

## **Professional Learning Strategy for teachers employed by Shetland Islands Council**

**Operational Date: December 2020**

**Review Date: December 2022**

### **Introduction**

Effective professional learning engages and empowers teachers to stimulate their thinking and professional knowledge in order to ensure that their practice is critically informed, reflective and up to date. Shetland Islands Council is committed to ensuring that a wide range of high-quality, sustained professional learning experiences are supported so that teachers can provide high quality teaching and learning experiences which enable learners to achieve their best.

‘Continuing professional learning is fully recognised as an essential element within Children’s Services to ensure outstanding outcomes for all. It enables the continuing development of knowledge and skills for all staff at all stages in their career’ (Operational guidelines for PRD, 2020)

Professional review and development is the process whereby the development and training needs of all teaching staff are identified and agreed in relation to their current practice, the requirements of the school or authority improvement plan, the wider and longer term needs of the education service, and national priorities (Handbook for Teachers and Manager on Professional Review and Development Professional Update, 2020).

It is vital that engagement with the Professional Standards, career-long professional learning (CLPL) guidance and the Framework for Educational Leadership is underpinned by effective Professional Review and Development (PRD) and GTCS Professional Update processes.

This strategy links to the following Shetland Islands Council policies/guidelines:

- Operational Guidelines for Professional Review and Development of Teaching staff (2020)
- School Improvement Framework (2016)

### **National and Local Drivers**

This strategy recognises the requirement for all registered teachers to meet the GTCS Professional Update requirements.

There is an expectation under the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education that local authorities will support teachers to access high quality professional learning opportunities. Within the National Improvement Framework the current key priorities are:

## National Improvement Framework



These key priorities will be supported by a number of drivers for improvement

- Teacher Professionalism
- Assessment of children's progress
- Performance Information
- School Improvement
- Parental Engagement
- School Leadership

In addition to the National Improvement Framework this strategy will also take into account the Education Reform – Joint Agreement, 2018.

The Professional Learning Strategy for Teachers 2016 was created in the context of Shetland Islands Council, Children's Services Department. The Quality Improvement Framework has now been overtaken by the National Improvement Frameworks, first produced in 2016 and this strategy has been reviewed in that context.

This Professional Learning strategy aligns with the National Improvement Framework priorities and drivers, the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Plan, the Shetland Islands Council National Improvement Framework Plan and the Shetland Islands Council Schools and Quality Improvement Service Plan, all of which are produced annually.

Shetland Islands Council will:

- Support opportunities for all teachers to enhance their professionalism no matter what their sector, subject or location.
- Support staff to achieve the Standard for Headship.
- Promote the Framework for Educational Leadership for all teachers no matter what their sector, subject or location.
- Support opportunities for professional learning at SCQF Level 11 (Masters).
- Continue to strengthen the evaluation of professional learning in relation to the impact on children’s learning and progress.

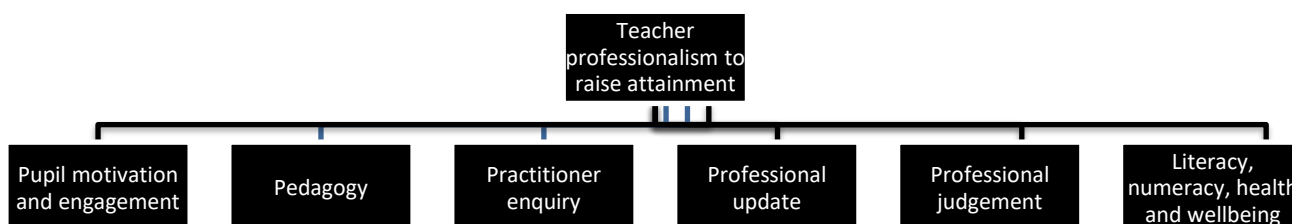
**Key objectives for Professional Learning**

Our key objectives for Professional Learning are:

- To improve attainment and achievement for children and young people
- To support ongoing development of teachers’ knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities
- To include genuine engagement in self-evaluation
- To include learning from effective and innovative practice and research
- To bring about transformational change
- To develop enquiring professionals who critically examine attitudes and beliefs, explore and challenge assumptions and engage with new and emerging ideas about learning and teaching
- To develop champions across different themes such a digital skills, within schools, clusters and individual establishments
- To develop a career-long commitment which brings maximum benefit to the practitioners themselves, to children and young people as learners, to their colleagues, as well as the impact on their individual school and across the wider learning community.

