



LEADING TOGETHER

AN ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY AND
DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN
SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL SERVICES

**Report by University of Stirling in partnership with
the Voluntary Sector Social Services Workforce Unit
and the Changing Lives User and Carer Forum**

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership in Scotland's social services is important. It is important because it makes a difference to outcomes for people who use services and carers as well as impacting on the morale and wellbeing of people working in social services.

But what do we mean by leadership? Do we have a shared understanding of what good leadership looks like and how to nurture people's capacity for leadership in different roles, at different levels and across all sectors in social services?

'[As a leader] you have got to be visible. You have got to be knowledgeable. You have got to have influence and power, whether that is at the top, the middle or the bottom. You have got to have some kind of power, almost a sense of belonging to others – give yourself as well as take.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

'I think the real difference [between leaders and managers] is that effective leaders can deliver change, set good examples, create a positive environment and celebrate diversity.'

(Public sector focus group participant)

'I think having the right people doing the right task at the right time is really crucial because is it the manager's best use of time working on a rota?...It's a lot easier to go and sit in an office and do paperwork than it is to be out there and really getting into the nitty gritty and challenging people and looking at where they are going, and getting people to reflect and develop.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

Leadership does not displace the role of good management. Glenn¹ describes the interdependent qualities of structure and soul within organisations. Structure offers clarity of purpose and expectations. It sets boundaries and supports consistency and predictability. But without soul this is arid terrain. Soul lives in the relationships between people; the stories, conversations and encounters which bring meaning and rich experience. Leadership in social services must honour the significance of soul as well as structure.

1 Glenn, L (2009) Structure and Soul, The Academy Leadership Journal Volume 15 (1) 12-20

KEY FINDINGS

In this report we present themes which have emerged from our analysis of leadership activity and development in Scotland's social services in 2010. These are informed by the views of staff working in the public, private and voluntary sectors of Scotland's social services and by members of the Changing Lives User and Carer Forum as well as relevant research.

Scotland's social services need leadership at all levels but they also need authentic connections between formal and informal leaders

There is a challenge for all involved in Scotland's social services to understand the ways in which formal and informal leadership roles must complement and support one another. This relies upon key principles of adaptive leadership which include 'giving the work back to the people'². It means that leaders in senior positions must value and be responsive to contributions from many different sources. It is not only because leaders and followers are dependent on each other nor because dispersed leadership makes best use of the collective skills of a group of people. Leadership at all levels aspires to the 'moral alignment'³ which asserts that practitioners whose voices are heard will in turn listen to the voices of people who use services and carers.

Front line staff need delegated authority. They also need a sense of personal authority and the confidence to take measured risks.

Our consultation with the Changing Lives User and Carer Forum does not portray an empowered workforce taking initiative on behalf of people who use services. There is an impression that leadership at all levels is sustained against the odds rather than because it is consistently encouraged and supported. Leading at all levels depends upon organisational cultures which entrust authority to those who work on the front line and which support rather than scapegoat individuals. It also relies upon self leadership and the readiness of people to be proactive within their own spheres of influence.

Leadership development requires a whole systems approach which includes both self and organisational development.

The analysis of leadership development in Scotland's social services evidenced a diverse array of leadership qualifications, resources and activities. What was less obvious was a coherent or systematic approach which aligns the development needs of the workforce with the leadership challenges they face.

'There are almost too many leadership and management programmes floating around – creates confusion for someone on what their leadership journey should be.'

(Public sector focus group respondent)

'Whole systems'⁴ leadership development recommends an approach which links the development needs of the individual with those of the organisation. It advocates development activities which address real problems and which foster the kind of adaptive capacities required at every level.

2 Heifetz, R and Laurie (1997) 'The Work of Leadership', Harvard Business Review, Jan – Feb 1997

3 Manning, S.S (2003) Ethical Leadership in Human Services: A Multi Dimensional Approach, Boston, Allyn and Bacon

4 Benington, J and Hartley, J (2009) 'Whole Systems Go!' Improving leadership across the whole public service system, Sunningdale Institute

Collaborative leadership demands strong relational skills as well as perseverance and commitment

Collaborative leadership is needed at all levels in social services. It is necessary because complex problems, risk and uncertainty require people to work together and to share skills, experience and resources. Collective leadership relies upon trust, respect and mutuality. It does not work if it is tokenistic and if people do not feel they are equal partners round the table. Responses from different sectors suggest that such inclusivity remains an aspiration not a reality.

'There are a lot of, you know, pretend structures if you like which are there.... unfortunately you're sitting round the table talking about things that basically other people are controlling and it's not really making much of an impact, and I think that becomes very frustrating.'

(Voluntary sector focus group respondent)

More optimistically there were shared views on the importance of placing people who use social services at the centre. This offered a kind of touchstone which could help to surmount the difficulties of working together across sectors and professional disciplines.

'It's helpful, in terms of vision, to constantly bring it back to people who use social services, whether it will produce good outcomes for them. Different salary levels and different employment conditions can get in the way so focusing on "will it produce better outcomes for people who use social services?" is a good starting point.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

Collaborative leadership mirrors other aspects of partnership working. It needs perseverance and commitment. But it also needs people with the ability to build relationships and to value difference.

Complexity and paradox have to be acknowledged without any promise of simple solutions.

Across the sectors in Scotland's social services we were reminded of the contradictions which impact on leadership development at this time. Now, more than ever, effective leadership is needed at every level. Investment in leadership for the future is essential at the same time as budgets are at their most vulnerable.

Financial resources are needed but so too is time. Time is a precious resource and repeatedly managers and front line staff describe workload pressures which leave no space for reflection.

'.... in the current climate how do you enable that to occur, how do you enable people to be good leaders at that level? Because that is learning, and it is reflection, and it is support and it is mentoring, and it is access to information and it is all these things. And that's where the rub is. That is where the squeeze is at the moment – in being able to enable that to occur.'

(Private sector focus group respondent)

Creativity and innovation are needed as social services undergo radical change. 'More of the same won't work' challenges the workforce to do things differently but staff described management cultures which were becoming more rather than less controlling. Autonomy was undermined rather than supported and they were caught between the conflicting expectations of risk enablement and risk aversion.

None of these paradoxes has a simple resolution. Grint⁵ describes 'wicked issues' as having no easy answers and requiring leadership which acknowledges complexity and tolerates uncertainty.

