

# A National Continuing Professional Development Strategy

for EDUCATION and CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
MANAGERS in SCOTLAND

# Foreword

**This Strategy has been produced by a multi-agency group on behalf of the Virtual Staff College Scotland (VSCS) and represents a serious commitment by all of these agencies to ensure that senior managers in the field of education and children's services provide high quality leadership and strategic direction for the services for which they have responsibility.**

Such a commitment reflects the need for both CPD and succession planning and builds on the other opportunities which are currently provided through VSCS.

The importance of the CPD Strategy cannot be underestimated and I commend it to you.

Alan Blackie  
Chair of VSCS

# Introduction

The planning, management and delivery of a national system of education is an extraordinarily demanding and complex task. The role of local authorities in Scotland is critical to the success of that task. Local authorities have a statutory duty:

*“to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education which is provided in schools managed by them; ... with a view to raising standards of education.” - (Standards in Scotland’s Schools etc Act 2000)*

The Scottish Parliament is ambitious for Scotland to have a world class education service and it has placed considerable responsibility on local government to achieve that goal in partnership with the Scottish Executive and with all other stakeholders.

Moreover the nature of the task is continually changing as society itself evolves. More and more will be required from the education leaders of the future and the consequences of failure will be greater. The system will need to be robust and also sensitive and, above all, have the capacity to encourage change and improvement while itself being capable of initiating or responding to change. The need for support is imperative as the challenges increase.

The link between the standard of our education system and the quality of management and leadership in local authorities has never been made more explicit. The inspection and public reporting of the performance of Local Authorities is now established in statute and the analysis of that performance is focussed on the impact which each authority has made in delivering national and local priorities for education and children’s services. The second round of inspections will focus even more clearly on outcomes and impact on children and families, staff and communities and, most importantly, the authority’s capacity to improve.

Increasing emphasis is also being placed on the provision of coherent and coordinated services. In several Councils this is leading to the creation of integrated children’s services departments which are combining major elements of council provision under a single chief officer. Even where these structural changes are not taking place the demands of partnership working – as set out in “For Scotland’s Children” - require these to be addressed in other ways.

Different Councils have different levels of capacity to support and develop senior staff. The implementation of this CPD strategy will ensure effective succession planning, and by improving access and consistency across local authorities, will benefit the individual, the organisation and the service as a whole, with a subsequent positive impact on morale and professional confidence.

In recent years there has been welcome investment in the professional review and staff development of staff in schools. It is important that equivalent attention is paid to those who lead and manage education and children's services in Local Authorities.

Finally, it is becoming increasingly apparent that preparation for senior management in the education and children's services is a critical factor for the next generation of senior and chief officers. The age profile of the current post-holders reveals that there will be a significant loss of experience to the management of the service over the next few years. Planning for succession is, therefore, a significant challenge facing most if not all Local Authorities in Scotland.

# A Coherent Strategy for Scotland

**Clearly, to be effective, any national strategy designed to address the development needs of managers within local authorities should have both theoretical coherence and practical continuity. To achieve this requires a theoretical and practical base upon which to move forward.**