**Teacher Professionalism**

‘Teacher professionalism demonstrates the overall quality of the teaching workforce in Scotland and the impact of their professional learning on children’s progress and achievement’ (National Improvement Framework). Support will be provided or teacher professionalism as shown in the diagram below.



## Evaluation of Impact

‘Evaluation of impact is integral to the process of high quality professional learning’ (Education Scotland).

These are the key approaches/guiding principles for effective evaluation of impact (Education Scotland):

- The core focus should be on linking the planning and evaluation of professional learning to improvements in teaching and learning and ultimately improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Planning for professional learning and its evaluation should be integral to teacher and school self-evaluation.
- Decisions about what to evaluate, when and how to go about it should be made at the outset of the professional learning activity.
- Evaluation should go beyond the activity itself to evaluate the extent of teacher’s professional learning, how this supports improvements at individual, school and system level and the effect on children and young people’s learning, progress and achievement.
- The timescale for impact evaluation should be based on projections of when impact will occur across the short, medium and long term. This should allow for sufficient time for teachers to adapt new ideas and practices and for learning outcomes to become evident. Formative evaluation at agreed stages should provide information that will strengthen or improve longer term professional learning activities.
- Professional learning can have unintended impact so information should be gathered from a broad range of sources to give a complete picture of impact. Sources of information and evidence should provide opportunities for corroboration.
- Evaluation methods should be tailored to the activities and experiences.
- For selected professional learning activities the evaluation of impact should include value for money assessment.
- Evaluative practices and processes should be regularly assessed to ensure they are and continue to be effective and proportionate

Shetland Islands Council are committed to evaluating the impact of this strategy through the Professional Review and Development Process, Quality Assurance visits, evaluations, surveys and other methods as appropriate.

