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## **LEADING TOGETHER**

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

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#### **Linked reports**

**December 2010**

- **Leadership in Scotland's social services: background and context**
- **Gaps and development needs in leadership: a literature review**
- **Leadership development needs in Scotland's public services: 'below surface' dynamics in organisations**
- **The regulatory bodies: an overview of existing intelligence about leadership**
- **Leadership concepts and the role of competencies and frameworks**



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## **LEADERSHIP IN SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL SERVICES: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The Changing Lives Report (Scottish Executive, 2006) highlighted the need for leadership at all levels within the social services workforce. The Leadership and Management subgroup of the review made recommendations for a leadership and management development framework which 'should make explicit common qualities and behaviours that are required of all leaders and managers in a public sector context but also identify whether there are additional or specific needs for the social service context' (Leadership and Management subgroup, 2005). In the same year the report on Improving Front Line Services (Scottish Executive, 2005) had identified ten key principles of successful people management and had called for 'emotionally intelligent leadership' which 'connects with people at both head and heart levels.'

Since the publication of the Changing Lives Report significant work has been undertaken to progress the apparent gaps in leadership development within social services. The Leadership and Management change programme, led by David Crawford, set itself the task of defining skills and competencies needed for front line leadership, strategic leadership, academic leadership and political leadership. Work outputs from this group include the 4Ps leadership framework made accessible to the workforce via the Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) portal. The Practice Governance change programme addressed shortcomings identified in relation to professional leadership, with guidance on the role of the Chief Social Work Officer being published early in 2010. In parallel with this work there have been important developments in Citizen Leadership led by the Service User and Carer Forum, and in 2008 the document 'Principles and Standards of Citizen Leadership' was published. The Scottish Government's commitment to personalisation strengthens the need to encompass these principles within the leadership agenda for social services going forward.

The Scottish Leadership Foundation report (2003) had made recommendations for an accredited leadership development programme specifically designed for managers in social work services and, over a five year period, approximately five hundred staff across the sector participated in the Leading to Deliver programme funded by the Scottish

Executive. A second report was published by Van Zwanenberg in 2005 (Scottish Leadership Foundation) which reviewed progress and included comparative analysis of leadership development in other organisations and sectors including the NHS, Police, Education and the Civil Service. A comprehensive evaluation of Leading to Deliver was commissioned by the Scottish Government and its findings published in 2008 (York Consulting LLP). While there was broad support for the programme from participants, the findings remained inconclusive about the impact of leadership development programmes on organisational performance and outcomes. The demise of the Scottish Leadership Foundation inevitably impacted on progress in defining an overarching leadership and management strategy for social services. A range of leadership development activities were initiated across Scotland to fill that gap and the Scottish Social Services Learning Networks have played an important part in supporting new 'leadership communities', co-consultancy and action learning sets for managers. These have provided valuable fora where the principles of 'leadership at all levels' can be nurtured but there is a risk of patchy and fragmented leadership activity which will not suffice to meet the challenges facing the social services workforce over the next decade and beyond.

The Social Work Inspection Agency's report Improving Social Work in Scotland (SWIA, 2010) was based on performance inspections carried out across the 32 local authorities in Scotland. Its conclusions unequivocally assert the central role of leadership in ensuring high quality services:

- 'The quality of leadership impacted on outcomes for people who use social work services
- leadership of social work had a direct impact on staff morale and confidence.'

The importance of leadership does not, therefore, appear to be contested. What is less clear is a shared understanding of what leadership means; the most effective way to promote sound leadership and how to ensure that investment in leadership development activities will have a positive impact on the delivery of public services. Transforming Public Services (Scottish Executive, 2006) identified the need for 'strong, visible and dynamic leadership' and an expansion of leadership capacity including the ability to work collaboratively across agencies. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) held a series of seminars in Edinburgh in 2009 exploring different aspects of leadership. A linked publication Leadership

in the Public Sector in Scotland called for 'a critical overview of developments in leadership theory in recent years, and of its application through Scottish public sector leadership training' (ESRC, 2009). In progressing a strategic direction and vision for leadership in social services there is a need for rigorous and critical evaluation of current leadership theory and practice.

