



South West and Mid Wales Consortium Consortium De-orllewin a Chanolbarth Cymru

Bulletin 1

December 2007

Consortium working – a reminder of what it's all about

Our vision is that through working collaboratively we will develop and deliver improved services for children and young people and support them to achieve improved standards,.

The six Authorities which make up the South West and Mid Wales Consortium, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Neath and Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire, Powys, and Swansea, have worked together in a range of areas for some years and continue to seek to develop new systems and ways of working that :

- remain true to the ethos of each authority,
- maintain a focus on the needs of the learner and
- provide additional benefits to all.

Consortium working

- promotes improvement in standards of attainment and achievement
- provides mutual support
- builds upon and adds value to the successful work of the individual authorities and
- ensures bilingualism
- whilst seeking to ensure that the approach developed is cost effective and achieves value for money.

There is no one way of working together that fits all situations and therefore swamwac has adopted a Continuum of Consortium working which provides the necessary flexibility to accommodate a range of situations and solutions.

The strength and success of Consortium working within the swamwac Local Authorities is as a result of the willingness of teachers, headteachers and professional officers to share experience and expertise and to contribute to development work for the benefit of all learners across the whole region.

Our Journey so far

In addition to the continuing work of the Operational Groups, between September 2006 and May 2007 swamwac undertook a range of research and developmental work utilising funding made available from the Welsh Assembly Government. This 'Making Connections' Project resulted in a number of priority areas for Consortium working being identified and included in an Action Plan.

The final project report and outcomes were welcomed and approved by the Consortium Directors and the Regional Partnership Boards and delivered to WAG in June 2007.

The work of the Operational Groups was instrumental in securing the positive outcomes of the project and thanks must go to the commitment and contribution of all involved. The work was key both to the successful and timely completion of the project and to the added value which will be attained when the actions identified in the Action Plan are completed.

Further information on the detailed outcomes of the Making Connections Project is available on the Consortium web site at: www.swamwac.org/project report

Step 1 Interim Consortium Working Strategic Plan

The Consortium Working Strategic Plan September 2007 – August 2008, builds on the 'Action Plan' and identifies the following distinct strands for further development:-

- Strand 1: Workforce Development
- Strand.2: Advice Support and Challenge
- Strand 3: Governance and Organisational Development

In order to implement the Consortium Working Strategic Plan in full additional funding is needed, and therefore a bid to the Welsh Assembly Government for continuation funding from the Making the Connections Improvement Fund has been submitted – the outcome is awaited.

In the meantime, actions have been prioritised and the plan separated into two distinct but interrelated parts.

- Part 1 indicates those areas and key actions which can be achieved via authorities existing pooled resources and is
- Part 2 focuses on the work which cannot be delivered until additional funding is agreed.

For ease of reference Part 1 of Consortium Working Strategic Plan has been named the **Interim Consortium Working Strategic Plan**. We therefore now have a clear and focused strategic plan for consortium working which has been agreed by Local Authorities and schools, and which identifies outputs and outcomes focused on children and young people.

There is a small team of professional officers/facilitators, and support staff coordinating and facilitating work on behalf of the swamwac Local Authorities, based at Trinity College (see information on contact details below).

Step 2 Consortium Operational Groups

Revised Consortium Operational Groups have been agreed, determined by the actions within the Consortium Working Strategic Plan and arrangements put in place for these groups to be facilitated. There will be both Standing Groups and Task and Finish Groups. Group meetings will be convened as soon as possible and will receive a brief to implement specific actions from the Interim Consortium Working Strategic Plan against a specified timescale.

Details of the agreed groups, including their remit, is available on the Consortium web site at www.swamwac.org/group summary remit and membership. Facilitators will be contacting any groups which currently do not have a planned meeting date.

Other Consortium Operational Groups will continue to meet, continuing their valuable networking and coordination work. This work is important and facilitators will maintain contact with these groups. However, until further resource becomes available, where the Group does not have a specific action within the Interim Consortium Working Strategic Plan, no specific support can be allocated.

Step 3 Organisation and Governance

As part of the implementation of the Consortium Strategic Plan the organisation, governance and scrutiny arrangements for Consortium working will be further developed. Schools are playing a vital strategic role in the development of consortium working, and governance and scrutiny arrangements via the Headteacher Group (further information below).

Contacts

Headteacher Group

Each authority is represented by 5 headteachers nominated via the usual procedures within their Authority

- 1 Secondary headteacher
- 3 Primary headteachers
- 1 headteacher to represent the Special School perspective either a headteacher of a Special School or a headteacher of a mainstream school with a significant specialist provision

The group operates at a strategic level, together with the Strategic Group,

- defining the strategic direction and scope of consortium working
- Providing a representative forum for discussion on the Consortium activities from a schools perspective
- Providing constructive challenge and support
- Providing a conduit for communication between the Consortium and the schools in each authority

The full group meets on a termly basis as a minimum, with sub groups convened as required.

We are working towards making contact details for headteachers on the Headteacher Group available on the swamwac web site. In the meantime, please telephone the Consortium Office with any query.

Consortium Office

There is a small team of professional officers and support staff coordinating and facilitating work on behalf of the swamwac Authorities, based at Trinity College , Carmarthen in the new Y LLwyfan building. The move to the new building provides the opportunity for meeting rooms and work space which groups can use when meeting to develop consortium working.

You can contact swamwac on 01267 245633 or email admin@swamwac.org

Facilitators

Contact details for the lead facilitator for each Strand of the Interim Consortium Working strategic plan are:

Strand 1: Workforce Development	Sian Lewis	admin@swamwac.org
Strand.2: Advice Support and Challenge	Lynne Walters	admin@swamwac.org
Strand 3: Governance and Organisational Development	Eileen Bellamy	admin@swamwac.org
Strategic Co-ordinator	Pauline Lewis	admin@swamwac.org

Keep in Touch

We will be sending bulletins on a regular basis to keep you in touch with consortium working progress and successes and will be further developing the swamwac web site.

We would welcome comments from you on how consortium working has helped you, or suggestions as to how it could help you in the future, or if you have any good practice that you would like to share via the web site. Please email admin@swamwac.org.