## Professional Learning Working Group

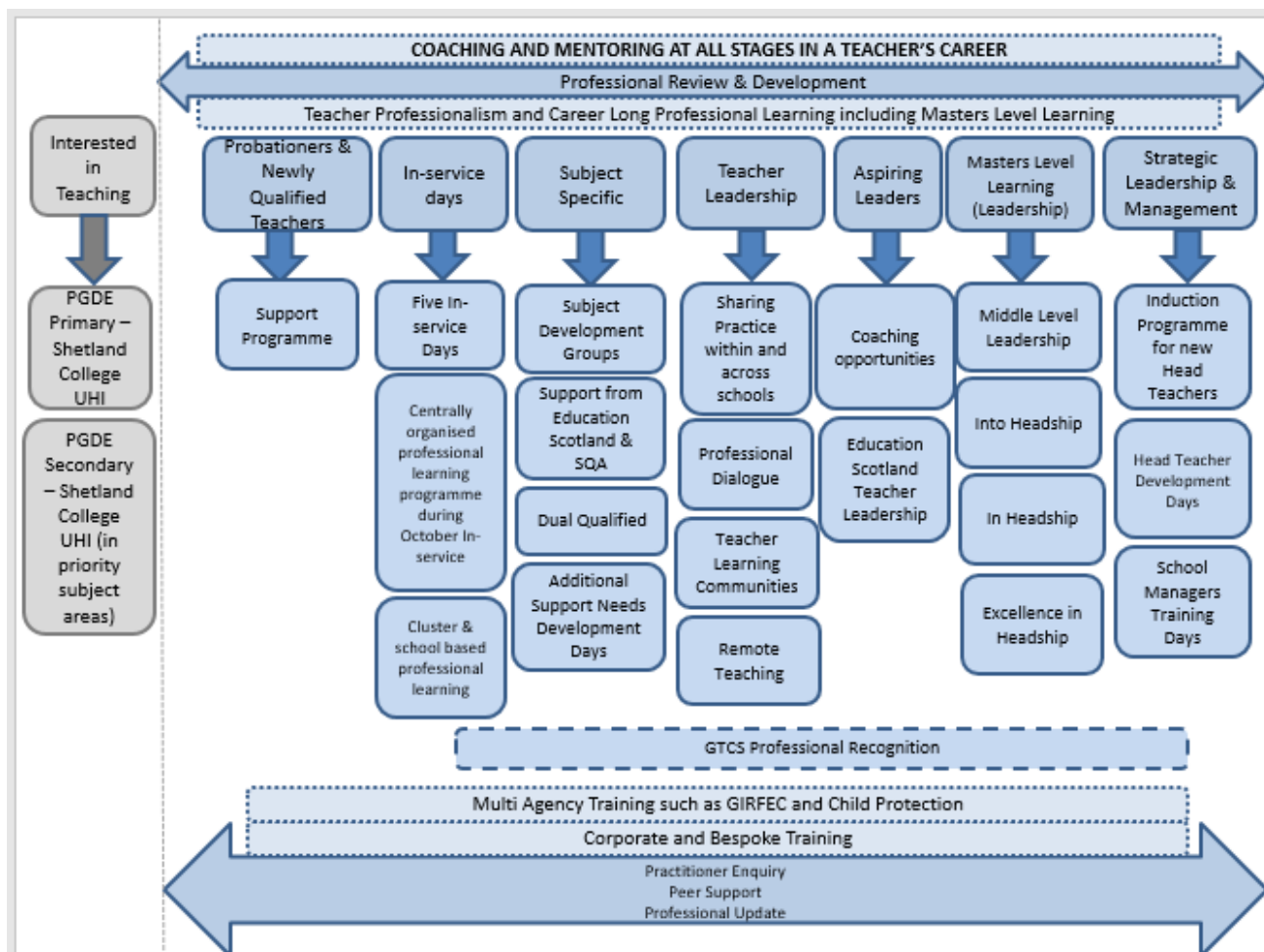
The Professional Learning Working Group comprises Quality Improvement Officers, Head Teachers, Depute Head Teachers, Principal Teachers and class teachers and is chaired by the Workforce Development Advisor, Workforce Development. The group meets at least once a term to look at

approaches to professional learning and develop a programme for the school in-service days with a particular focus on October in-service. The remit of the group is:

- To establish a Professional Learning programme for School In-service days
- To plan different approaches to professional learning
- To plan options for sharing practice locally
- To plan approaches for Leadership Development

### The Professional Learning Pathway

The diagram below shows ongoing priorities such as Professional Review & Development, Career Long Professional Development and Professional Update. It also shows the different pathways available to teaching staff. This strategy will explain these in more detail. Appendix 1: Professional Learning Handbook provides more detail on the processes which support the Professional Learning Strategy. For those interested in teaching Shetland Islands Council works in partnership with Shetland College UHI to offer the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) primary programme and the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Secondary programme (in priority subject areas) every year. Following successful completion of the PGDE programme (Shetland College UHI) students are guaranteed a probationer place in Shetland.



### **Overarching emphasis on Coaching and Mentoring, Peer Support and Practitioner enquiry**

‘Whether or not a teacher has direct responsibility for mentoring of student teachers and probationers at any particular time, every teacher will be engaged in professional dialogue with peers. Mentoring and coaching skills enable much more effective dialogue and learning to take place within groups of teachers and with stakeholders and partners’ *Teaching Scotland’s Future, Graham Donaldson, Scottish Government, 2010, pg73*

Practitioner enquiry is an area of professional learning which was highlighted in Teaching Scotland’s Future (Donaldson, 2011) as a way forward to support teachers to become more engaged with research to support their own learning and ultimately pupil experiences (The General Teaching Council for Scotland).

Shetland Islands Council recognises the importance of coaching and mentoring, peer support and practitioner enquiry in order to encourage professionals to manage their own learning, maximise their potential, develop their skills and improve their performance.

Shetland Islands Council will:

- Encourage all teachers to undertake an Introduction to Coaching course
- Encourage all teachers in promoted posts, all aspiring leaders and all probationer mentors to undertake courses at relevant levels in Coaching and Mentoring
- Raise awareness of the principles and aims of practitioner enquiry
- Encourage practitioner enquiry to become an integral aspect of the day to day practice of teachers

### **PGDE Primary/PGDE Secondary**

Applications for the PGDE Primary and PGDE Secondary programmes are accepted through Shetland College UHI. The interviews are also organised through the college. Programmes will begin in August each year.