## **Definitions**

In progressing a vision for leadership the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) has endeavoured to 'seek consensus about working definitions of leadership and management, the differences and the overlap between them'. Ranging from Bennis' (1992) statement 'the manager does things right, the leader does the right thing' to Grint's (2008) linking of management with 'tame problems' and leadership with 'wicked issues', there is no shortage of definitions. A tendency which can be observed in some of the literature is the halo effect surrounding leadership. Management is portrayed as a mundane activity alongside the more inspired and visionary cult of leadership. In seeking to explore both 'differences and overlap' the SSSC helpfully acknowledges the complementary functions of management and leadership and the need for both in contemporary social services. Ruch (2007) writes of the containing aspect of management in social work. She is referring to the psychodynamic concept of the emotional 'container' (Bion, 1959) where the supervisor's capacity to listen and to 'hold' the worker's experiences, allows those experiences to be processed and not to overwhelm. The report into the death of Victoria Climbié (Laming, 2003) and other inquiry reports affirm the role of supervision in good practice. But Ruch is also describing the necessary containment which is provided by sound management and organisation. Systems and procedures which support front-line workers can offer a secure base enhancing the quality and consistency of direct work with service users and carers. The impact of managerialist cultures on professional autonomy (Harris, 2003, 2009; Lymbery, 2001) and over reliance on procedures in some areas of social care has contributed to a splitting which potentially romanticises leadership at the expense of management. In their review of the 'transformational' aspirations of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Social Work Review, Watson and West (2008:310) question whether it will be possible to find 'a resolution between the businesslike environment of service provision and the aspiration of creating a flexible leadership culture that enables personalised services to be designed and delivered.'

The allure of leadership is strengthened when combined with the power of transformation. Burns' (1962) distinction between transactional and transformational leadership highlights qualities which clearly belong to leadership in the context of contemporary social services. The ability to inspire and motivate others; to foster shared vision and to value the contribution of followers aligns with the fundamental values of social care. Transformational leadership has other connotations, however, and the association with charismatic or heroic models of leadership is less well matched to principles of empowerment and participation. Western's (2008) description of the leader as 'messiah' reflects an era when faith was invested in the power of a single individual to transform an organisation and achieve excellence. The example of Enron and disillusion with leadership across the corporate world including finance has introduced a critical edge to transformational leadership theory.

In writing of a 'fifth generation' of leadership theory, Pine (2007) describes participatory management which values staff as the most important resource in human services. She stresses the importance of 'moral alignment' (Manning, cited in Pine, 2007) where expectations of staff working in partnership with service users can only be realised if the behaviour of managers and leaders is congruent with these ideals. Pine's model of participatory management is closer therefore to post-transformational or post-heroic leadership as described by Alimo-Metcalfe (2009). A commitment to leadership at all levels requires an understanding which does not rely on trait theories of great leaders or charismatic individuals but one which rests on a more inclusive model of leadership.

## **Leadership activity and leadership development**

The report 'Evaluating Leadership Development in Scotland' (Tourish et al, 2007) 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. These were 360-degree feedback, coaching, mentoring, networking, job assignments and action learning. Within the social services sector it is important to evaluate the prevalence of these practices but also to investigate alternative approaches and diverse perspectives on leadership activity. This includes the co-consultancy and 'risky business' initiatives which have emerged within the leadership communities supported by the Learning Networks. It also encompasses the activities of Local Practitioner Forums and their contribution to

professional autonomy and an engaged workforce. The conferences which have taken place to promote the principles of Citizen Leadership (eg Citizen's Leadership: Everyone's Business, 2010) represent significant examples of leadership activity which need to inform and enrich the sector's understanding of leadership in all its forms.

