

## **ADCS Associates Network Terms of Reference**

### **1. Governance, Structure & Operations**

1.1 The Associates Network will have a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary elected by and from Associate Members, with elections organised by the ADCS Honorary Secretary normally at the same time as other elections for ADCS office-holders.

Terms of office:

The Chair in a given membership year shall be the person who served as Vice-Chair in the previous membership year.

The Chair shall serve as such for one Membership Year following his or her appointment. The outgoing Chair shall be eligible for re-election.

The Vice-Chair shall serve as such for one membership year following his or her appointment. At the end of the membership year, the Vice-Chair shall become the Chair.

The Secretary shall normally serve for three membership years. The outgoing Secretary shall be eligible for re-election

The membership year is 1 April – 31 March

1.2 The Associates Network meets up to four times a year; one meeting a year will be held in a regional location.

1.3 The network is self-sustaining, manages its own paperwork (with support with distribution and communication). The network agendas are prepared through consultation with members, and consist of three parts:

- members sharing their current work, experiences and intelligence;
- formal policy business;
- a speaker.

1.4 It will, in addition send out one news-based communication directly to Associates quarterly meaning that members will be updated and kept informed in between each Network meeting. This will also be used to inform debates and topics in preparation for the next meeting.

### **2. Relationship to ADCS, scope and the bounds of the Network's responsibility and authority**

2.1 Associate Members cannot vote at the AGM in the same way as Ordinary Members because Associate Members are not guarantors of the company ADCS Ltd. The Associates Network has a representative place on the ADCS Council of Reference. Normally the place will be held by the Chair of the

Network, however, this place cannot be held by a person who is involved in, or likely to be soon involved in any external challenge activity, regulatory activity or be in a position of making a public external judgement on the work of a local authority's children's services department in England. In this case, alternative arrangements for representation will be made for that period of involvement.

2.2 A clear distinction is drawn between the voluntary contribution of Associates to the development of ADCS and any commercial, financial or other interests Associates may have as consultants, directors of companies or shareholders, or arising from the work done for other organisations, including any work undertaken in a regulatory or improvement capacity. This will be governed by a clear protocol. Being a member of the Associates Network is not an appropriate avenue for promoting or marketing of services.

2.3 The Associates Network also has a clearly defined relationship with the Virtual Staff College (VSC). The Network does not duplicate the work of this organisation. VSC makes a significant contribution to the development of leadership and management capacity within the education and children's service community. It is uniquely placed to continue to support the ongoing development of local authorities and their partners by providing effective support which is tailored to their needs and offers best value. ADCS Associate Members may choose to also register as members of the VSC Professional Associates Network (PAN) through the VSC's own recruitment, selection and QA processes. Membership of the Network is not a guarantee of employment with the VSC or with VSC Plus Ltd. It does however mean that individual associates are part of the VSC community and will be one of a small group of children's services professionals which the College will call upon to deliver services on its behalf as and when appropriate.

2.4 The ADCS Associates Network will not undertake or compete in any way for work that is more properly undertaken by the VSC.

### **3. Guidance/Protocols**

3.1 By virtue of our membership we are signed up to the Association's values and principles. We will at all times behave with probity.

We keep separate any work we undertake or contribution we make to ADCS as an Associate Member (unpaid except when offered for expenses), and any commercial, financial or other interests we may have as consultants, directors of companies or shareholders, or arising from the work we do for other organisations. This includes any work undertaken in a regulatory or improvement capacity. It is important that both ADCS nationally and individual Associates respect this distinction and ensure that the boundary is maintained.

We ensure that we do not use our access as Associates to privileged information or individuals to obtain a commercial advantage and we respect appropriate confidentiality requirements.

We proactively identify and manage actual or potential conflicts of interest arising from our Associate membership.

Associates are sensitive to the functions they carry out in their current roles and any roles and relationships created in policy committees and regions.

The Chair (and Vice-Chair in their absence) acts as the single point of contact for all contacts and requests for contributions from ADCS or from individual Policy Committee Chairs in policy decisions. They also act as the conduit for any other requests for specific contributions, ad hoc advice, intelligence or pieces of work from any direction.

The Secretary, at the request of the Chair or Vice-Chair communicate via the ADCS Associate Members' circulation list and e-mail system and requests or opportunities with clear instructions about how to respond and will develop and maintain a skills and interests list of associate members.

#### **4. Communications and contacts, specific projects or events**

4.1 The ADCS office will support the Network by providing a specific email address to facilitate communication, a membership list and an email group through which direct communication can be channelled.

4.2 Contact with the Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary can be made via the Associates email address.

4.3 The Chair and Vice-Chair will maintain contact with policy committee and regional chairs and will facilitate communication between regional and policy committees and the Network.

4.4 At times, Associates may be asked to contribute information about their experience, skills, interests and areas of specialism to facilitate the maintenance of a database of information about what Associates can offer.

4.5 The Network may choose to undertake specific projects in its own right, or to hold particular events for particular purposes. These will be self-funded and self-sustaining.