

Trigger

The Scenario

The year is 2018. England is in a jubilant mood: the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have just announced the birth of their third child, Sir Bruce Forsyth is soon to present the latest series of *Strictly*, and the national football team returned home from the World Cup victorious thanks to the impeccable management of David Beckham. Moreover, the Green Party have swept into power on the back of a landslide election victory, the final nail in the coffin of the Conservative government's campaign coming when all David Cameron managed to say in the live television debates was "I agree with Nick".

The summer of 2011 seems but a distant memory. Whilst some of your trainee protégés are still rattling around in the basement of various local authorities, most have left to set up the latest outposts of the Michael Gove Free School Academy franchise, where only the English Baccalaureate is taught. The stress and strains, trials and tribulations that you endured for the two years that you were forced to supervise those tiresome trainees took their toll, and you seized the opportunity for early retirement only months after they had qualified.

Now, however, the world seems a very different place. Over the years various people have knocked on your door, asking you to be the manager of this, the consultant of that, or the director of children's services of t'other. You have politely but firmly refused each of these offers. But the time is right for you to get back in the game; too many people have been deprived of your talents. Just as you think that it was high time you wrote an email to your old principal, the telephone rings and a meeting is arranged with a somewhat mysterious gentleman...

The Meeting

Your meeting is with the Director of the Local Authority of Rudnet. He explains that - following the employment of a group of consultants early in their development - the Rudnet Educational Psychology Service used to be the envy of the world (or at least its neighbouring authorities). However, the credit crunch and recession of the late 2000s and early 2010s led to a difficult financial situation, with large-scale cuts being made across the board. The EPS was no exception, and it became a skeleton service, dealing only with statutory casework.

The Director goes on to explain that things have begun to turn around under the new Green Party Government. It is time to restore Rudnet EPS to its former glory. Nevertheless, not being one to miss out on a chance to embrace the future, the Director believes that a new model of educational psychology practice should be pursued. This is similar to the new GP consortia system, and places the responsibility on Local Authority Children's Services to provide good outcomes for young people, families and schools -

but with a freedom to achieve these results as they wish. Thus it is expected that they will commission private companies to work on their behalf. In other words, the EPs will be employed privately by Rudnet Children's Services to deliver the educational psychology services to the local authority population.

The Opportunity

For this to work effectively, the Director recognizes that commissioning services on a piecemeal, ad hoc basis would be inappropriate. Instead, he is searching for a group of EPs to establish a private Educational Psychology Service, which Rudnet could then buy into as a whole.

The Director has heard of the outstanding and exceptional talent of the former supervisors of the so-called 'UCL 14', and would like the group to meet and subsequently come back with a proposal for what this private 'Rudnet' EPS would look like. His priority is for it to be a service fit for the demands and opportunities of the 21st Century, with a focus on a potentially revolutionary structure and organization. This is a request to design the Educational Psychology Service of the future.