Alban-Metcalfe and Alimo-Metcalfe (2009) distinguish between leader development and leadership development. Echoing the concerns about charismatic leadership they do not underestimate the contribution of individual leaders but emphasise the need for leadership which is distributed across organisations. It is the ability of leaders at a senior level to engage with others and to foster leadership capacity which is most critical in contemporary organisational and professional contexts. Tourish et al (2010) have critiqued transformational leadership education in university business schools identifying two contradictory strands within the teaching on these programmes. They draw attention to an 'unresolved tension' between models of leadership committed to shared vision and collective interest and more controlling top-down approaches reliant on performance management systems. They propose an alternative curriculum 'based on followership, the promotion of critical upward communication within organisations, and the recognition of leadership as a contested, discursive and co-constructed phenomenon.' Grint (2005:4) uses the metaphor of the leader as wheelwright whose skill lies in determining the spaces between the spokes of a wheel:

'while the spokes represent the collective resources necessary to an organisation's success – and the resources that the leader lacks – the spaces represent the autonomy for followers to grow into leaders themselves.'

Across diverse organisational settings the concept of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1998) begins to resonate with a renewed focus on values and a growing commitment to corporate social responsibility. While there is a risk of tokenistic compliance and self interest driving some organisations' commitment to sustainability, there is also a rich opportunity for the social services sector to explore and develop the potential 'fit' between social work values and models of leadership which seek to enhance not diminish the autonomy of others

'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?' (Greenleaf, 1998).

Seddon (2008) critiques the impact of targets and performance measurement on the quality of public services. He advocates enhanced professional autonomy and measuring standards on the basis of direct customer experience. His recommendation that responsibility is best delegated down to staff involved more closely with the recipients of services accords with the principles underpinning action learning (Revans, 1980). Revans' belief that the most effective solutions were generated at the 'coal-face' rather than delivered top-down from senior managers met with little enthusiasm in post-war British industry. Over subsequent decades, however, the use of action learning as a management and leadership development tool has become widespread across diverse sectors. Our own work within continuing professional development has demonstrated its potential in group supervision as well as peer learning sets for managers.

The complexity of contemporary public sector leadership demands new skills and approaches. A number of programmes have been initiated in response to those challenges including the pilot mentoring scheme for senior managers in social services and the leadership development programme 'Collaborating for Outcomes in the Public Sector.' Within the voluntary sector the Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations (ACOSVO) offers master classes and a Leading Edge programme delivered in partnership with the Social Enterprise Academy. Grint (2008) defines leadership as the necessary response to 'wicked issues' and distinguishes it from management which appropriately deals with familiar problems on the basis of tried and tested methods. Part of the art of leadership is the skill of convincing others that an issue is truly 'wicked' and resisting the pressure to offer short term solutions which fail to address complex and interdependent factors. Asking the right questions and activating the knowledge and expertise which resides in multiple stakeholders is the appropriate leadership response to such issues. Heifetz' (1997, 2009) model of adaptive leadership similarly recommends 'giving the work back to the people'. He describes the subtle balancing act which a leader needs to practice – maintaining the optimal level of stability/instability in an organisation where workers are alert and

responsive to change but shielded from the debilitating impact of constant disequilibrium.

The readiness to question; to tolerate uncertainty; to maintain focus while being change-ready; to recognise interdependence and work collaboratively are all vital leadership tasks. They manifest in different ways at different levels within the social services sector but generating capability across the system is a necessity. 'Skills in partnership working' and the 'ability of staff to operate autonomously' are amongst the key skills identified in the Sector Skills Assessment Report (2010) as well as the need for effective leadership skills in children's services and other practice arenas.

### **Leadership qualifications, awards and competency frameworks**

There is a diverse and extensive range of qualifications, awards and accredited programmes relevant to management and leadership in social services. A clear overview of provision including critical evaluation of the fit between different training and development routes and specific leadership roles is harder to access. The introduction of the Leadership and Management for Care award (2008) supports leadership across Scottish social services and the National Occupational Standards provide a benchmark for comparing a wide spectrum of training and development opportunities for managers across the sector. For many staff an accredited award is essential in order to meet registration requirements while others may be seeking alternative ways of developing their skills and confidence in leadership and management roles. Feedback from first line managers in social services often indicates that they feel unprepared for the transition from practitioner to management responsibilities. Career progression leads experienced staff into new roles without always supporting them in the shift of professional identity as well as the development of a different set of skills.