5 Grint, K (2008) 'Wicked Problems and Clumsy Solutions', *Clinical Leader* 2:1, 54-68

BACKGROUND CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

This review of leadership in Scotland's social services, commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) in July 2010, was undertaken during September and October 2010. It has been a collaborative project involving the support and contributions of many individuals and organisations in addition to the key partners responsible for this report.

We see our work as part of an evolving process. A significant amount of time and energy has already been invested in leadership and management in social services. Much has been written and many conversations have taken place. The part that we play is one of bringing some of the many threads together. In presenting themes which have surfaced during our work we can give a picture of the emerging patterns. The cloth is not fully woven and there are parts of the design which we have only begun to explore. Most importantly there is still the possibility of more colours and textures being introduced to this tapestry of ideas about leadership in Scotland's social services.

The report reflects a variety of methods used to explore the topic. We pursued desk based research into many aspects of leadership both in a general context and specifically in relation to social services. We carried out two complementary surveys: one focused on **organisations** across the public, private and voluntary sector and one for **individuals** working across the different sectors. These aimed to gather the views of staff employed in diverse roles but we recognise that the focus on leadership may have limited the responses from practitioner or direct support workers. Although we endeavoured to get a balanced perspective across all sectors in the social services workforce, we are aware that the response rate was highest from the voluntary sector and significantly lower from the private sector for both surveys. Across all sectors the response to the organisational survey was low relative to the time invested in making contact with relevant people to request their involvement. Feedback indicated that 'consultation fatigue' contributed to the level of organisational responses particularly in the public sector.

We used focus groups and telephone interviews to address issues around leadership and management; the gaps and development needs within social services leadership, and the kinds of organisational culture which support creativity and leadership at all levels. In the focus group activity we tried to give fair and equal representation to different sectors, localities and stakeholder groups. This proved challenging within the time available and we know that there are many voices which have not yet been heard. We acknowledge the impact of these constraints on our findings and hope that in the months ahead more people will be able to contribute to the continuing debate.

Leadership in social services involves both theory and practice. It is informed by research and by the lessons of experience. We know that words on a page will not be enough to inspire leadership at all levels. But we want to do justice to the complexity of the leadership challenge and to the insights offered by many people who care about social services in Scotland in the 21st century.

This main report outlines the key findings from our work. More detail is included in a number of background reports. For those who would like to explore below the surface we hope these will provide a more comprehensive overview of our analysis of leadership in Scotland's social services.

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP MEAN IN SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL SERVICES?

The language of leadership is abundant. It can seem as if each writer searches for a new adjective to capture the essential quality of leadership. The different terms can help us make sense of the many sides of leadership but they can also confuse and mystify us.

Some of the words used to describe leadership are value laden. They can bewitch us by their promise of something good. We need to use discretion in judging whether that promise is fulfilled. We also need to be sure we know what different people mean when they use specific terms. For one person transformational leadership means an inspired leader committed to motivating and involving followers in a shared vision. For another, this describes a charismatic individual holding too much power and with followers who have no active voice.

'You can have very inspirational leaders that you can cope with for a little bit of time but they've got no interest in managing anything and the whole thing's going to go to pot because this person's away off doing the visionary blue sky thinking bit, but, hang on a minute, there's chaos behind you there.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

The concept of distributed leadership⁶ has been well received within Scotland's social services. The leadership communities have been active in fostering the readiness of people in different roles to share their skills and experience of leading. Whether we call this 'distributed', 'dispersed', 'roving' or 'shared', it is an important recognition that leadership is enriched by the diversity of contributions. No single person holds all the expertise or knows all the answers. 'Experts-by-experience' is a term which honours the knowledge held by people who use social services. It reminds us that distributed leadership extends beyond the boundaries of the social services workforce.

Collaborative leadership brings its own complexity. Do we mean leading partnerships? Or do we mean engaging in leadership activities with people from a different organisation or sector? Alternatively we might be thinking of a collective style of leadership which seeks to work with consensus and power sharing. It could be all or any of these so once again we need to ensure we know what is meant by the words people use.

The potential ambiguities of language have led us to resist a definition of leadership for Scotland's social services. There are many different elements which are important. Participatory leadership fits well with our value base. Engaging leadership honours the importance of relationships between leaders and followers, managers and staff, workers and people who use social services; the connections between one person and another. Citizen leadership reminds us of why we are working in social services and affirms the timeless quality of servant leadership:

*'The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?'*⁷

IN SUMMARY

- The language used to describe leadership can be ambiguous and confusing.
- Within Scotland's social services there is a commitment to leadership at all levels of the workforce.
- This model of leadership recognises the contribution and expertise of people in diverse roles whether they be employees, people who use social services or carers .

⁶ Gronn, P (2002) 'Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis', *The Leadership Quarterly* 13 (2002) 423-451

⁷ Greenleaf, R (1998) *The Power of Servant-Leadership: Essays*, San Francisco, CA , Berrett-Koehler Publishers

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS?

The importance of the relationship between formal and informal leadership

Changing Lives (2006) set the aspiration of leadership at all levels. The case for distributed leadership, or leadership at all levels, is a persuasive one. It has been attributed 'with enabling a pooling of ideas and expertise to produce services and leadership energy that is greater than the sum of individual capabilities'⁸. Over recent years initiatives such as leadership communities have been actively supported in Scottish social services with the aim of promoting 'individual and joint leadership capacity'⁹.

Responses from different sectors affirmed commitment to the principle of leadership at all levels.

'Organisationally we are looking at distributed leadership with everybody understanding they have a leadership role. It's about organisations giving people autonomy and giving support for action taken.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Generally, voluntary sector organisations are very open to the idea of leadership at all levels, but also highlight the need for clear lines of accountability so that risk can be managed [or enabled] effectively.'

(Voluntary sector focus group respondent)

The value of shared leadership has been described as 'the ongoing, mutual influence process through which leadership is rotated to the person with the key knowledge, skills, and abilities for the particular issues facing the team.'¹⁰

'It is the person closest to the person receiving the service who needs to be the best leader, the best follower, in a sense: the most confident, the most valued and all of that. Because as they provide the service....these are the people that need to be able to make decisions.'

(Private sector focus group respondent)

However, views were mixed on whether the rhetoric of distributed leadership is reflected in actual practice.

'A major gap is that the culture of leadership at all levels is not promoted and the energy of frontline staff is not being harnessed.'