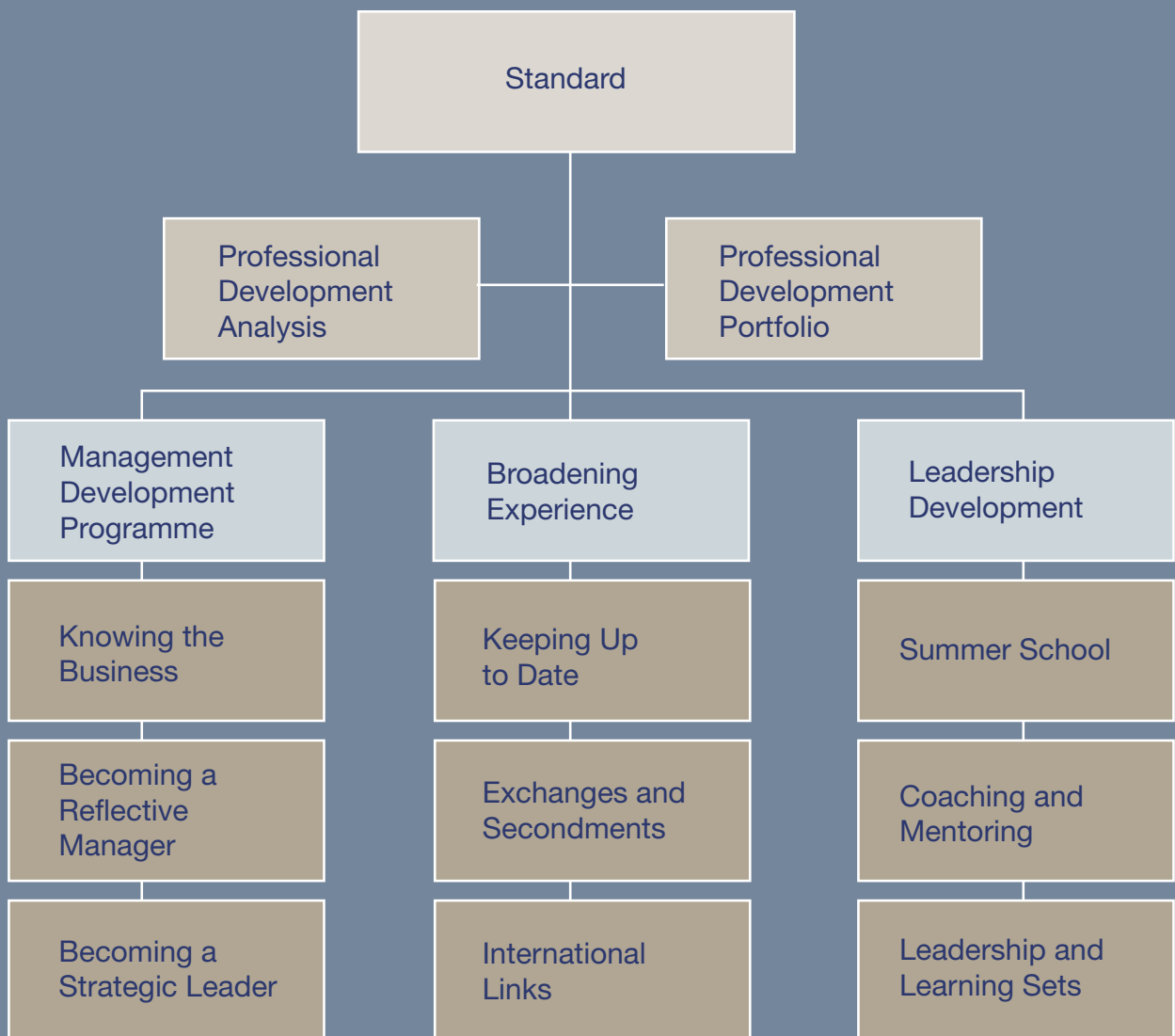
The following principles appear in most of the leading developmental theories and provide a structural basis for a systematic approach to CPD:

- 1) the central importance of both direct experience and observation of role models in emotional and social development and
- 2) the existence of periods of more intensive development in various aspects.

It would therefore seem prudent to include these features in any national strategic approach to management and leadership for professionals working in Local Authorities. With this in mind, the strategy is based upon a number of key elements or units which collectively address these principles, as illustrated in the following diagram.

The diagram illustrates the central importance of a standard for senior education and children's services managers and the need for effective review and support systems to be in place in each managing Local Authority to ensure that regular and focussed support is available to individuals to allow them to progress and improve as their career develops. The diagram then displays three vital strands which will provide a range of developmental opportunities for managers to pursue in accordance with the needs they have identified in discussion with their employer. The strands reflect the need to provide opportunities for intensive development, experience of alternative role models and up-to-date information and skills development.

# The CPD strategy



Each of these key elements will now be explained.