Alban-Metcalfe and Alimo-Metcalfe (2009) describe three interdependent aspects of successful leadership. Firstly there are the personal qualities and values of the individual; secondly, there are leadership competencies and thirdly there is engaging leadership behaviour. While competency is an 'essential characteristic of anyone in a management or leadership role' (2009:13) it does not suffice unless complemented by the capacity to engage positively with others. These authors believe that the limitations as well as the strengths of competency frameworks need to be

acknowledged 'effective leaders are not the sum of a set of competencies' and 'what matters is not a person's sum score on a set of competencies but how well a person uses what talents he or she has to get the job done' (Hollenbeck et al, 2006, quoted in Alban-Metcalf, 2009:11). They argue for sector specific research to ensure that competencies are relevant to a particular area and for continuity of competencies required of staff at different levels and different roles. An example of such continuity is found in the Leadership Development Framework for the Scottish Police Service (2009). This document also highlights the finding of the Police Leadership Study (2008) that 'the ability and willingness to nourish and develop other members of staff is arguably the most critical feature of effective leadership within policing.'

National Occupational Standards for Leadership and Management in Social Care and the Continuous Learning Framework (CLF) are both sector specific. The CLF also reflects a commitment to supporting emotional intelligence within professional development. Goleman et al's (2002) work in this area includes the concept of 'resonant leadership' where empathy and relationship building are critical to success and sustainability. Distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002 cited in ESRC, 2009), 'engaged nearby leadership' (Alban-Metcalf, 2009) and other terms such as dispersed or roving leadership all describe models of leadership where diversity of expertise is valued and where leaders and followers are actively engaged in working towards common goals. The report Improving Social Work in Scotland stated 'for there to be effective leadership of people, people themselves have to be willing to follow' (SWIA, 2010). In gathering and analysing information about leadership competencies and frameworks it will be important to retain a focus on 'softer' or less tangible skills which foster capacity and contribution from others.

### **Impact of leadership development activities**

The issue of impact is a critical one and is raised repeatedly in relevant literature and policy documents. The Audit Scotland report (2006) found that 'three-quarters of public sector bodies were unable to identify the impact of this spending on their organisation's performance' (Tourish et al, 2007). Within the evaluation of the Leading to Deliver programme (2008) there was some divergence between participants' and line managers' perceptions of impact in the workplace. Both groups identified 'organisational barriers to use of learning' and the area least clearly evidenced was impacts on service users. Tourish et al (2007) made a

number of recommendations about leadership development activities being more closely aligned to the kinds of behaviours, values and competencies deemed essential to the achievement of organisational goals. Such activities should then be rigorously evaluated against key business objectives and the impact on organisational performance routinely monitored. SWIA (2010) has already published its findings on the impact of leadership on staff morale and on outcomes for service users. Leadership development, whether it takes the form of accredited programmes, individual coaching and mentoring or other activities, will need to demonstrate a tangible contribution to responsive and cost-effective services. The ability and willingness to support the voices of citizen leaders will be integral to professional leadership roles.

Sustainability also needs to be addressed on a number of different levels. In addition to considering how leaders of the future can be supported and developed there is a need for better understanding of how learning cultures can be sustained within organisations despite increasing pressures and tight resources. All too often the impact of leadership development activities or training programmes seems to fade once participants return to their workplace and operational demands take precedence. The Social Services Knowledge Scotland (SSKS) portal and a range of other initiatives offer social services managers and practitioners access to a rich array of electronic learning resources. But there is evidence to suggest reluctance on the part of many social care professionals to utilise online resources to their full capacity. The 'relationship' aspect of social work seems to be as important in professional learning and development as it is in practice. A range of approaches need to be explored to ensure that leadership development has a positive and a sustained impact within organisations.