(Public sector focus group participant)

'The current model is generally still quite focused on leadership from above – it will be quite a culture change to turn this around.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

A number of respondents felt that attention is primarily focused on strategic leadership and on managers in senior organisational positions. This focus restricted development opportunities for staff working in other roles and limited the contribution of the wider workforce. Such views did not imply that sound professional leadership and effective strategic leaders were not important. Instead they suggested that leaders at the top needed to be attentive to voices from below and that leadership capacity needed to be valued at every level:

8 Economic and Social Research Council (2009)

9 Dunoon, D (2004) Leadership communities: developing leader-managers for the twenty first century, Training and Development in Australia. 7-9

10 Crossan, M; Vera, D; Nanjad, L (2008) 'Transcendent leadership: Strategic leadership in dynamic environments', The Leadership Quarterly 19 (2008) 569-581

'[With strategic leadership] it is important that the chief executive is very visible and that the head of social work is listening to staff.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

The critical integration of leadership across different levels was evident in the views expressed about citizen leadership. There was general support for the principles of citizen leadership but concerns were voiced about a number of issues. These included different interpretations of what citizen leadership means in practice and perceptions that there were variable levels of support and engagement across services:

'Citizen leadership can be inspirational – it proves that leadership is not just about managers, but not everyone is convinced that there is a shared understanding of what citizen leadership actually is. Also, [there is] some concern that "citizen leadership" is the kind of term that can become misused.'

(Voluntary sector focus group summary)

'Citizen leadership [is] seen as more part of the culture within mental health and learning disability services but far less so in older people's service and also in children's services.'

(Public sector focus group respondent)

It was felt by some that 'the personalisation agenda reflected a move towards citizen leadership' and that there was 'a high level of commitment to developing leadership at all levels and to developing a workforce which feels empowered to develop change and improved person centred services.' Others expressed concerns about the risk of tokenism in relation to citizen leadership.

The views of the Changing Lives User and Carer Forum reflect the importance of authentic connection between formal and informal leadership:

'Good leadership in social services requires an active relationship with people that use services and their families that promote their leadership. In other words, citizen leadership is not a bolt-on, optional idea – it is a key part of the development of good leadership.'

'At every level, there must be leadership and empathy that transmits to the people they are managing..... effective leadership at every level of the workforce, from frontline worker to directors, required actively listening to the views of the people they served and supported.'

(Changing Lives User and Carer Forum consultation)

Heifetz¹¹ writes of the 'interdependence of people throughout the organisation' and the need to 'use leadership to generate more leadership deep in the organisation'. That interdependence extends across organisations, sectors and communities.

IN SUMMARY

Leadership at all levels does not mean that the roles and responsibilities of those in senior positions are the same as those of people in front-line practice or citizen leaders. It does not mean that everyone will choose to be a leader or to exercise leadership in all circumstances. However, it does mean that the expertise of people at all levels is valued. Their contribution is seen as enhancing the quality of leadership across social services. For this to happen it is vital that leaders in positions of formal authority genuinely support, respect and listen attentively to the voices of leaders from below. Leadership at all levels requires an appreciation of both the uniqueness and the limitations of wisdom at every level.

11 Heifetz, R (2009) 'Leadership in a (Permanent) Crisis, Harvard Business Review, July – August, 62-69

The challenge of leadership without formal authority

Leadership at all levels brings a further challenge and one which is linked to principles of self leadership. Blanchard¹² asserts that 'empowerment is something someone gives you, self leadership is what you do to make it work'. He describes the need to 'challenge assumed constraints'. There were indications in the responses from managers, practitioners and services users that they experienced significant constraints in exercising leadership. This echoes findings from the evaluation of the Leading to Deliver programme¹³ in which course graduates expressed the view that their learning could not be fully implemented back in the workplace because of organisational culture or lack of support from senior managers.

In our study front line staff spoke of time and workload pressures which impeded them from exercising leadership. Organisations' responses to regulatory demands led at times to tighter, more controlling cultures which eroded rather than encouraged personal leadership. Resources to support the development of leadership capacity were diminishing. This included the time for reflection and work based learning as well as financial resources for formal courses.

These constraints are real and need to be taken seriously. But there was a further issue which begged questions about how well organisational cultures were supporting staff at every level to believe in and to exercise their own leadership potential.

Views from the Changing Lives User and Carer Forum painted 'the picture of a workforce not being encouraged to proactively find solutions' and described the disheartening experience of a lack of leadership at the front line:

'One member said his social worker showed no initiative, no proactivity; did not try to get a picture of the whole family, did not offer information or show creativity in finding information he did not possess; was not reliable, said he was not free to do things, and lacked a vision of what was possible for this family.'

(Changing Lives User and Carer Forum consultation)

Another member's experience stood out in contrast:

'An example of a private home support organisation showed effective leadership at both a middle management level and a front line level. This person was able to change her support hours in consultation with the support worker alone, without needing the approval of the manager. For this to work, the organisation had agreed a system that gave support workers control over their own diaries. This arrangement clearly carries risks, but resulted in high levels of satisfaction with the support given. In addition, the service manager regularly 'phones and has also visited the house to check that the support is working well.'

(Changing Lives User and Carer Forum consultation)

The crucial elements of trust and empowerment seemed to be key factors in enabling front line staff to realise and enact their leadership potential.

'...giving the grassroots levels of staff the empowerment to know how to make decisions, to go out and find the information and take it back. But it is a fine line with them getting information wrong and it is again allowing them to have the confidence to do that, but also not coming down on them when they do get it slightly wrong. Unfortunately they are never going to get it right all the time.'

(Private sector focus group respondent)

12 Blanchard, K (2006) Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager, London, Harper Collins

13 York Consulting LLP (2008) Evaluating Leading to Deliver, Government Social Research, www.scotland.gov.uk/socialresearch

'Transparency and a "no blame" culture needs to be fostered. "Watch your back" prevails too often.Confident staff are able to take positive risks. For this to happen there needs to be good supervision, CPD, reflection and honesty.'

(Changing Lives User and Carer Forum consultation)

Some responses gave the impression that personal authority was an issue for leadership at different levels in a hierarchy:

'One difference is that being a manager is a definite job that carries power and authority. Leadership, on the other hand, is not necessarily linked to a formal role and therefore relies heavily on influence to be successful.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Although the voluntary sector is quite positive about supporting leadership at all levels, there is concern that it gets lost somewhere around middle management. One of the challenges is that staff do not feel confident about taking on the leadership role.'