### **PROBATIONERS & NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS**

Shetland Islands Council will provide all newly qualified teachers who are on the GTCS programme for probationers with a mentor during their probationer year. There will be a support programme available for probationers which will typically include:

- Practitioner Enquiry
- Child Protection
- Using GLOW/ICT in the classroom
- Active Schools
- Inclusion, Equality and Emotional Wellbeing
- GIRFEC

- Literacy, Numeracy and Health & Wellbeing Across Learning
- Outdoor Learning
- Approaches to Nurture
- Learning for Sustainability
- Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)
- Cooperative Learning
- Children's Rights
- Planning Formats and Moderation
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Parent Involvement and Engagement
- GTCS – Use of Social Media and GTCS Code of Professionalism and Conduct
- Nurture
- 1+2 Modern Foreign Language
- Remote Teaching and Learning

There will also be a commitment to ensuring that University partnerships continue to be strengthened in order to develop a clear continuum from teacher education into the probationer year. Where appropriate there will be opportunities for newly qualified teachers to undertake action research at Masters Level.

### **IN-SERVICE DAYS**

There are five in-service days for school staff each year. During October in-service (2 days) there will be a centrally organised programme of high quality professional learning opportunities that staff are encouraged to select and attend. The Professional Learning Working Group will set the priorities and theme for the October in-service programme each year. The group welcomes ideas from Head Teachers or individuals on what they would like to see at in-service regarding professional learning. In addition, evaluation of in-service training will be sought from those attending the training. When looking at priorities and the theme careful consideration will be given to the following:

- Shetland Islands Council Our Plan 2016-2020
- The annual Service Plan for Schools and Quality Improvement
- National Improvement Framework
- Annual Shetland Islands Council National Improvement Framework Plan
- Scottish Attainment Challenge
- Other local and national priorities as they arise
- Feedback from Professional Review and Development Meetings

The in-service days outwith October will offer a small programme of professional learning (i.e. Child Protection and First Aid). This strategy specifically encourages schools and clusters of schools professional learning for the in-service days outwith October. One full in-service day in January is focussed on moderation activities, as a minimum, as per the Strategy for Tracking, Monitoring and

Moderation in the Broad General Education in Shetland's Schools). 'Effective professional learning takes place when teachers work with others to share practice and learning' (Education Scotland). Individual schools and clusters of schools are encouraged to develop their own programme of professional learning, embedded in their school improvement plans, taking into consideration the main elements of collaborative learning which are:

- working collaboratively to support each other in changing practice
- sharing ideas and experiences through professional dialogue
- seeking constructive feedback on practice and the impact on pupil learning
- providing constructive feedback on practice and the impact on pupil learning

## **SUBJECT SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

'Teachers should have access to relevant high quality Continuing Professional Development for their subject and other specialist responsibilities' (Teaching Scotland's Future).

The processes and forms for requesting professional learning can be found on the Workforce Development intranet page.

### **1) Subject Development Groups**

The responsibility of all secondary teachers is to raise standards of attainment over time for all of the secondary aged pupils that they teach. Clearly each teacher has a part to play in the development of coursework for their subject at a school level. However, there are benefits of dialogue between teachers of the same subject from all schools across Shetland. The forum for this is at a Subject Development Group, which is, in effect, "a community of professional practice".

There are subject development groups for each subject area offered in Shetland's secondary curriculum. Each Subject Development Group will have a self-appointed chairperson. Subject development groups will support teachers in their continuous drive to improve attainment and work towards local and national development priorities.

Priority areas for subject development groups could include:

- SQA Feedback (including Nominees and Markers)
- Feedback from any training attended
- Moderation activity
- Processes for planning, monitoring and tracking using advice from the local strategy;
- Benchmarks
- Analysis of subject qualification results
- Curriculum Development
- Remote Teaching and Learning
- Raising attainment and closing the attainment gap
- Any other relevant activity



Subject Development Groups should refer to the Subject Development Group Position Paper 2017 for guidance on the principles of the groups.

