

Regional and National updates

Regional RE Hub Leads for Religious Education

Céline Benoit, Chair of the Regional Hub Steering Group, is delighted to announce the full team of Regional Leads that will be representing and supporting their region in the new RE Hubs project. Under the leadership of Claire Clinton, Lead Director, a fantastic team of Regional Leads will be supporting their region. Recently appointed Regional Leads are:

Regional Leads

1. Christopher Allen	East
2. Deborah Yeomans	East Midlands
3. Stacey Burman	London
4. Karenza Passmore	North East
5. Naomi Anstice	North West
6. Justine Ball	South East
7. Ed Pawson	South West
8. Jennifer Harding-Richards	Wales
9. Chris Giles	West Midlands
10. Olivia Seymour	Yorkshire & Humber

The new team provides a rich and diverse set of skills and experience within education and RE provision with extensive years of working as practitioners. They have been recruited to build relationships with advisers, dioceses, universities, SACREs, LAs, governors, MATs, teaching school hubs and more. The Regional Leads will also act as conduits between the regional providers of research, CPD, resources, places of worship and so on for the benefit of all Religion and Worldview stakeholders.

Working alongside the Regional leads is NATRE's Saima Saleh, the Local Groups & Networks Lead, ensuring that those running over 360 RE support groups from all around the country benefit from this new programme.

The steering committee, with representatives from RE organisations AREIAC, AULRE, TRS-UK, NASACRE, NATRE and REC, are dedicated to this collaborative working approach. This project is supported by a number of funders, to whom we are grateful for their investment at the start of this key infrastructure programme for all those working in and supporting Religious Education. One of the aims of the programme is to develop a well-resourced and up to date Regional Hub website facilitating information and knowledge exchange which will go live in November.

The Regional leads officially start their work in October 2022.

The Specific Aims:

- To improve communication between teachers, professional development and resource providers, and research communities
- To improve connections and interactions between different parts of the RE/R&W Eco-System
- To be an information exchange to increase accessibility for all teachers to local and regional professional development and research
- To enable teachers to teach with greater confidence through their access to the support, knowledge, training and resources available in their region.

- To create a sustainable long-term model for future provision

This will be achieved through

- An excellent communication system that works efficiently and effectively between teachers, CPD and resource providers, local/regional adviser networks and research communities which will link those who need training, resources and encouraging with those whose purpose is to provide it.
- Improved cohesion and strategic operations between different RE/R&W organisations and groups
- Improved engagement by teachers with RE/R&W local groups/networks
- Increased access to wide range of professional development locally and regionally
- Secured long term funding for this project
- Improved accountability lines for the project

Still Standing: The Future of SACREs Report

This report is an analysis of a joint REC/NASACRE project which ran from May 2020 to June 2021. The 'LAN Project' aimed to test out the recommendations of the Commission on RE regarding SACREs. For the project, funded by Culham St Gabriel's Trust, four SACREs engaged in action-research into the Commission on Religious Education's report recommendations on the future viability of SACREs. In September 2018 the Commission on RE gave a call to government and RE bodies for wide ranging reforms to the present law around RE in English schools. In section 7, their report details what is positive and important in the work of SACREs which the Commissioners would want retained in a modified form, as local area networks. The Commission report goes on in its recommendations in section 8, to suggest a number of possible changes to improve the make-up of SACREs and their work within local communities and schools. Over a one-year period, May 2020-July 2021, this local area network project has sought to investigate the proposals in recommendation 8, specifically 8b and 8e of the CoRE report, through analysis of case studies produced by four SACREs.

- The case study in Barking and Dagenham showed how a small amount of funding to a SACRE/LAN can be highly effective and impactful for teachers of RE, providing opportunities for support to all schools and connect schools with faith/belief/other support groups.
- The Bath and NE Somerset action research project demonstrated that the National Entitlement is useful for structuring a renewed Agreed Syllabus. A SACRE Agreed Syllabus review tool was created as part of this research project.
- The work in Hampshire suggested that the democratic involvement of the LA was essential in an effective and fully representative SACRE
- Richmond SACRE found that SACREs could and should review their membership within the current legal framework to ensure that it is representative. A diverse range of voices with specific roles making up a SACRE/LAN is essential if an LA is to be able to discharge its legal responsibilities. A SACRE membership tool was created as part of this research project.

The fact is that schools have changed enormously over the last 70 years, and so has religious and non-religious practice and its place in our society. Having analysed the action-research, this project has discovered that, with proper funding, section 8 recommendations from the CoRE report could be useful in ensuring that there is effective support for RE/Religion and Worldviews in schools. However, this report concludes that without a significant change in funding to SACREs the ambitious and positive recommendations from CoRE will fail and systemic change will not be possible. A SACRE cannot be expected to carry a wider remit without new funding streams being secured for their work. The RE community must come together to ensure current SACREs find their place in this new

educational system.

This report makes a number of recommendations and can be read in full here:

<https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-58-final-still-standing.pdf>

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Olivia Seymour

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