Frances Patterson

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## **GAPS AND DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN LEADERSHIP IN SCOTLAND'S SOCIAL SERVICES: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

A burgeoning UK and international literature reflects the sustained interest in, and concern with, leadership and management in the public sector. The literature informs us about the range and efficacy of leadership styles, models and attributes (eg Lawler & Bilson, 2010; Lustig et al, 2010; SWIA 2010; Boehm & Yoels 2009) including those characteristics thought to be specific to social work leadership (Lawler & Bilson 2010; Fisher 2009; Holosko 2009). A number of common issues emerging from the recent literature are considered below in relation to how they inform development needs in current leadership activity.

### **Distinctiveness of social work/social services leadership**

If, indeed, there are recognised characteristics associated with social work services which somehow set them apart from other public services, these can be linked to some extent to the values base underpinning professional practice. Lawler and Bilson (2010) state 'social work activities in themselves can at times be seen as political in the ways in which they might challenge current power dynamics in society' (p2) and '..in social work, situations are frequently messy and have significant moral and emotional depth' (ibid;51). Fisher, albeit writing from an American perspective, cites Rank & Hutchieson in identifying five distinctive leadership characteristics in social work:

- commitment to a code of ethics
- taking a systemic perspective
- altruism
- concern about the public image of the profession
- participatory leadership style.

However, in reviewing a range of leadership theories thought to be compatible with social work, she cautions that 'there has been no empirical research to determine if the core principles that social workers follow with clients are transferred to their work as managers' (2009:356-8).

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) (2010) identifies some service-specific leadership issues which are clearly linked to the profession's values base

- establishing a vision that is person centred and promotes dignity, respect, equality and inclusion
- raising the profile of a service which is not universal
- balancing complex and divergent responsibilities (these include providing care and protection to some of the most vulnerable children and adults, and compulsory interventions, such as the management and supervision of high risk offenders)
- assessing and managing risk in ways that are responsible but do not undermine individuals' rights
- demonstrating efficient and effective delivery of services where outcomes for individuals are not always easily identified or measured
- giving professional leadership to social work services staff, and
- assisting elected members and strategic partners in their understanding of particular responsibilities, for example equality, public protection and corporate parenting.

Cox (2009) identifies four 'paradoxes' which further complicate service delivery

1. Low status/high impact – meeting the development needs of low status staff but whose frontline activity is both complex and significant
2. Private provision/public good – the shift to private provision of public services
3. Partnership/conflict which he defines as deriving from the fact that "much of what the sector does is concerned with battles for limited resources and social and human rights. These are necessarily contested" (p29)
4. Profession/anti-profession – where professional status is deemed less important than upholding professional values.

A number of writers support the view that leadership should become integrated into the social work curriculum (Fisher 2009, Holosko 2009, Devine 2010), a view predicated on its current absence and a reliance therefore, on learning to be a leader, or developing leadership qualities

and skills while 'doing' a job, if not that job. Action learning, however, is already seen as a 'cornerstone' of the Learning Communities (see below) and is also used in post-qualifying education. This perhaps suggests that there is scope for complementary leadership activity at pre-and post-qualifying levels.

The Leadership in Scotland's social services: background and context report rehearses a range of models of leadership and concludes that an inclusive model is best placed to promote leadership traits at all levels. It is clear that delivering responsive, values-driven professional services places additional or specific pressure on those charged with leading those services. This perhaps signals the need for greater understanding of what distinctive features might be desirable or required by the sector.

### **Social work leadership through financial turbulence**

The 'distinctiveness' arguments above perhaps help us understand the particular tensions of serving society's most vulnerable members within a managerialist, target-driven ethos. Lawson & Cox (2010) identify the impact of "the myriad of performance measures facing public sector leaders" along with 'swiftly changing priorities due to political decisions' (p9) while Boland & Coleman describe the 'relentless focus on delivery' (2008:313).

