

## SERVICE UPDATE

<b><u>Name of Service:</u></b>	Integrated Children and Family Services
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	25 June 2018
<b><u>Title of Update:</u></b>	Integrated Children & Family Services: Professional Development Framework
<b><u>Report Author:</u></b>	David Bliss & Eleanor Sheppard
<b><u>Contact Details:</u></b>	<a href="mailto:Esheppard@aberdeencity.gov.uk">Esheppard@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a> 01224 522707

### **UPDATE:**

Staff within Integrated Children & Family Services are its largest resource. Within Aberdeen City Council, there are over 2000 staff registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) and over 250 Children's Social Work staff and up to 300 Early Years Practitioners registered with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and are required to meet the professional standards set out by these national bodies.

We have an obligation to support the professional development of staff to meet the professional standards as this investment ensures the safe delivery of services and enables staff to develop quality professional practice. In addition to the standards set out by the GTCS and the SSSC all staff within Integrated Children and Family Services are also subject to the Council's Code of Conduct for all employees as well as its performance management arrangements, including line management support and an annual Performance, Review & Development appraisal.

### **General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)**

All Teachers are subject to the registration requirements of the GTCS. The Standards are agreed nationally and provide a baseline standard of competence in terms of the professional qualities and capabilities expected at different stages of a teaching career. They also provide a framework for the professional development of teachers throughout their career. The standards are subtly different in order to encourage aspiration and continued professional development.

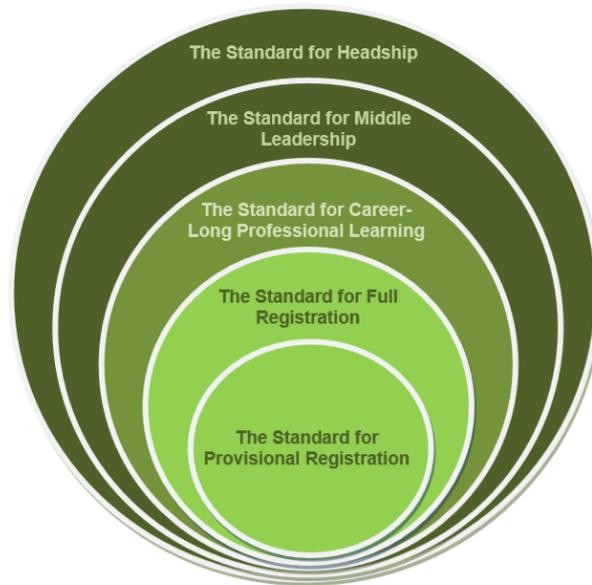
The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) introduced the current suite of Professional Standards in August 2013. These are:

The Standard for Provisional Registration - for student teachers.

The Standard for Full Registration - for early career/probationary teachers.

The Standard for Career Long Professional Learning - for experienced classroom practitioners.

- **The Standard for Middle Leadership** - for teachers who aspire to, or are in, a promoted post.
- **The Standard for Headship** - Head Teachers.



As illustrated by the diagram, the Standards are linked and interconnected with the same core values integral and consistent across all Standards irrespective of the stage of a teacher's career. Each Standard also provides detailed information about the Professional Knowledge, Understanding, Skills and Abilities that a teacher should demonstrate.

Newly qualified teachers must demonstrate the Standard for Provisional Registration before beginning a probationary year in a school. Throughout the probationary year the teacher must demonstrate that their practice meets the expectations of The Standard for full Registration in order to be fully registered with the GTCS and able to secure employment as a teacher. As a career progresses a teacher must continue to demonstrate increasing competence in line with the standards by maintaining Professional Learning Records which evidence their meeting of The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning or the Standard for Leadership and Management. Professional Learning Records inform discussion at each yearly Professional Review with teachers being guided to reflect on their practice against the relevant standards and identify any professional learning required over the following year. They must also consider the impact of professional learning undertaken on practice. These yearly Professional Reviews and reflections inform the five yearly Professional Update which is submitted to the GTCS and is a condition of ongoing registration with GTCS.