# Standard

**The standard for education and children’s services managers will set out the key aspects of professionalism and expertise which the Scottish education system requires of those entrusted with the leadership and management of the education service within an education authority. It will serve as a template for existing and aspiring managers to determine strengths and identify development needs.**

The standard is underpinned by elements which permeate and support the work of senior managers in education and children’s services in Scotland.

## **These elements are:**

- Professional Values and Commitments
- Professional Knowledge and Understanding
- Professional and Personal Abilities

and examples of each are provided below:

## **Values and Commitments**

- Keeping the child at the heart of the service
- The importance and merit of lifelong learning
- Communicating an ethical perspective
- Developing and communicating a vision and purpose, with a drive to improve
- Working in partnership and building communities
- Supporting self-evaluation in others by personal example and taking responsibility for personal development

## **Knowledge and Understanding**

- Principles and practice of leadership
- Quality assurance systems
- Learning and Teaching
- Context for policy development
- Principles and practice of social justice, inclusion and equality
- Planning, policy development and implementation
- Resource and budget management
- Relevant legislation
- Project management
- Change management

## **Professional and Personal Abilities**

- Demonstrate confidence and courage
- Think and act strategically
- Inspire and motivate others
- Judge wisely
- Communicate effectively
- Solve problems creatively
- Empathise
- Share leadership
- Earn trust and trust others
- Show political insight
- Maintain a positive atmosphere

It is important that the standard is subject to wide consultation and to regular review to ensure that it continues to offer a challenging vision for those who are seeking to improve the quality of their practice. The VSCS Link Officers from each of the 32 Local Authorities will continue to act as a sounding board for this purpose.

Experience shows that professional standards are used more extensively and become embedded in culture if they have clear means of assessment. VSCS, through its Link Officer Group, will develop exemplars of assessing to the standard.

Two important processes assist colleagues to identify their professional development needs and to record achievements. These are the Professional Development Analysis and the Professional Development Portfolio.

# Professional Development Analysis

**Effective performance management is an essential element for continuous professional development. Recent research conducted by the University of Strathclyde on behalf of VSCS highlighted that professional development and review schemes for officers were in place in local authorities across Scotland but that the quality of implementation of these schemes varied considerably. The notion of audit is a critical element of good performance management in order that an individual's targets are linked to those of the organisation. This way of working is not always as fully developed as might be expected. The VSCS is committed to supporting effective performance management and has made available a Professional Development Analysis pack It guides users through a rigorous process of audit including 360° review and support.**

The VSCS will continue to promote the development of sound performance management in local authorities. By using the Standard it is expected that the quality of the professional dialogue between staff and their line managers will be improved. The Standard will assist the dialogue by providing a common language and structure for purposeful review.

# Professional Development Portfolio

**One mark of a professional is the ability to maintain and enhance professional competences throughout a career. Many professions now require their members to maintain a portfolio as a condition of membership of relevant professional bodies.**

A professional development portfolio (PDP) is intended to support CPD activities and processes through the maintenance of a record of goals, growth and achievement over time. A key feature of a PDP is that the individual takes personal responsibility for their own professional development. The PDP itself is the product of, and cannot be separated from, the reflection and evaluation processes required to produce it.

VSCS has produced a portfolio for use by ADES members which has been designed to be flexible and open-ended. The portfolio process is considered to be a fundamental and essential component of this strategy.

It is recognised that some Councils will have corporate policies applying to the maintenance of a professional development portfolio. However, where these are absent, the VSCS portfolio is available for use in Education and Children's Services Departments. The portfolio will complement existing performance management arrangements and will be a portable tool which can accompany colleagues throughout their career.

**There are three strands of activities supported by the VSCS to contribute to the professional development of education and children's services managers:**

- Management Development Programme
- Broadening Experience
- Leadership Development

# Management Development Programme

**The Management Development Programme is a series of three accredited modules designed to support career development at key stages:**

- Induction:                   Knowing the Business
- Reflection:                 Becoming a Reflective Manager
- Direction:                  Becoming a Strategic Leader

At the induction stage newly appointed staff are provided with opportunities to get to know the business of educational management in a Local Authority setting. This will include induction to their own Council's policy and structure but also opportunities to learn about the national context and the links between local and national government in education leadership.