Shetland Islands Council will:

- Offer support to schools to ensure these meetings can happen, including on digital platforms.
- Offer Subject Development Group chair people the opportunity to attend the Co-operative Meetings course.
- Provide a Link Education Officer for each Subject Development Group, who will meet periodically with the chair.

## **2) Support from SQA and Education Scotland**

Shetland Islands Council will continue to monitor and prioritise subject support offered from SQA, Education Scotland and other national bodies. If staff are attending professional learning events on the mainland there is an expectation that they will disseminate the information from the event across schools in Shetland and where appropriate assist with ensuring consistent application of SQA standards across Shetland. Shetland Islands Council continues to support SQA external verification duties. Subject Development Group nominees are supported to attend Understanding Standards events for their subject area and disseminate this information to their Subject Development Group and where appropriate lead moderation activities.

## **3) Dual Qualified**

Staff will be supported to become dual qualified in subject areas that are hard to fill or require careful succession planning. Each instance or request will be looked at on a case by case basis and consideration will be given to whether a contribution of up to £500 towards the cost of the course will be made. The priority subject areas will be agreed each year.

More information on adding additional subjects to an individual's registration can be found on the GTCS website.

## **4) Additional Support Needs**

There will be ongoing additional support needs professional learning. This will include:

- Additional Support Needs Development Days
- Management of Actual and Potential Aggression
- Challenging Behaviour
- Moving and Handling
- Autism
- Nurture
- Emotional Wellbeing

- Other priority areas as agreed

## **MODERATION**

Moderation activity will continue to be driven by the Tracking, Monitoring and Moderation Strategy, 2017. An effective moderation process can deliver twin professional learning opportunities simultaneously. The first aspect to this is through the collegiate approach to moderation - discussing standards and sharing practice to arrive at more consistent, evidence based interventions for learning, teaching and assessment. The second aspect to this is through the formal training opportunities delivered through the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) national training opportunities.

Professional learning and effective moderation will be achieved by delivering two relevant actions from the Tracking, Monitoring and Moderation Strategy:

Action 4: "School leaders and managers maintain an overview of attainment through monitoring and moderation and take appropriate action to support and challenge teachers."

Action 7: "Teachers engage in regular moderation activities at all levels, to ensure confidence in their professional judgements."

Shetland Islands Council will ensure that there is adequate capacity and prioritisation in the school year for moderation to take place at local level in individual schools and across clusters. Teachers will also be invited to support assessment and moderation activity across the authority and take advantage of leadership opportunities through the Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) programme.

This will be planned for through a revised moderation model for Shetland which will build on the expectations for moderation contained within the 2017 strategy and refresh the programme of moderation and professional learning activity across a school year.

## **GTCS PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION**

Professional Recognition is awarded to teachers who have completed one year of professional practice after gaining GTC Scotland full registration, where they have demonstrated a commitment to develop their professional learning in a particular areas of interest and/or expertise in order to further enhance their knowledge, understanding and practice. (GTCS, 2016)

Professional Recognition offers the opportunity for teachers to be recognised as they develop as reflective, accomplished and enquiring professionals, continually enhancing their practice at all stages of their career. Professional Recognition aligns primarily with the Standard for Career-long Professional Learning. However, teachers may choose to reflect against the Standards for Leadership and Management and for those in Further Education the Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges (Scottish Government 2011).

Shetland Islands Council will:

- Raise awareness of Professional Recognition
- Encourage teachers, where appropriate, to consider making a claim for Professional Recognition

There are key groups of people who require leadership development opportunities:

- All teachers who aspire to take leadership roles whether or not in formal promoted posts.
- Middle managers (Principal Teachers) who aspire to whole school leadership roles.
- Depute Head Teachers and Head Teachers in a new strategic leadership role, including those in an acting role;
- Head Teachers seeking to be developed and challenged, within and beyond this stage, in their leadership

### **Secondments**

Secondments, temporary reallocation of duties and “acting-up” opportunities provide individuals with rich development experiences that can underpin their professional leadership development pathway. These opportunities will also bring valuable perspectives to support the work of central service. Central officers will consider proposals from teachers with regard to secondments and reallocation of duties, in addition to promoting such opportunities. Secondments will be for specific purposes and will generally be advertised across Shetland, as agreed by LNCT on the 3 December 2019. Acting up arrangements will be advertised across Shetland where this is possible. Such opportunities will depend on the requirements and resources of the service.