(Voluntary sector focus group respondent)

Obholzer¹⁴ describes three dimensions of authority: authority from above; authority from below; authority from within. Effective leadership at all levels needs attention paid to all three of these elements. From above, authority must be entrusted to staff; from below, authority must be earned; and from within, individuals must know the strengths and vulnerabilities of their inner experience of authority.

Self leadership belongs to leadership at all levels. It can be undermined by internal constraints as well as external ones.

'Leadership begins when we start to explore "How can I best make a difference?"'¹⁵

Developing leadership without formal authority can be seen as a good apprenticeship for leadership positions which carry higher status or levels of responsibility.

IN SUMMARY

- Organisational cultures and work pressures significantly limit the opportunities for front line staff to develop their leadership capacity.
- Risk averse cultures undermine the autonomy and empowerment of informal leaders.
- Other factors linked to personal authority seem to limit some people's capacity to exercise self leadership.

¹⁴ Obholzer, A (1994) *The Unconscious at Work*, London, Routledge

¹⁵ Blanchard, K (2006) *Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager*, London, Harper Collins

LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS ACROSS SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL SERVICES

The need for 'whole systems' leadership development

In their report **Evaluating Leadership Development in Scotland**, Tourish et al¹⁶ recommended closer alignment of leadership development activities to organisational goals. They question the impact of many leadership programmes and work based activities on performance and results. Individual participants may value their learning and believe that it has enhanced their leadership capacity. Others may not be convinced that the investment of time and resources is justified in terms of benefits to the organisation or to people who use social services.

The distinction between 'leader development' and 'leadership development' has been linked to human capital and social capital. The former is specific to an individual while the latter 'has as its goal the building of social relationships involving all members of the community in order to respond proactively and effectively to changing circumstances, and thereby achieve organisational and societal goals'.¹⁷

'Whole systems' leadership development presents an approach which focuses on the work context and the team rather than on the individual in isolation from their workplace. It advocates development activities which address real problems and which foster the kind of adaptive capacities required at every level.

'Leadership development programmes need to translate individual learning into organisational and inter-organisational action and improvement. This requires completely different starting points from traditional leadership development programmes.'¹⁸

This systemic approach pioneered by Warwick University recognises the need for sustainability and for clear focus on the issues that make a difference. It seeks to harness the potential within individuals, teams and organisations to meet complex challenges.

Our review of leadership development activities in social services

Responses to the questionnaire surveys provided information on formal leadership and management awards undertaken by staff employed in different roles within social services. We also asked questions about work based leadership development activities and about the kinds of competency frameworks or other resources currently used by individuals and organisations. A further focus of our investigation was the degree to which agencies had implemented succession planning strategies. Through the focus group activity we explored gaps and development needs and the ways in which the different sectors contribute to leadership development in Scotland's social services. The information gathered from the social services workforce was supplemented by desk based research. This included an analysis of competency frameworks used in disparate organisational contexts; a review of leadership development strategies in other sectors eg health, justice, and examples of cross sector leadership programmes within Scotland.

16 Tourish D, Pinnington, A and Braithwaite-Anderson, S (2007) *Evaluating Leadership Development in Scotland*, Aberdeen, Aberdeen Business School and Robert Gordon University

17 Alban-Metcalf, J and Alimo-Metcalf, B (2009a) *Engaging leadership part two: an integrated model of leadership development*, The International Journal of Public Services, Vol 5, Issue 2, 5-11

18 Benington, J and Hartley, J (2009) *'Whole Systems Go!' Improving leadership across the whole public service system*, Sunningdale Institute

• Qualifications and awards pursued by different levels of management

Questionnaire responses indicated that few front line staff had leadership and management qualifications but that a similar percentage of managers at different tiers (first line, middle and senior managers) either had or were working towards formal qualifications. There was evidence to suggest some differences across sectors in terms of the types of award gained by managers. First-line managers from the voluntary sector primarily gained competency-based leadership and management qualifications, probably related to SSSC registration requirements. This route to leadership and management awards is used less by public sector managers, more of whom have gained academically-based awards. The acquisition of academically-based leadership and management qualifications by respondents in the public sector is particularly prominent at senior manager level, where Master's level degrees were the most commonly cited award. This contrasts with senior managers in the voluntary sector, whose qualifications were more diverse in type, including a considerable number of competency-based awards. Private sector senior managers had acquired leadership-related SVQs or Open University units, but this restricted range may not accurately reflect the sector owing to the relatively small number of private sector respondents. SSSC registration requirements were frequently cited as a reason for choice of award by first line managers. Middle managers tended to focus more on job relevance, personal development and career progression, although several indicated that their 'choice' was the only one available through their employers. Senior managers talked in the main about personal and professional development, although several also mentioned registration requirements. The reasons given for not completing an accredited award included lack of time, lack of funding or other support from employers and, for senior managers, identifying an award that was perceived as relevant to their role and responsibilities.

• The benefits gained from leadership and management awards

In terms of the benefits gained from completing leadership and management awards, first line managers were generally positive and commented on courses improving their practice; providing space and time for reflection, and enhancing their knowledge and understanding.

'At times of enormous changes and pressures on budgets the course has provided me with the skills to explore other methods of delivering a service and also identify the priorities for focussing work activity upon.'

(Individual survey response)

Middle managers also made reference to awards providing opportunities for personal development and time for reflection, but in addition a number indicated increasing abilities to see the bigger picture and to think strategically. Many made connections between gaining the qualifications and career advancement:

'Helped in understanding role and developing a balcony view of the organisation and its issues – helped confidence on a personal level to allow me to progress to middle manager.'

(Individual survey response)

The comments from senior managers may reflect the fact that they were more likely to have undertaken an academic award, often at Master's degree level. They cited the benefits of extending their knowledge of the theoretical underpinnings of leadership and management practices; being able to relate theory to their own leadership and management styles; and developing increased abilities to think at a more strategic level:

'It has been useful to bring me up to date with theory and evidence based work practice. It was also useful to enable reflection and widen knowledge which had a direct positive impact on my approach to management – in particular management of change and marketing. It also took some of the mystery out of financial management.'

