

Summary Report of Professional Update Validation Process

Report by Peter McNaughton, Head of Education

1 Purpose of Report

This report outlines the outcome of the above validation process as carried out by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) in June 2014.

2 Background

- 2.1 The General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) has established a process entitled Professional Update, the development of which was required by an act of the Scottish Parliament in 2011.

The key purposes of Professional Update are:

- to maintain and improve the quality of our teachers as outlined in the appropriate professional standard and to enhance the impact that they have on pupils' learning.
- to support, maintain and enhance teachers' continued professionalism and the reputation of the teaching profession in Scotland.

- 2.2 GTC Scotland seeks to ensure that the key purposes, principles and features of the Professional Update process are applied consistently across Scotland for all registered teachers.

Each local authority has its own Professional, Review and Development (PRD) system, and so validation criteria have been established to clarify how those key purposes, principles and features should be applied to local PRD processes. A Validation Panel looks at each local authority's processes by examining documentation and visiting the local authority to hold a validation event.

From the evidence gathered, the panel decides to what extent the criteria have been met. The panel may then decide to validate fully or with conditions. Any conditions must be addressed by the local authority before full validation can be given. Each condition will be discussed with the local authority and the steps to be taken to meet the condition agreed within an identified time. When this process is complete, full validation will be confirmed in writing by GTC Scotland.

- 2.3 In respect of Midlothian Council, the Validation Panel met with 4 focus groups of Midlothian teaching staff. Thereafter a meeting was held on 12 June where the Head of Education presented an overview of the strategic direction of the newly revised PRD policy and the nature and scope of professional learning within the authority. A note of this meeting is attached as appendix 1.

3 Outcome

- 3.1** The panel validated Midlothian Council's strategy and plans in full with no conditions attached. Recommendations were offered to help build on and continue to enhance the existing provision.
- 3.2** The following key strengths were noted:
- There is an excellent strategic direction in Midlothian in relation to Professional Update with a strong and explicit commitment to ensuring a coherent approach to developing and implementing this key initiative, professional learning and PRD across the authority. The commitment from central staff leading this work is commendable.
 - It is evident that there is a strong supportive culture that promotes engagement in sustained and meaningful professional learning. There is a commitment centrally to support and encourage staff development at all stages with a broad and engaging range of opportunities provided.
 - There is a very encouraging focus on developing an understanding of professional learning in its widest sense rather than a one-off event. This is beginning to support a shift in the way in which people engage with and understand their own professional learning.
 - There is a clear emphasis on PRD as an ongoing process. It is evident that staff perceive the revised process as being more meaningful and robust than the previous policy.
 - There has been a clear commitment to develop a streamlined policy and ensure the process is not overly bureaucratic. The documentation provided works well to support the process outlined.

The following recommendations were identified:

- Develop one further brief guidance sheet for all staff outlining the 5 yearly sign off process confirming engagement in Professional Update via MyGTCS. This should also include information on the deferrals process and guidance on use of the MyGTCS online professional learning record.
- Continue the plans for building the capacity for coaching across the authority to support Professional Review and Development and the Professional Update processes. As part of the ongoing training for reviewers and reviewees it may be helpful to continue to develop the ethos and understanding that professional learning is at the heart of PU and issues relating to competence remain separate from this process.
- Continue to support GTCS registered staff working centrally to engage with the processes of Professional Update and help to develop alignment between Council appraisal processes and the PRD process.

- Continue to raise awareness about, promote and support the range of professional learning opportunities available for all staff, including planned inclusive arrangements for supply and peripatetic staff.
- Continue plans to disseminate and engage with all staff about the requirements and processes of Professional Update through a range of communication approaches.

3 Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no financial and human resource implications associated with this report.

3.2 Risk

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by the Head of Education and the Schools Group Managers is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of Registered Teachers to demonstrate their capacity to engage with the process.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☒ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

3.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

The work of Registered Teachers supports a number of outcomes within the Single Midlothian Plan including ensuring that young people are better educated, more skilled, successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

3.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The Authority is committed to supporting Registered Teachers to engage in professional learning and thereby enhancing the experience in the classroom for learners.

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

The authority is building on the existing high performance of Registered Teachers to ensure that the learning needs of all young people are met.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Midlothian Council is working in partnership with the GTCS. As part of the introduction to Professional Update a working group and focus groups made up of Headteachers, Classroom Teachers, Supply

Teachers and Peripatetic Teachers were set up in order to ensure that staff had all the information they required to engage in the process.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

The Directorate Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Professional Update is ongoing and supports sustainable development.

3.9 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

4 Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) note the content of the validation report;
- (ii) pass this report to the Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration; and
- (iii) note that officers within the Directorate will continue to challenge, support and monitor the development of the Professional Update process in order to achieve excellence through further improving performance.

16 September 2014

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