### **Teacher Leadership**

In an increasingly empowered workforce, all teachers are expected to see themselves as leaders. This should include leading their own learning and regularly self-evaluating against the GTCS Standards. Teachers should critically engage with and reflect on literature, research, legislation and policy in order to enhance their practice.

Education Scotland’s Teacher Leadership Programme is open for all post-probation classroom teachers in Scotland.

A central feature of the Teacher Leadership Programme is for participants to understand what teacher leadership means and looks like in practice. As a part of this process participants are supported to take an enquiring approach to developing an aspect of learning and teaching of their choosing as appropriate for the learners in their context.

Shetland Islands Councils will:

- Encourage and support teachers to reflect on and share their practice
- Encourage and support purposeful professional collaboration
- Support the teacher learning community model of professional learning.

### **Remote Teaching (opportunities for distance learning and teaching)**

In partnership with the Council's Workforce Development Team and Education Scotland, there will be ongoing support and professional learning available over the coming years, as required, for teachers around the area of remote teaching. There is a commitment to provide bespoke training to all teaching staff involved in a remote teaching experience as part of Children's Services' locally agreed position statement and protocols paper.

Moreover, a continuous Digital Skills Support Package will be developed each year, under the support of our Digital Lead. The Strategy will closely align with 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through the Use of Digital Technology – A Digital Learning and Teaching Strategy for Scotland 2016 -2020 and any revision of the national strategy, and taking account of wider emerging policy at national, regional and local level.

### **MASTERS LEVEL LEARNING**

Masters level learning is designed to develop the ability to critically analyse practice and consider underpinning research in areas of particular interest. It is possible to focus on areas which are of direct relevance to professional practice. Shetland Islands Council recognises the national aspiration that teachers in Scotland will engage in Masters-level learning.

Shetland Islands Council will:

- Raise awareness of the distinctive features of Masters-level learning
- Raise awareness of the leadership opportunities available each year, including what is required to apply
- Support teachers with Masters-level prior learning claims

### **Masters Level Learning linked to Leadership**

Education Scotland has established a clear Masters pathway with 3 stages which are Middle Level Leadership, Into Headship and In Headship, which if all completed result in a Masters Degree. However, it is not a requirement to do all three. To support teachers through these programs, Shetland Islands Council work with Aberdeen University.

### **Middle Level Leadership**

Middle leaders are key drivers in ensuring positive outcomes for all learners. Through working collaboratively with school leaders, members of their teams and partners, they devise and contribute

to the school's vision and values, ensuring that the strategic direction of the school is communicated effectively with all stakeholders.

### **Into Headship**

The Into Headship qualification will be an essential requirement for Head Teaching posts from August 2020. Post can be recruited to on a temporary basis where the Head Teacher has 30 months to complete the qualification.

The Into Headship qualification aims to ensure aspiring Head Teachers are supported to develop and continue to build the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required of senior leaders. The Into Headship qualification is aimed at those teachers whose next post will be that of a Head Teacher, likely to be within 2/3 years. The qualification aims to enable candidates:

- To acquire and deepen the ability to critically reflect and enquire in order to enhance their strategic leadership practice
- To develop their strategic leadership and management skills in practice as specified by the Standard for Headship in Scotland.
- To build and apply sound knowledge and understanding of strategic leadership and management practice and theory in the context of the role of Head Teacher
- To design and initiate a strategic change initiative which will strengthen the school's capability for improvement
- To meet the Standard for Headship

### **In Headship**

In Headship is a postgraduate programme for new Head Teachers who are within the first two years of starting their role. The course supports them to develop and continue to build the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required of Head Teachers.

The In Headship programme encompasses the role of Head Teacher as a strategic leader within, across and beyond the school community. It is designed to facilitate and support Head Teachers in the transition through the early stages of headship, to enable them to develop as effective strategic leaders who contribute to system leadership.