• Dissatisfaction with competency based awards

Some of the more critical responses related to SVQ awards with several candidates indicating that they had derived no benefit from completing the qualification: 'not at all as the SVQ is only providing evidence that you are doing the job'. Frustration was expressed about instances where the choice of leadership award had been shaped by SSSC registration requirements:

'The registration agenda tends to skew the agenda....'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'We have a qualifications structure based on competencies and qualifications. What one learns from the primary qualifications, the VQs, is debateable.... If you have got a good assessor and you are helped to reflect in your qualification well you can go and learn. But the key thing is, what?....The question is, how do we enable people who are operationally leading to be better leaders?....Some of the components of the SSSC's Continuous Learning Framework are very constructive in terms of helping people to analyse where they are in terms of how their behaviour is perceived by others....'.

(Private sector focus group respondent)

• Impact of practice learning qualification on leadership at all levels

The questionnaire responses indicated that front line staff who had undertaken some kind of leadership training but were not currently in a management post felt that they had not derived much benefit. This contrasted markedly with feedback from the focus groups relating to the Practice Learning Qualification (PLQ). This award includes a module on leadership and there is some evidence to suggest that it has a valuable contribution to make to leadership at all levels:

'We need leaders at all levels and in all jobs. The PLQ has been valuable here [for promoting leadership lower down the hierarchy].'

(Public sector focus group respondent – manager)

'I would not have attributed myself with leadership qualities until I did the PLQ training.'

(Public sector focus group respondent – practitioner)

All the comments about the PLQ came from public sector participants. Further investigation would be required to find out whether staff from other sectors are accessing the award and if so, what kind of impact it is having on leadership capacity. Integration of teaching on leadership into a range of different awards and, specifically, into the curriculum of the social work degree has been suggested as a way of enhancing skills and understanding across the workforce¹⁹.

• Work based leadership development

Tourish et al²⁰ used six common forms of workplace leadership development as the basis of their study which was conducted across the private, public and not for profit sectors in Scotland. These were 360-degree feedback, coaching, mentoring, networking, job assignments and action learning. Within the survey questionnaire we added leadership communities and co-consultancy as forms of leadership development which have been supported within social services over recent years. We wanted to explore respondents' awareness of different kinds of work based leadership development and to gather information about which levels of staff had access to specific opportunities.

19 Fisher, E. (2009) 'Motivation and Leadership in Social Work Management: A Review of Theories and Related Studies', *Administration in Social Work*, 33, 347-367

20 Tourish et al, op cit

• Extent to which different leadership activities were being offered/utilised

Coaching and networking were highlighted in both the individual and organisational surveys as being the two most common activities available to staff. But over half the individual respondents indicated that they had never been offered coaching in relation to leadership and management issues and 45 per cent had not had opportunities for structured networking activities supporting their leadership development. Approximately a quarter of the respondents had participated in an action learning set. A similar number had experience of mentoring support and/or had taken part in a leadership community. These results do not show how many people had been involved in more than one activity so there may be significant overlap in the figures.

There was evidence to suggest that coaching tended to be offered to managers in more senior organisational roles. Feedback from the focus groups indicates that there may be scope to extend the use of coaching and other work based leadership development to a broader range of staff:

'Action learning sets, coaching and mentoring, secondments were all mentioned as possible ways forward but it was recognised that action learning sets do not suit everyone. The impression was that these options are available to only a few and probably also lack strategic direction to decide who gets what.'

(Public sector focus group summary)

'The development of an effective learning culture which is supported through mentoring, supervision, job shadowing or deputising for a manager can all help develop leadership skills.'

(Voluntary sector focus group respondent)

• Absence of a strategic dimension

A strategic overview seemed to be missing in relation to work based leadership development.

'There needs to be a more systematic approach to skill development before appointment to a new job.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

There was no clear sense of why specific opportunities were offered to individual staff or how their impact was assessed. Issues such as the quality of coaching support or action learning facilitation needs more rigorous evaluation before recommendations could be made about what is effective. Attention also needs to be paid to sustainability. In relation to leadership communities Tavendale's²¹ report seems to indicate 'the need for greater investment in a range of support, not least in the time and space made available to those who seek to make best use of the anticipated benefits.'²² This view was echoed within focus group discussion:

'I think there needs to be investment in leadership within social services. I think statutory organisations invest a lot of money into it, and particularly some of the smaller organisations might not have the resource or time to do that. Hopefully the outcome of this [consultation] will be about how do we then pay for some of the leadership development... people need tools and the time to do it.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

21 Tavendale, A (2010) Facilitating the Development of Social Services Leadership Communities across Scotland – starting points and future directions, Scottish Social Services Learning Network

22 Gillies, B (2010) appended report on 'Gaps and Development Needs in Leadership in Scotland's Social Services: A Literature Review'

• Leadership development resources and frameworks

The questionnaire surveys asked respondents about a number of resources relevant to leadership development. These included the Continuous Learning Framework (CLF), the '4Ps Leadership and Management model' and SWIA's recent 'Guide to Leadership'. Overall there was not a high level of familiarity or usage of the available resources. The CLF was most commonly cited as being occasionally used but it was not explicit whether this was specifically in relation to leadership development. A significant number of organisations indicated that bespoke packages for their own agency were used more frequently.

• Difficulties in accessing/navigating available resources

Comments from the focus groups and telephone interviews offered further perspectives on the resources which have been made available to the social services workforce on leadership and management.

'At the moment the message we are getting is that "we have created [information on leadership] and do what you want with it" rather than "this is how you can use these resources and this is how they link together".'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'It just hurts my head even contemplating trying to figure out in amongst all that if there are any nuggets. If I wanted to be a miner I'd have taken up mining.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

• Reservations about competency frameworks

Earlier studies have identified a lack of enthusiasm for online development resources on the part of many social care professionals. Our work has also highlighted a dissatisfaction with competency frameworks which mirrors other critiques of their limitations.

'Competency frameworks tend to reinforce individualistic practices that dissociate leaders from the relational environment in which they operate and could, arguably, inhibit the emergence of more inclusive and collective forms of leadership....therefore, to escape from the repetitive refrain of competencies, more consideration should be placed on reflection, discussion, and experience.'²³

In their writing about 'engaging leadership' Alban-Metcalfe and Alimo-Metcalfe²⁴ are clear that the qualities and the competence of a leader are necessary but that they are not sufficient. The readiness to engage with people and to build relationships based on mutuality is a critical element in effective leadership.

• Planning for succession

Our study has not evidenced extensive planning for succession in organisations. A similar picture is reflected in a recent report published by the Association of Chief Executives in Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)²⁵. Their study into third sector leaders is not based on the Scottish context but indicates that 65 per cent of voluntary sector agencies had no succession planning in place for their chief executive.

