

## **TEACHER PANEL**

### **DELIVERING AN EMPOWERED SYSTEM**

#### **Purpose**

1. This paper provides an update on the actions of the School Empowerment Steering Group including the co-production of the Headteachers' Charter and empowering schools guidance.
2. Members of the Teacher Panel are invited to review the draft Empowering Teachers and Practitioners guidance (Annex 2) and provide feedback on progress towards empowering the teaching profession. The draft Empowering School Leaders guidance and Headteachers' Charter were shared at a previous meeting of the panel.

#### **Background**

3. The Education Reform Joint Agreement between the Scottish Government and Local Government published in June 2018 recognises that establishing an empowered system, which includes schools, teachers, pupils and parents, is crucial in improving the life chances of our children and young people.
4. The School Empowerment Steering Group, chaired by Gayle Gorman as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, is tasked with taking this work forward and ensuring that empowerment takes place at all levels of our system. A broad range of partners are engaged in developing the school empowerment agenda through their representation on the steering group. They include national and local government, professional associations, Education Scotland, ADES and other key stakeholders.

#### **Progress**

5. An overarching 'Empowered System' diagram has been developed which identifies key contributors in an empowered system (Annex 1). The diagram is supported by draft guidance on what an empowered system means for each of the following eight contributors:
  - School leaders
  - Teachers and practitioners (Annex 2)
  - Support staff
  - Parents and carers
  - Learners
  - Partners
  - Local Authority and Regional Improvement Collaborative
  - Scottish Government and national organisations

6. The diagram and all sections of the guidance are now published on Education Scotland's [National Improvement Hub](#) as agreed drafts alongside a self-evaluation framework for local authorities and a school empowerment evaluation strategy. Partner organisations have direct links from their webpages to this resource. The SNCT has also recently agreed a Code of Practice on Headteacher Responsibility in Recruitment and Selection of Staff which supports the Headteachers' Charter and the revised Devolved School Management guidelines.
7. A communications strategy has been developed in partnership with steering group members to support awareness of the draft guidance. This launched in November 2019 with a social media campaign focusing on each section of the guidance in different weeks. This cycle of promotion takes place across this academic year and is supported by a range of events where all partners are highlighting the empowered system guidance at stakeholder events. This is supported by Education Scotland keynotes at a range of education conferences this year.
8. An engagement strategy has been agreed to support stakeholders to explore the draft guidance and provide feedback. Engagement with the empowered system guidance will be supported by each partner organisation represented on the steering group. This includes the increased focus on empowerment through Education Scotland's enhanced leadership professional learning offer.

Education Scotland is leading a range of workshops in each region to support LA self-evaluation of empowerment next term, involving LA teams, school leaders and teachers.

### **Next steps**

9. Members of the School Empowerment Steering Group will take forward their approaches to supporting engagement with the draft guidance.
10. Feedback on the draft guidance is welcome before the end of March 2020. Feedback received will be used to inform the development of a further iteration of the resource by the end of June 2020.

### **Points for discussion**

- To what extent are headteachers, teachers and practitioners empowered to make decisions for the benefit of the children and young people they work with?
- How is the system progressing towards an empowered system?
- How are headteachers and individual teachers taking forward teacher agency?

Learning Directorate  
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ANNEX 1

AN EMPOWERED SYSTEM DIAGRAM

# AN EMPOWERED SYSTEM

An empowered system grows stronger and more confident, working in partnership to lead learning and teaching that achieves excellence and equity for all learners. Empowerment and collaboration for improvement happen at all levels of the system.



## ANNEX 2

### EMPOWERING TEACHERS AND PRACTITIONERS GUIDANCE – AGREED DRAFT AS PUBLISHED

#### Introduction

An empowered system expects, and creates, the conditions for all to work within a culture of collaboration and collegiality with learners, parents, colleagues and multi-agency partners. All share a vision for education based on the values and needs of the community.

The culture should foster feelings of trust, openness, wellbeing and satisfaction for all, enabling teachers, practitioners and learners to be the best they can be. In this culture, the needs of all learners are understood, their voices are heard and included. Teachers and practitioners work in a culture and ethos of collaboration where learning experiences are co-created and the curriculum is right for the context and every learner.