Beyond this initial stage the development of the reflective manager will be the priority. As individuals become more confident in their roles and the basic building blocks are in place it is important that opportunities are provided to allow colleagues to review and evaluate their work and be able to contrast and compare their experience with those of colleagues in other places both nationally and internationally. With experience and career progression comes the opportunity to influence strategic direction within an authority and the reflective manager will have opportunities to plan and prioritise the next stage of their development.

Each of these modules will offer optional accreditation through a University partner in Scotland.

# Broadening Experience

The opportunities to broaden experience are increasingly important as colleagues take up responsibilities for managing services for which they have had no previous direct experience. The continuing and rapid pace of change requires that regular opportunities are provided to permit colleagues to keep up to date with developments in their areas of responsibility and also beyond their substantive post.

**These opportunities which will be brokered by VSCS include:**

- Inter and intra authority job exchanges
- Secondments to the Scottish Executive and national bodies
- Seminar programme on areas of current concern and interest

An annual programme of seminars and conferences will be organised by VSCS in partnership with ADES standing committees to ensure that opportunities are available for colleagues to keep knowledge and skills up to date

VSCS Knowhow, which is an online management development database, will provide ready access to information and ideas about management theory and practice as well as access to ADES papers and a forum for networking.

VSCS through its involvement with VSC in the rest of the UK will assist in promoting international exchange of best practice in the field of education and children's services management.

# Leadership Development

**The VSCS will provide a range of opportunities to ensure that experienced managers can continue to develop skills and knowledge and also encounter alternative approaches and ideas which challenge the status quo.**

An annual residential summer school will be offered to senior managers which will provide an opportunity to encounter alternative approaches to educational management and also draw on experience and expertise from outside of the educational domain and also the public sector. The summer school will normally seek to cater for senior colleagues who have the potential to become chief officers

The development and refreshment of those who are leading the service is equally important. Residential workshops for chief officers will be offered for small groups. These will be based on the principles of co-coaching and will provide opportunities for reflection, refreshment and re-calibration.

Learning sets will be created to allow focussed, single theme, peer group interaction in contexts where the frank exchange of current challenges facing senior managers and the consideration of possible solutions is facilitated by skilled practitioners from the field. These opportunities will be characterised by openness and sharing.

A mentoring and coaching scheme will be administered by the VSCS for senior officers. This voluntary scheme will offer opportunities for colleagues to mentor or be mentored by contemporaries working at a similar level either in local government or in other public services.

# Conclusion

**This strategy will be monitored by the Board of Virtual Staff College Scotland and will be the subject of reports to the membership of ADES at its annual conference.**

In order that the strategy is continually tested to ensure it is relevant to the needs of ADES members, focus groups will be invited to meet and comment on aspects of the strategy.

A development plan will be created to ensure that each of the main elements of the strategy is translated into effective provision to support the professional development of education and children's services managers.

# VSCS CPD Strategy Working Group

Margaret Alcorn, National CPD Coordinator

Alan Blackie, Director of Education and Children's Services, East Lothian Council and Chair of Virtual Staff College Scotland (Chair of the working group)

Isobel Calder, Head of Professional Development Unit University of Strathclyde (Resigned August 2005)

John Cassidy, Head of Learning Community, South Lanarkshire Council

John Christie, Director, Virtual Staff College Scotland

Clifford Cooke, Quality Improvement Officer, Highland Council

Anton Florek, Chief Executive, Virtual Staff College and VSCS Board member

Anne Hughes, Vice Dean Academic, University of Strathclyde School of Education (Joined August 2005)

Martin Jack, Head of Professional Development, Learning and Teaching Scotland

Sandra Love, Education Officer Quality Development, North Lanarkshire Council and VSCS Board member

Iain MacRobert, HM Assistant Chief Inspector, HM Inspectorate of Education

