



Summary Report of Professional Update Validation Meeting

Midlothian Council

Thursday 12 June 2014

1 Members of the Validation Panel

- Dorothy Ferguson, Education Committee, GTC Scotland (Chair)
- Tara Lillis, Professional Update Working Group, GTC Scotland
- Caroline Bayne, LA Representative, City of Edinburgh Council
- Zoë Robertson, Education Adviser, GTC Scotland

2 Event

The event was chaired by Dorothy Ferguson. The first meeting involved Peter McNaughton, Head of Education; Elaine Napier, Education Support Officer; and Arlene Limerick, Head Teacher at Kings Park Primary School. Four focus group meetings were held with the following groups of staff: unpromoted; promoted; supply & peripatetic; and centrally based staff.

Peter, Elaine and Arlene presented an overview of the strategic direction in Midlothian, the newly revised PRD policy and the nature and scope of professional learning within the authority. After considering evidence from the meetings and the documentation issued in advance of the event, the panel met with the Senior Leadership Team to provide an oral report.

Information provided:

- Professional Update Implementation plan
- Revised PRD Policy and forms
- Previous PRD policy and associated forms
- MNCT Report
- PRD Guidance 1-4
- PRD Agenda and self evaluation

3 Conclusion

The panel validated Midlothian Council in full with no conditions attached. Recommendations were offered to help build on and continue to enhance the existing provision.

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/...

- 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 PRD and PU 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.