It is important however to query what is understood by 'succession planning' and to recognise that this is not restricted to senior management positions. A variety of awards and development activities are contributing to staff being prepared to move into promoted posts or assume new responsibilities. The example of the Practice Learning Qualification was cited by several respondents as having had an impact on leadership at all levels. The Continuous Learning Framework was seen as:

23 Howieson, B (2010) appended report on 'Leadership Concepts and the Role of Competencies and Frameworks'

24 Alban-Metcalfe, J and Alimo-Metcalfe, B, (2009b) Engaging Leadership part one: competencies are like Brighton Pier', International Journal of Leadership in Public Services, Vol 5, Issue 1

25 ACEVO (2010) CEO Final Pay Survey 2009/2010, www.acevo.org.uk

‘Helping people to assess “where they are” in relation to their behaviour and how it affects others. Many organisations [are] keen to support managers undergoing this process, [and] see leadership as more than ticking boxes relating to competences.’

(Private sector focus group participant)

Demographic change impacts on social services both in relation to needs and also the workforce. In addition there are concerns that the requirement to make savings through staff costs may lead to the most experienced people leaving organisations²⁶. While there is not sufficient evidence to back the idea of a ‘leadership crisis’ it is helpful to consider the strategies used in other sectors to ensure the next generation of leaders is prepared.

• Leadership development in health services

Within the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland there are initiatives at different levels to prepare staff for the challenges of leadership. These include a framework for chief executive development; the ‘Delivering the Future’ programme for clinical leadership, and a graduate management scheme. All of these represent a high level of investment in the people who will lead the health profession in different roles. The programmes carry a high status and there is strong competition for places. Robust systems for selecting candidates ensure a fair process and external evaluation is positive.

• Leadership and diversity

Our research has not investigated equal opportunities and diversity in social services leadership. A report on **Mapping of Black Asian and Ethnic Minority Career Progression and Leadership Development in Local Government**²⁷ highlights structural barriers to black and minority ethnic (BAME) representation at senior management levels and above. They detail a range of ‘success factors’ that need to be considered for achieving greater equality and conclude that these:

‘Are consistent with, though not identical to, the characteristics of “best practice in leadership programmes”those that are based on a thorough needs assessment, select a suitable audience, design an appropriate infrastructure to support the initiative, design and implement an entire learning system, set up an evaluation system, and take evidence-based actions to reinforce success and improve on deficiencies.’

• Building on experience

As the previous sections have shown there is extensive leadership development activity already in place. It needs to be supported and it needs a more strategic overview. There will be no high returns on leadership without adequate investment of both time and money. People need guidance and skilled facilitation to make effective use of available resources and development opportunities. Different levels of leadership face different challenges and require input and learning activities which match their particular needs.

The focus group consultations demonstrated the need for organisations to collaborate and share expertise in developing leadership across Scottish social services.

‘Because of their position as providers and commissioners, local authorities have a role in promoting leadership in service delivery. They should open up their training and learning opportunities to all in the sector, including more sharing with people who use social services.’

(Public sector telephone interview)

26 Lustig, P; Reynolds, J; Ringland, G; Walsh, R. (2010) ‘Leadership in the Public Sector – the Next Decade’, International Journal of Leadership in Public Services, Vol 6, 1, 34-43

27 Local Government Improvement and Development (2009) Mapping of Black Asian and Ethnic Minority Career Progression and Leadership Development in Local Government

'The Learning Networks are very important because there are 32 local authorities. They can be honest brokers or can host [events, training] and organisations can contribute to the cost.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Need to share practice, share expertise (eg through mentoring), peer support (especially for chief executives, and leaders of smaller organisations, who can sometimes be quite isolated).'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

IN SUMMARY

- There is a significant amount of leadership development activity taking place within social services
- There are a broad array of qualifications and awards available for staff in different roles and at different levels within organisations
- There is limited familiarity with many of the frameworks and resources available on leadership, especially those which are accessible online
- People do not find it easy to navigate the available resources or to know what is most relevant and useful to their specific role
- There is a need for protected time and skilled facilitation as well as financial resources to support leadership development
- There needs to be a strategic approach which makes links between leadership development at individual and at organisational level

THE ROLE OF COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

Exploration of collaborative leadership in focus groups and telephone interviews raised diverse issues which are indicative of the complexity of this aspect of leadership. It was apparent that there is confusion about the difference between partnership working and the concept of leadership in a collaborative context. In terms of our findings there was significant overlap between the views expressed by respondents and existing research on partnerships and collaboration:

- collaboration is a necessity
- not all partners are equal
- there are structural and cultural barriers which undermine collaborative leadership
- a different balance of skills is needed than for leadership in a single agency context
- it is important to find common ground through an overarching goal which has undisputed value
- under pressure people retreat back to their 'home' base.

Collaborative leadership is a necessity

Although significant challenges were identified by many respondents, there was consensus about the importance of collaborative leadership. The personalisation agenda, the need for joined-up services and increasing pressure on finite resources all contribute to a critical need for effective leadership across agency and sector boundaries.

'As service provision becomes more diverse through self-directed support and more outsourcing so the need (and opportunities) for collaborative leadership will increase.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Collaborative leadership is becoming more important in the statutory sector. Some staff work across two or more local authorities and this cannot be achieved unless there is understanding of each other's thinking, ethos and values.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'I think we are going to have to [work together], going forward in the current climate. It's going to have to be about collaboration. And it is going to be about setting old suspicions aside and working [together] going forward. But as long as it's open and transparent and it's fair to everybody then we are up for that.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

'... many people receive support from a number of different organisations and agencies. These organisations may be totally independent from each other. It is crucial therefore that managers and workers develop and show a style of leadership that recognises this situation; that brings these different organisations together; and puts energy and thought into making sure that they are all co-ordinating their work for the benefit of the people they are supporting.'

(Changing Lives User and Carer Forum consultation)

Not all partners are equal

While there was a shared recognition across sectors of the value of collaborative leadership, there was a degree of scepticism about what partnership means in practice. Concerns were voiced about tokenistic commitment to participation and about the unequal distribution of power within collaborative structures.

'What will underpin all effective leadership development is sound values – staff and management have to believe that people who use services are important, active co-producers in services.'

(Changing Lives User and Carer Forum consultation)

“‘Silo mentality” prohibits effective leadership. There is a feeling that the voluntary sector is not always seen as an equal partner when it comes to collaborative leadership, say with the health sector.’