Teachers who do not engage with the professional update 'sign off' may have their registration status altered from Full to Associate status meaning that they are unable to teach a class of pupils. In turn, teachers who fail to meet the GTCS Standard for Registration may be subject to the local authority disciplinary process and, as the regulatory body, GTCS have a Fitness to Teach process which will investigate issues of professional mis-conduct and can result in a teacher being removed from the register.

In 2017/18, after five years in use, the GTCS have fulfilled their commitment to review the Professional Standards. This 'National Conversation' with relevant stakeholders, is an opportunity to not only reflect on how the Standards have

impacted upon the teaching profession and to consider how they can be improved, but also to refresh the suite of Professional Standards to ensure that they remain relevant to the profession. International feedback via Improving Schools in Scotland: An OECD Perspective (2015) said:

"In Scotland, the desired characteristics and qualities of human capital are enshrined in an inspiring set of professional standards that, following revision after TSF, are based on core values of social justice, integrity, trust and respect, and professional commitment through undertaking processes of professional enquiry." (p126)

### **Approach to meeting the professional learning needs of teaching staff**

All teachers in schools agree a school working time agreement in August. This negotiated agreement clarifies how the 35 hours contracted hours of each teacher will be used. It is nationally agreed that 5 hours per week will be used for collegiate activities of benefit to the teacher and school and some of this time can be used to undertake a wide range of Professional Learning opportunities, these collegiate opportunities supplement the Professional Learning offered on in-service days and throughout the year. In addition all teaching staff must undertake 35 hours of Professional Learning on a yearly basis, the impact of which is recorded against the relevant Standard in the Professional Learning Record.

Professional Learning can take many forms and teachers are encouraged to choose an approach best suited to their learning style. This can include professional reading, undertaking action research in their own school, attending events to support understanding standards, team teaching, observing others or accessing a range of web-based tools. A suite of face to face Professional Learning is provided to support the professional development of teachers in line with the Standards. The current local authority offer includes both internal and external training which is based on a Training Needs Analysis and also on a demand-led basis throughout the year. The impact of professional learning on practice informs future planning. The local authority offer is varied and wide ranging and includes:

**The Standard for Provisional Registration:** Student teachers are placed in schools and a mentor is provided. A link is built with our partner Higher Educational Institution to ensure the smooth transition from student teacher to probationer.

**The Standard for Full Registration:** Probationer teachers are supported through a year-long induction programme to enable them to reach full registration, and ongoing support is provided in their early careers after their probationary period through a skilled central officer.

**The Standard for Career-Long Professional Learning:** Individuals have access to a wide range of professional learning opportunities to establish and maintaining a highly skilled, well-motivated workforce. This includes opportunities to develop the leadership skills required to be in a position to seek a promoted post which assists succession planning. A joint bid with the University of Aberdeen is submitted for Scottish Government funding on an annual basis to supplement the internal central budget. This bid provides the funding required to enrich the offer and includes access to Masters Level learning in Coaching and Mentoring and Middle Level Leadership.

**The Standards for Middle Leadership and Headship programmes** are delivered by working with the internal and external partners. A leadership development framework is in place to guide staff through three progressive levels of leadership:

Early Leadership, Middle Leadership and Senior Leadership. A range of peer support groups led by more experienced staff, take place once a month to enable colleagues to support each other on leadership topics pertinent to them. Links with external partners allow for a more formal learning environment which is the progression route to more senior leadership roles. The training is also carried out in collaboration with a range of partners with an example of this being 'Into Headship', the mandatory qualification required for staff who wish to take up a post as a Head Teacher. This is delivered in partnership with SCEL, University of Aberdeen and the local authority Co-ordinator.

### **Support staff in Schools**

Staff working schools who are not covered by the GTCS Professional Standards (eg. Pupil Support Assistants, technicians etc.) have access to a range of professional learning informed by the yearly Training Needs Analysis. This is provided by a range of internal and external providers. In addition there are a range of mandatory Health and Safety training requirements such as Moving and Handling, First Aid, and Workshop Machinery training which are available to all staff in schools.