The programme aims to enable Head Teachers to:

- engage in critical reflection on their transition to headship
- recognise, understand and adapt to the complex challenges and opportunities of headship through critical engagement with a wide range of academic literature and research
- develop a culture of sustained professional growth for self and others
- demonstrate professional values and personal commitment as stated in the GTCS Standard for Headship

- build on critical understandings of a core set of professional and academic literacies including research, data, political, as well as knowledge and understanding of evaluative and interpersonal skills
- develop a critical understanding of professional learning as collective and emergent, to facilitate school and system improvement
- understand the significance of strategic and system leadership in driving change and improvement.

### **Excellence in Headship**

In addition to the Masters pathway, Excellence in Headship will also be offered through Education Scotland.

The Excellence in Headship programme supports Head Teachers - who have been in post for two years or more - to strengthen and expand their school and system leadership skills, with a strong focus on delivering excellence and equity for all children and young people.

The Excellence in Headship programme provides an annual calendar of professional learning opportunities for leadership in a range of formats, which include: opportunities for collaborative learning, cross-system learning, coaching and mentoring, network development, issue exploration, international research and engagement with online learning. It is designed to provide sufficient flexibility to enable you to engage in several key areas over an academic session. (Education Scotland)

## **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS**

### **Head Teacher Induction**

All new Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers (permanent or temporary) are now offered and induction programme by the local authority. New Head Teachers and new depute Head Teachers should discuss any additional professional learning requirements with their line manager. If they wish to submit an application for professional learning they must gain support from their line manager in the first instance. The line manager must decide if the request is essential or desirable and then the application should be submitted to the Workforce Development Team.

### **School Managers' Training Sessions**

There will be a support programme available, designed to support new Head Teachers but is available for all School Managers which will include sessions on:

- Introduction to council processes/political awareness
- Managing Staff and Human Resources Policies and Procedures
- Managing budgets and Finance Policies and Procedures
- Quality Assurance
- Overview of Management Information Systems
- Complaints Handling and Data Protection

- Buildings Management & Risk Assessment
- Other priority areas as agreed

This will be available to all acting and new Head Teachers, all Into Headship participants and any Head Teacher who would like a refresher on any of these areas. It will also be available to all acting and new deputy Head Teachers. Any staff new to a leadership role should give careful consideration to any other professional learning needs they may have.

All new Head Teachers will be offered a peer mentor to support them in the first year of their new leadership role. In addition, an updated Head Teachers' Handbook is also available on Glow.

As part of our work reviewing the teaching Head Teacher model in Shetland, we are also committed to developing support mechanisms for all Head Teachers and strengthen the opportunities for high quality professional learning for school managers, referring to the recommendations from the Independent Panel on Career Pathways for Teachers, May 2019, and the Head Teacher Recruitment Working Group, November 2018.

### **Head Teachers' Development Days**

Four Head Teacher Development Days will be held across the year for Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Into Headship participants. The Head Teacher Development Days are planned and led by two Head Teachers and/or Deputy Head Teachers in collaboration with the Quality Improvement Service. These days will have a clear strategic focus driven by:

- Themes arising from inspections (including input from promoted staff who have recently been through an inspection)
- Themes arising from local authority visits
- National education priorities
- Local education priorities

Prior to each day a Head Teacher Information Bulletin, compiled by Quality Improvement Officers, will be emailed to all Head Teachers to share current national and local developments, news and relevant links.

External speakers and from organisations such as the GTCS and Education Scotland may be invited to the Head Teacher's Development Days to discuss different topics. In addition, sessions on different themes may be planned such as wellbeing and mindfulness.

After the development day attendees will be asked to complete a quick survey providing feedback on whether or not the aims of the day have been met and the impact they feel their attendance will have on their work, knowledge and skills.

**Leadership & Management – Corporate focus**

Head Teachers and Quality Improvement Officers will be offered Corporate Leadership Development opportunities, such as, Frontline Management, The Management Network, Influencing with Impact and other training designed to improve their skills and abilities to deliver school and wider council objectives. In addition, various different courses can be accessed through the Workforce Development booking system VOR, through iLearn or through various LinkedIn eLearning Pathways.