

APPENDIX 2 - THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER



What are Regional Schools Commissioners?

Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs) are civil servants who are responsible for working with school leaders to take action in underperforming schools. Department for Education guidance explains that they act on behalf of the secretary of state for education and are supported and held to account by Headteacher Boards (HTBs), which are made up of 'outstanding' academy headteachers and sector leaders.

There are eight RSCs, each responsible for one of the eight English regions. They are appointed by the DfE on the basis of their "extensive knowledge of the education sector within their regions". They are usually experienced academy headteachers, chief executives of multi-academy trusts (MATs) or leaders in education.

What are their responsibilities?

RSCs have six main responsibilities. They are:

- Intervening with under-performing academies and free schools to ensure that high quality support is commissioned to improve them quickly
- Tackling underperformance in maintained schools by providing them with support from a strong sponsor
- Working with the regional HTBs to approve the conversion of new academies
- Approving new sponsors and the creation of MATs
- Ensuring that the pipeline of outstanding free school proposers is secure and capable of delivering great new schools
- Taking decisions on changes to academies and free schools

RSCs do not intervene in schools themselves. Instead, they commission teaching schools, National Leaders in Education, MATs and other leaders in education to improve underperforming schools.

How do RSCs make decisions?

RSCs decide whether intervention is necessary based on a school's inspection results and accountability measures for school performance. They are ultimately responsible for making decisions but decisions should be informed by the input of the HTBs.

When decisions are sensitive, raise issues of interpretation of government policy or relate to urgent safeguarding or extremism concerns, RSCs escalate them to the National Schools Commissioner or the relevant Minister.

In Plymouth

In the SW (Including Plymouth) the RSC's office is focusing on:

- Inadequate schools being brokered into strong Trusts
- Underperforming Trusts' challenge and support. E.g. Commissioning expert advisers or emergency support
- Development of MAT to MAT system capacity building
- Support for MAT networks and use of self - assessment/peer coaching. E.g. the induction of new CEOs, Chairs networks.
- MAT reviews – with all Chairs and CEOs of Trusts (prioritised by need)
- Decisions about who joins which Trusts/Trust development and growth (Headteacher Board)

- Working with LAs, the Teaching School Council and the Diocese to develop wider school improvement system locally and regionally.
- The key priorities for the RSC in the South West are:
 - Improving school leadership at all levels.
 - Raising standards in maths.
 - Improving the oracy skills of children especially in the early years.
 - Improving the performance of disadvantaged and special needs students.
 - Making sure that professional development opportunities and their outcomes are embed amongst school staff.