### **Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)**

All Children's Social Services Workers, including Early Years Practitioners and those working in early years setting who are not covered by GTCS registration, are subject to the registration requirements of the SSSC. This means that they have to ensure that their practice meets the standards of professional conduct and practice set out in the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers and that no action or omission on their part harms the wellbeing of people who use services. Aberdeen City Council and the SSSC may take action if registered social service workers fail to meet the standards in the Code.

The SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers requires them to:

- protect and promote the rights and interests of people who use services and carers;
- create and maintain the trust and confidence of people who use services and carers;
- promote the independence of people who use services while protecting them, as far as possible, from danger and harm;
- respect the rights of people who use services, while striving to make sure that their behaviour does not harm themselves or other people;
- uphold public trust and confidence in social services; and
- be accountable for the quality of their work and to take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills.

## **Approach to meeting the professional learning needs of social workers**

To help them meet these Standards, Children's Social Work has aimed to develop a supportive culture. For example, the service has developed a clear mission statement which is to:

*"To protect children from significant harm and where possible to support their family to care for them. For those children who cannot be kept safe within their family to provide them high quality care."*

In turn, its aims are to:

- provide children and families with meaningful support, building on their strengths helping them to care for their children.
- treat people with dignity, respect and empathy at all times.
- work to reducing inequalities for children and their families who experience, often multi-layers of disadvantage.
- when it is not safe for children to be cared for by their families we will work swiftly and effectively to protect them whilst being open and transparent with families with their collaboration wherever possible.
- support the continuous development of a credible, knowledgeable and professional workforce.
- deliver on our statutory responsibilities keeping our interventions with families to a minimum.

These aims are directly aligned to the objectives of the Target Operating Model.

With the implementation of Reclaiming Social Work over recent years has been a significant investment in Systemic Practice training for frontline Children's Social Workers and their managers. This has been the cornerstone of the service's professional development framework and has seen around 200 staff complete at least a short course in systemic practice with many completing a professionally accredited certificate. This training is not only leading to improved outcomes for service users but is also contributing directly to the worker's ability to meet the standards outlined above.

Following the review of residential care for children, a similar investment was made in developing the workforce within the city's Children's Homes. This has seen an emphasis on promoting relational based practice. To do this we have rolled out training in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) to all our residential childcare staff, a small number of whom are undertaking advanced level qualification in DDP. In addition, across the residential service there are monthly themed action learning sets as well as regular practice consolidation in relation to newly acquired skills.

As the Systemic Practice training programme has been largely completed the service is now committed to delivering a more comprehensive professional development framework in line with its mission statement and aims, as outlined above. This will include both internal and external learning and development opportunities, all of which will help staff and the service meet the required standards.

**Under-graduate and post-graduate study:** The service has recommenced sponsorship of staff to attend the BA (Hons) in Social Work course and BA in

Residential Social Work at RGU in Aberdeen and also the Post-Graduate Certificate in Child Protection at Stirling University. Ten staff have been funded this year to undertake these courses, who on completing their studies will be committed to working for the service for two years.

**Practice development programme:** The service provides regular in-house training which is based on a Training Needs Analysis, which includes induction and core skills training for all staff new to the organisation; skills development for less experienced staff; and further knowledge development for those who are more experienced. Over and above this programme, there are two half day practice improvement sessions per year, which focus on a particular area such as new legislation, as well as an annual conference which is open to all staff and includes keynote speakers and opportunities to showcase good practice within the service. All practice development opportunities are published on a Training Calendar to which all staff have access. Staff can also access 65 social work specific on-line courses through the North East Learning Co-operative and through Social Services Knowledge Scotland they have free access to both on-line and physical university standard resources.

**Newly qualified support structure / mentoring:** In anticipation of the requirement to provide a supported first year in practice for newly qualified social workers, the service has introduced a tailored training programme of 144 hours support to these workers. This includes practical application of social work theories, legislation and policy. In addition, newly qualified staff have access to at least 18 hours of mentoring from experienced staff and to the overall practice development programme outlined above.