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

‘Partnership working between them and local authorities (LAs) meant that they did what LAs told them to do. [There was] little or no room for manoeuvre within that.’

(Private sector focus group participant)

Structural and cultural barriers

Frustration was expressed about the obstacles which can undermine effective collaboration even when all parties are convinced of the benefits and committed to working together. The divergence in organisational and professional cultures can be a significant barrier and requires boundary spanning activity at all levels. In addition to these cultural factors the determination to persevere in collaborative activity can be sorely tested by incompatible IT systems, budgets, financial reporting procedures and governance arrangements.

‘There are organisational barriers [against collaboration] – different planning cycles, different accountability systems – which lead to huge problems in deciding priorities.’

(Public sector telephone interview)

‘A broad understanding of people’s roles is very helpful and an understanding of each organisation’s culture. It would be very helpful also to have this lower down the organisation, so that people could take a bit of leadership and responsibility to take things forward in their particular part of the organisation.’

(Public sector telephone interview)

A different balance of skills is needed than for leadership in a single agency context

It was recognised that leadership is different when there is no formal power and authority to make and implement decisions. The emphasis shifts more on to interpersonal skills and the ability to build effective working relationships based on trust and influence not control.

‘Some of the skills needed are different from ones needed in your own organisation..... When working across organisations you don’t necessarily have permission to lead. Staff in other organisations don’t necessarily see you in a position to lead [because you are not their manager]. So a lot hinges on trust, building strong relationships, a degree of patience and understanding and being able to have the difficult conversations.’

(Public sector telephone interview)

‘You do have to get involved in managing conflict and be prepared for a bit of compromise and give and take so that you come away with what’s good for all.’

(Public sector telephone interview)

‘You need people skills, you need to get behind what people are saying and spend time with them. It is very time consuming.’

(Public sector telephone interview)

It is important to find common ground through an overarching goal which has undisputed value

One of the more encouraging elements in the feedback on collaborative leadership was the recognition of shared purpose. Conflicting priorities between organisations or sectors could sometimes be overcome by keeping a clear focus on positive outcomes for those on the receiving end of services.

'Another skill is being prepared to share the credit – people have to be not too precious about their own part. I've seen some struggle with that because they are not coming from that perspective. You have to put your own bit behind you and think is the end result good for people who use social services.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Everyone is really trying, to kind of work together in the best interests of the people who are actually paying us. So that's what I think good leadership is about.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

Under pressure people retreat back to their 'home' base

There was considerable anxiety about the impact of recession on collaborative working. Examples of good practice were cited but with an awareness that these were fragile. As resources become more stretched there is a natural tendency to pull back from additional commitments and focus on activities which are essential to an organisation's core mission and its survival. The competitive culture of social care procurement and tendering was also seen to be at odds with the principles of partnership and more permeable boundaries between organisations.

'The voluntary sector has typically been good at sharing policies, practices etc with others with a view to making services better. There was also discussion of joint training between health and social work. In some instances, this is still the case. Some people mentioned however that this has been happening less and less due to competitive tendering.'

(Voluntary sector focus group summary)

'[Collaborative leadership] is evident at the front line where workers work well together. Senior managers may make the right noises but they keep their resources. And the middle people hold on to territory.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Collaborative leadership is beginning to slide in the last year or two, because of the financial climate. My impression is that agencies will only engage if they can see a direct benefit to them.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

Leadership in and across public services

There has been a heightened focus on leadership in public services over recent years. Such attention is helpful as it reflects the limitations of a restricted managerialist approach. There is a call for new public leadership which has public value as its outcome and which has been defined as:

'A form of collective leadership in which public bodies and agencies collaborate in achieving a shared vision based on shared aims and values and distribute this through each organisation in a collegiate way which seeks to promote, influence and deliver improved public value as evidenced through sustained social, environmental and economic well-being within a complex and changing context.'²⁸

28 Brookes, S (2008) 'The Public Leadership Challenge: Full Research Report', ESRC Seminar Series End Of Award Report, Swindon, ESRC

Talking about 'where public value is created' Benington²⁹ suggests:

'The prime arena....are often found at the front-line of the organisation, where there is the closest interaction with clients, citizens, communities and the changing environment. Moreover, public value is increasingly produced not by a single organisation, but by inter-organisational partnerships and networks. This brings with it dilemmas of steering, accountability and measurement.'

Two key points to emerge from recent writing about integrative leadership are the need to bridge diversity and the significance of relational skills in cross sector leadership.

'Bridging' is the ability to hold different perspectives without merging them and to 'move towards the goal of producing a greater good for everyone'³⁰. It is 'the leadership work....[which] helps bridge differences without necessarily reducing them.'³¹ There are clear links to be made between this leadership ability and the need to find common ground through an overarching goal.

Relational skills matter in all kinds of leadership. They are critical in collaborative leadership where influence rather than formal authority makes a difference and where trust is essential.

IN SUMMARY

Collaborative leadership is needed in order to provide responsive, consistent and cost effective support to people with diverse needs. Although there is general agreement about the importance of collaborative leadership this does not ameliorate the significant obstacles which can undermine people's commitment to working together for the greater good. These challenges must not be underestimated at policy or practice level. The ability to build trust, to relate to others with integrity and to 'bridge' diversity are all essential skills for those engaged in leadership activities across agency and sector boundaries.

29 Benington, J (2007) The Public Leadership Challenge, ESRC Seminar Series 06/07, Fourth Seminar, Warwick Business School

30 APALC (2003) Crossing boundaries: an exploration of effective leadership development in communities, Los Angeles: Asian Pacific American Legal Center

31 Ospina, S and Foldy, E (2010) 'Building bridges from the margins: The work of leadership in social change organizations', The Leadership Quarterly, 21, 292-307

WHY IS LEADERSHIP SO CHALLENGING NOW?

In this section of the report we highlight some of the paradoxes of leadership in the current economic climate. The profound challenge posed to public services in times of recession has accentuated a number of tensions or contradictions which might otherwise be less acute.

Despite the increasing workload pressures faced by respondents there was an unequivocal commitment to leadership in social services; a sense that investment in leadership was more important now than ever. There was considerable concern expressed that budget cuts would have a detrimental impact both on leadership development within agencies and especially on collaborative leadership.

'Restrictions on resources are pulling people back.'