If we then consider unprecedented global financial turmoil, the challenges become clearer. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) refer to the severe pressure on resources facing the Scottish public sector and the 'apparent' problems of governance and leadership (2009:2/3). SOLACE (2010) consider that an anticipated "real" budget cut of 12% is a reasonable working assumption and a number of writers warn that public sector leaders have hitherto been untroubled by this level of financial cutback (eg Lustig et al, 2010).

Demographic change is leading to predicted increased demand for services from among the ageing, more frail population and increasing numbers of severely disabled children surviving with complex care needs. In tandem with this, the requirement to make savings through staff costs may lead to the 'most effective' (ie possibly mature and experienced) leaving first (Lustig et al, 2010) with the prospect of less experienced staff reluctant to fill their roles (Johnson, 2009). Here she cautions, however, about the lack of evidence to support the view that retiring

baby-boomers are about to create a leadership crisis. Mant states that 'producing good outputs is only half the battle – the managerial side of the equation. Producing good outcomes calls for an extra layer of contextualisation' (2010:20). This may well refer to how future service delivery will be shaped by shifts in not only demographic patterns, but in patterns of demand, such as that for more children to be looked after in formal placement (SOLACE, 2010). It seems logical, too, that anticipated cuts in hitherto "essential" services, will lead inexorably to a higher demand for those same services or some kind of alternative service response.

What appears to be required is a 'new kind of leadership' in order to meet the specific demands of this decade's, if not century's, uncharted financial landscape (Lustig et al, 2010; Devine, 2010; Holosko, 2009) and this perhaps signals the need for a greater understanding of what this leadership might look like (SWIA, 2010; SOLACE, 2010).

### **The emergence of leadership "communities"**

From among the many leadership models available to social work (Lawler & Bilson, 2010) a preference seems to have emerged in Scotland for that of distributed leadership. This approach appears to have increasing appeal as it offers an empowering opportunity to individuals and groups to 'lead from any chair' (Lustig et al, 2010:38) and, since 'much social care is delivered individually, in people's own homes or in community settings far away from the oversight of managers or the influence of policy and procedures' (Cox, 2009: 30), its relevance seems obvious. The inclusion element seems important. For example, Devine (2010) in his Canadian study of front line social workers' perceptions of leadership, found that 'overall many social workers reported not feeling involved and valued in the [change] process' and that their input was 'simply tokenism' (p127). Additionally, Frahm & Martin ((2009) argue that social work needs an 'external network focus' as they 'interact with and depend on others to jointly achieve community-level outcome' (p417).

Distributed leadership is also attributed 'with enabling a pooling of ideas and expertise to produce services and leadership energy that is greater than the sum of individual capabilities' (ESRC, 2009:13), with further benefits to partnership and cross-boundary activities (ibid). Gunter (2009) however, is sceptical about any leadership model (including distributed) which does not start with the 'beneficiaries' of that leadership

and, although writing principally about education, she identifies alternative approaches that start with 'social justice and humanity.' Gill (2009) suggests that, in times of crisis (see above) it may be more effective to revert to 'charismatic, individual leadership' more prevalent in the private sector, in preference to 'collective, consensual leadership' (p24).

MacRae (2009) charts the roots of the preference for distributed leadership in her review of the literature related to the establishment in Scotland of leadership "communities". These are described as

'groups of practitioners who support and encourage one another to expand their individual and joint leadership capacity' (Dunoon, 2004 cited in Tavendale, 2010) and..

'a community of connected, open minded and motivated leaders who share ideas, knowledge and experiences, and who seek to be the best they can be at delivering social services in a way that meets the needs of service users' (York Consulting, 2008 cited in Tavendale, 2010).

MacRae tracks their establishment from an evaluation of the Leading to Deliver programme whereby sustainability of the learning and enhanced skills base was thought to need 'syndicate groups' – networking opportunities to share knowledge, ideas and experiences.