**Staff development:** Whilst the practice development programme is about developing specific practice skills, the service is also committed to developing individual's careers. This is seen as important in the context of both encouraging personal ambition and ensuring sustainability of the service. Consequently, it has created trainee opportunities for aspiring Consultant Social Workers and Residential Practitioners and to offer career counselling through the Learning & Development Team. In addition all G15 and G16 staff are required to offer mentoring or training as both part of their leadership and as role models for others to aspire to.

**Learning organisation:** In partnership with RGU, Children's Social Work provides learning opportunities for students in training throughout the service. It also encourages existing staff to develop their own skills and experience by studying towards a Practice Learning Qualification (PLQ) which enables them to support and mentor the student on placement in conjunction with staff from RGU. Providing student placements is also a key part of the service's recruitment strategy.

### **Approach to meeting the professional learning needs of early years practitioners**

The Early Years' Service delivers comprehensive professional development opportunities to support the growth and development of the workforce. The programme is aligned to the SSSC Code of Practice, the new Health and Social Care Standards and the How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare Quality Framework. This includes both internal and external learning and development opportunities, all of which help staff and the service meet the required standards. Approaches are determined following a yearly training needs analysis and can take many forms including:

**Under-graduate study:** The service provides funding for staff to undertake the BA in Childhood Practice and SVQ Social Services (Children and Young People) at SCQF Level 6 & 7.

**Practice development programme:** The service provides regular in-house training which is based on a Training Needs Analysis, which includes induction and core skills training for all staff new to the sector; skills development for less experienced staff; and further knowledge development for those who are more experienced. All practice development opportunities are published in the Aberdeen City Early Learning and Childcare Training Programme to which all staff have access. The Training Programme also includes details of learning opportunities provided by third sector and private sector training providers across the city to enable staff to access opportunities most suited to their individual development needs.

**Early Learning and Childcare Academy:** In anticipation of the requirement to provide additional workforce in connection with the expansion of Early Learning and Childcare, the Early Years' Service have worked together with colleagues from Aberdeenshire and Moray to launch the Early Learning and Childcare Academy. This comprises training providers from across Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils. It has collaborated to agree a mission statement, vision and purpose and has developed terms of reference to support collaborative working. A detailed Action Plan and associated workstreams have been agreed with each local authority leading one of these. The Academy will further widen the professional learning offer available to current and future practitioners.

### **The role of the local authority**

As an employer of teachers, early years' practitioners and social workers, Aberdeen City Council has responsibilities. For example, the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Employers sets out responsibilities for employers of social service workers, including supporting their workers to meet the standards set out in the Code for Social Service Workers. The Care Inspectorate also takes both Codes of Practice into account during the inspection of services and may take action to support improvement or require change if employers fail to meet the required standards set out in the Codes. Inspections by Education Scotland take account of the Professional Standards and the "How Good Is Our?" quality framework. The Local Authority is the guarantor of the quality of education and has an obligation to provide the professional learning necessary to improve the quality of services. It is important that the Local Authority meets its obligations in keeping with the relevant professional standards in order to support the development of a high quality workforce and deliver high quality services for our children and young people.

### **Corporate Professional Learning**

In addition to its specific obligations above, staff within Integrated Children & Family Services are supported to develop a range of skills through access to the wider training programme within Aberdeen City Council. This programme is organised through the Organisational Development function of the Resources Directorate.

### **The provision of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency training to support policy**

A range of multi-agency training is in place to support national and local policy. This includes access to multi-agency training organised through the Child Protection

Committee, or under the GIRFEC programme commissioned from and delivered by Aberlour Futures. Multi-agency training provides an invaluable opportunity to consider the challenge and opportunities of partnership working and support best partnership practice as we work to support vulnerable children and families.

### **Proposed Next Steps**

All training provided is designed to support staff to reach and exceed the Standards expected of them and it is important that best practice shown across the current education, early years and social work teams is captured and used to inform all future programmes. Opportunities for more integrated Professional Learning will be explored over the coming months whilst ensuring that all practitioners continue to have opportunities to work to the standards expected of their profession.

Continuing to invest in the professional development of the workforce is a clear priority if the service is to continue to meet its own obligations as an employer of both registered teachers and social services workers. It is also crucial in encouraging staff to join the organisation and countering the challenges that continue to exist in recruiting staff in the north east of Scotland.