*‘The culture and ethos of our school is positive and focused on the needs of all staff, partners and learners. We actively promote equalities for all, so staff feel confident in the workplace. Our staff feel empowered and motivated to take decisions and lead aspects of school improvement.’*

**Quality Indicator 1.4 How Good Is Our School 4, Education Scotland, 2015**

To enable this, the culture should be underpinned by a strong commitment to developing capacity through professional learning. Teachers and practitioners should have the time and space to engage in high quality professional learning, which can take many different forms. This can include learning with colleagues, the use of research, enquiry and reflective-based approaches that are relevant, authentic and on-going. Teachers and practitioners benefit from engaging with networks and learning communities who are developing professional practice together throughout their career.

*‘Across our school, an ethos of professional engagement and collegiate working is evident. This leads to continuous improvement in learning and teaching and improved outcomes for our learners. There is evidence of strong leadership of learning by staff at all levels and in a range of contexts. We build and maintain constructive relationships, within our setting and beyond, which foster collective responsibility and mutual support. All staff undertake lead roles to motivate, support and inspire others.’*

**Quality Indicator 1.2 How Good Is Our School 4, Education Scotland, 2015**

All teachers and practitioners are enabled to engage fully with the complexities of education and to be key actors in shaping educational change, contributing to the enhanced reputation of their professions. It is the role of all teachers and practitioners to help shape an empowered system where teachers and practitioners, individually

and collaboratively, can be adaptive and creative in implementing approaches to learning and teaching that improve outcomes for all in the learning community.

## Principles

The six dimensions of empowerment (identified in [Education Scotland thematic reviews](#)) are identified as important levers for change. These dimensions can apply at different levels of the education system to ensure that decisions about children's and young people's learning and school life are made within schools, supported by parents and the local community.

### **Under the six dimensions a culture of empowerment enables teachers and practitioners to:**

#### Autonomous

- have confidence and capacity to take steps that meet the needs of learners in innovative and creative ways;
- be professionally courageous and take measured risks to improve outcomes for children and young people; and
- exercise control over workload and have an effective voice in determining priorities based on what makes the most difference for learners in their context.

#### Professional Learning

- be leaders of learning within their context;
- engage directly with relevant professional standards and feel supported and challenged by the professional review and development process;
- be able to actively seek out and engage with a diverse range of professional learning opportunities and networks;
- be connected with literature, research and policy to lead and develop learning in their context; and
- engage in on-going self-directed learning through adopting an enquiring stance in their practice to improve outcomes for their learners.

#### Participation and Engagement

- be involved in, and actively contribute to, evidence-based decision-making about the life and work of the school;
- engage with pupils, parents and partners in a range of ways to develop better outcomes for children and young people; and
- engage in positive and supportive workplace relationships that promote a sense of belonging.

#### Collaboration

- build and sustain positive relationships with colleagues and partners through collaborative practice in planning, leading and evaluating learning; and
- foster a culture of collective responsibility and collaborative professionalism to improve outcomes for children and young people.

### Resources

- have access to skills, information, guidance, tools and resources to bring about improvement;
- be afforded the time required to be an active participant in an empowered system; and
- ensure resources are available which overcome barriers to access and equity for all in the learning community.

### Impact

- be mindful of the importance of wellbeing and contribute to the development of a healthy learning environment, including control over workload; and
- be evidence and data-informed to demonstrate the impact of interventions and identify next steps.

### Resources

- GTCS Professional Standards: <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professionalstandards/professional-standards.aspx>
- GTCS Code of Professionalism and Conduct: <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/regulation/complaints/copac.aspx>
- SSSC Codes of Practice: <https://www.sssc.uk.com/the-scottish-socialservices-council/sssc-codes-of-practice/>
- Education Scotland Teacher Leadership Programme: <https://www.scotland.org.uk/what-we-offer/teacher-leadership/scelteacher-leadership-programme/>
- Framework for Educational Leadership and Model of professional learning guidance: <https://www.scelframework.com/>
- Links to Professor Mark Priestley's work on teacher agency: <https://www.stir.ac.uk/people/255862#outputs>
- EIS: <https://www.eis.org.uk/>
- SSTA: <https://ssta.org.uk/>
- NASUWT: <https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/>
- Voice: <https://www.voicetheunion.org.uk/>