(Public sector focus group participant – practitioner)

As resources become ever tighter the benefits of collective leadership become more critical. The expertise of leaders at all levels in the system is needed. But contrary to a culture supporting autonomy there were reports of organisations becoming more bureaucratic and more controlling.

'There are still a lot of frontline workers with enthusiasm but managers are pressing down. You get accused of being a maverick if you have challenging ideas.'

(Public sector focus group participant – practitioner)

'You require leadership at all levels but my anxiety at the moment is that, with all the financial uncertainty, there is a move towards management centralisation, management control.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

These comments came from staff working in the public sector but other constraints were clearly impacting across the sectors.

'There was a feeling of being constrained by the current economic situation and by their position as contractors to local authorities.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

'Feeling that there is a lack of strategic leadership at national level, from COSLA, Scottish Government and SSSC. Voluntary sector organisations often work across numerous local authorities, and each one will have different systems, or different interpretations of national policy direction (eg all local authorities encouraging more personalised services, but each has its own resource allocation system).'

(Voluntary sector focus group summary)

'There is a real concern about inconsistent procurement practices throughout Scotland, this requires a greater sense of national leadership as the private sector, if they are providing services across different local authority boundaries, are experiencing a great deal of variation in commissioning practices.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

'... time and funding can be considerable barriers to innovation, as can competitive tendering processes.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

Creativity and innovation are seen as vital to 21st century social services. The message of Changing Lives³² was that 'more of the same won't work'. Expectations that staff 'do more with less' lean still more heavily on the premise that scarce resources can be used creatively. Our consultation explored the area of risk and innovation, looking at the differences and the commonalities across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

'Focus group participants felt that the voluntary sector is generally well placed to be creative and innovative, particularly where organisations have a strong vision combined with the flexibility to adapt to changing needs and requirements. For example, much of the current focus on personalisation originated in the voluntary sector.'

(Voluntary sector focus group summary)

'The voluntary sector and private sector (but especially the former) were seen as having more experience of being innovative, of having to adapt to changing situations if they were to survive. For some, being smaller than local authorities made it easier to respond quickly to change.'

(Public sector focus group summary)

'A lot can be constrained by a corporate approach. Corporately, there can be something of a Starbucks mentality – what's good enough for Highways is good enough for Social Work. The corporate agenda and mechanisms take over and senior managers encourage a sheep dip approach – all the same rather than individuality.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'...suggestion that different sectors had different constraints on their ability to be creative and innovative. Voluntary [sector] seen as having less constraint, private sector as being constrained by finances and economic climate, and public sector by management styles, unions, etc.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

There was shared recognition of conflicting pressures impacting on staff in diverse roles and sectors:

'Within staff groups leadership is compromised. At director level they can be creative but how does that filter down where there is a push to get things done. In my own career, I've been given lots of training on leadership issues but now with all the volume and governance of this work, monitoring and writing reports takes up most of my time.'

(Public sector focus group participant)

'I participated in [Leading to Deliver] five years ago and came out fired up with all sorts of ideas, but I think the problem is the day job gets in the way...particularly in the voluntary sector where budgets are under pressure all the time.'

(Voluntary sector focus group participant)

'If you come up with an innovative and creative service that is cheaper then it would stand a good chance of success. If you found one that was creative and innovative and much better but was more expensive then I think that you might as well forget about it.'

(Private sector focus group participant)

The regulatory bodies (Social Work Inspection Agency, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care) all affirm the crucial role of leadership in improving outcomes for people who use social services. But a number of responses suggested that the regulatory process itself is at risk of undermining creativity and innovation.

32 Scottish Executive (2006) Changing Lives Report of the 21st Century Social Work Review, Edinburgh, Stationery Office

'Sometimes regulation skews activity... inspection can lead to more conservative ways of doing things.'

(Public sector telephone interview)

'Voluntary sector organisations were clear that it was important that regulation does not stifle creativity.'

(Voluntary sector focus group summary)

'A negative inspection report means practitioners are not allowed to take any risks or show imagination.'

(Public sector focus group participant – practitioner)

These unintended consequences need to be addressed. Ways have to be found to ensure that regulation designed to improve outcomes for people who use social services and carers does not have a detrimental impact on the ability of staff to work flexibly and creatively.

'If you follow the line that the greatest innovation and creativity is needed at the greatest times of change, then we are in that position at the moment. So there is more need – whatever we mean or [how we] define innovative and creative leadership – there is more need for that now than there has been in decades because of the climate that we are currently in.'

(Private sector focus group respondent)

IN SUMMARY

- In the current economic climate there is a heightened need for effective leadership at all levels within Scotland's social services.
- At the same time there are fewer resources, both time and money, to support the development of leadership capacity.
- Creativity and innovation are essential to respond to the challenges of more personalised services and resource constraints.
- At the same time many front line staff are experiencing reduced autonomy and more 'top-down' control.
- Individualised support involves both creativity and measured risk taking.
- There is an inevitable tension between risk enabling cultures and an organisation's duty of care to both people who use social services and staff.

NECESSARY BUT NOT SUFFICIENT

'Necessary but not sufficient' is a repeated theme in the literature about effective leadership. There is no simple formula nor is there one style of leadership which is right for every context. Leaders need to have integrity and to be competent but they also need to engage with people in a genuine and meaningful way³³.

Transcendent leadership³⁴ describes the need for leadership of self, leadership of others and leadership of the organisation. To those three elements we can add leadership which spans organisational boundaries.

Within and across Scotland's social services there is energy and enthusiasm for leadership. There is potential at every level to make a valuable contribution. It will take courage to accept the risks as well as the possibilities of leadership at all levels. There has to be consistent commitment to developing leadership capacity and the confidence to both support and challenge people on their journey.

- **Scotland's social services need leadership at all levels but they also need genuine connections and mutual respect between formal and informal leaders if organisations are to be responsive to the challenges that face them.**
- **Front line staff need to have delegated authority. They also need a sense of personal authority and the confidence to take measured risks.**
- **Leadership development requires a whole systems approach which includes both self and organisational development.**
- **Collaborative leadership needs strong relational skills as well as perseverance and commitment.**
- **Complexity and paradox need to be acknowledged without any promise of simple solutions. Effective leadership will 'hold' the uncertainty without being overwhelmed by it.**



33 Alban-Metcalf, J and Alimo-Metcalf, B (2009b) op cit

34 Crossan, M; Vera, D; Nanjad, L (2008) 'Transcendent leadership: Strategic leadership in dynamic environments', The Leadership Quarterly 19 569-581

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