how. Your Consortium Adviser will feed back about this.

What additional support can be requested from your Consortium Adviser?

Additional support from your Consortium Adviser develops out of the discussions that s/he will have with you in relation to **leadership and management priorities**.

This could take the form of:

- **help with strategy and planning:** particularly related to collaborative implementation planning, workforce planning and collaborative quality assurance
- **co-ordinating peer to peer learning:** such as a learning visit to another consortium or a joint meeting
- **attendance at meetings:** such as a strategy or steering group involved in design or planning. Requests are also coming in to hold 1:1 conversations with individual headteachers to address barriers to Diploma delivery
- **scoping the need for additional expertise:** helping you to decide when you need more in-depth, specialist support from a Leadership Consultant and to specify what is required and make a referral.

"The support was absolutely focused on our needs. It will bring a consistent approach to the future planning and roles of the Local Area Partnership, schools, colleges and others. We now have confidence we are on the right lines."

Consortium lead

"The sessions with my coach were excellent opportunities for me in terms of reflection and thinking. ..I have had a chance to see for myself what kind of ..leader I am at the present time and how I could improve in the future."

Consortium lead about a programme of telephone coaching sessions

Specialist support from an LSIS/National College Leadership Consultant

With your Consortium Adviser, you may decide that you need more specialist, in-depth support for your leaders and managers.

Leadership Consultants offer help on:

- collaborative leadership
- leading change
- in-depth collaborative quality assurance
- in-depth implementation planning and workforce planning
- equality and diversity
- leadership of Information, Advice and Guidance
- employer engagement
- other areas where appropriate.

All support will be bespoke. It can take the form of workshops, seminars, individual or group consultancy and coaching.

Consortium Adviser

Peer-to-peer learning

For a consortium, one of the richest sources of examples of successful leadership and management strategies and solutions is your colleagues in other consortia. There may be valuable knowledge and insights that your consortium can offer to share with others. Or, you might want to collaborate to jointly explore a theme or plan new processes.

Your Consortium Adviser will be able to help you locate/offer relevant expertise and experience and will help:

- broker peer support
- access learning visits
- signpost online communities where they exist
- highlight case studies and associated opportunities
- identify topics for a regional event.

You may wish to research peer learning independently, for example, you can find a schedule of learning visits on www.14-19support.org/lmdp

Videos of virtual learning visits, can be accessed at www.diploma-support.org/emergingpractice

Consortia are feeding back that they value this form of learning and it is expected that the range and content on offer will grow quickly. Learning how others have met and resolved challenges and barriers can be very powerful and offer ideas to accelerate your own development.

"We offer the visit as a genuine opportunity to share learning and experience. We see it as a 'developmental day' from which we too want to learn."

Learning visit host

Next steps...

This information might usefully be discussed with your Consortium Adviser.

Visit www.14-19support.org/lmdp

- to find your Consortium Adviser and their profile
- for more detailed information about the themes and priorities we can support
- for opportunities to network with your colleagues in other consortia, such as through online communities and learning visits
- for resources that will help you to review and plan.

For more about the programmes of DCSF-funded national support partners, see www.14-19support.org

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Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

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