A recent snapshot of Scotland's leadership communities is provided by Tavendale (2010) in her overview of how the Scottish Social Services Learning Networks 'could further develop social services leadership communities.' Her report, comprising the results of both review and consultation, provides ample evidence of developmental needs for the whole workforce if the ideals of leadership communities are to be realised in practice. There appears to have been successful and enthusiastic engagement with the initial establishment of these communities, but sustaining the activities has been less effective and Tavendale (p8) identifies four tasks for the Learning Networks to recapture that early engagement and establish sustainable communities:

- continuous review and consultation around impact
- continuing with network activities, building on emerging capacity
- publicising and marketing

- clarifying outcomes and what participants should expect to gain.

Tavendale's report would appear to signal that the sustainability of the existing leadership communities requires greater investment in a range support, not least in the time and space made available to those who seek to make best use of the anticipated benefits they advertise.

## **Political leadership**

Arguably, public sector leadership is what bridges 'the aspirations of politicians and the service seen by the citizen' (Lustig et al, 2010: 36). Political decisions can lead to 'swiftly changing priorities' (Lawson & Cox, 2010) and a 'context of uncertainty' with 'rapid and pervasive' organisational change (Devine, 2010). SWIA (2010) identified that social work staff were not confident that elected members valued social work services and this seems a stark and fundamental basis for mistrust and low morale within an already depleted workforce. It seems to suggest that development of political leadership within social services can be better informed by what emerges as the distinctive characteristics and requirements demanded by responsive professional leadership.

## **Citizen leadership**

Boland & Coleman (2008) suggest that local government leaders need to 'fundamentally change the way they consult people about what matters to them, how they listen and how they respond to what they hear if they are to become equal actors in the lifeworld and not just directors of the system' (p315). Kendrick and Sullivan (2009) identify no less than 10 challenges to leadership if it is to effectively promote inclusion and valued roles and state boldly that 'enduring collective leadership more readily accomplishes complex tasks better than individual leadership, however exceptional it may be' (p74).

The 2020 Commission into Public Services (cited by Patrick Wintour, The Guardian 14 September p7) includes recognition of the need to reshape public services around a shift in power to local citizens.

It is clear more needs to be known about inclusive models of leadership which empower those referred to earlier as service 'beneficiaries', not least in order to shift a perception of those passive in their role as

recipients, to one where they are engaged within partnership arrangements which contribute to how their services are shaped.

## **Summary**

There are a number of imperatives emerging from the recent literature which inform gaps and needs

1. Distinctive leadership for social services – what should this look like?
2. Demographic change - to what extent can we predict it will affect
  - demand for services
  - workforce sustainability, particularly those with enhanced leadership skills?
3. Financial turbulence – what leadership qualities and styles will best meet these challenges in a relatively untested workforce?
4. Leadership skills
  - fledgling leadership communities and the required support to sustain their membership
  - inclusion of leadership as part of the social work curriculum – implications for academic leadership
  - clarity around continuing professional development through leadership communities and other leadership initiatives
5. Political Leadership – what qualities can the workforce expect from their elected leaders?
6. Citizen Leadership – how will inclusive leadership be achieved?

Brenda Gillies  
September 2010

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## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT NEEDS IN SCOTLAND'S PUBLIC SERVICES: 'BELOW SURFACE' DYNAMICS IN ORGANISATIONS**

### **Background**

The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) (2010) report on Improving Social Work in Scotland notes that:

'There is a strong correlation between a competent, confident and valued workforce and the effective delivery of social work services. In a rapidly changing environment the workforce needs to be flexible, and staff should be supported to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to adapt and evolve in response to changing need and demand' (p. 93).

The report also notes in the same chapter that appropriate management training 'was a neglected area' (p. 98).

The overview and analysis of current leadership development programmes across Scotland reveals a rich and varied picture. There are many programmes which are carefully designed and well delivered and which focus on important different aspects of the leadership role, including; the strategic context; the leadership role itself which includes performance management; collaborative leadership and leadership qualities and behaviours. For example, the sustained development programme, 'Delivering Quality through Leadership' (NHS Scotland, June 2009) is one amongst several current Scottish leadership development programmes of clear quality in its design and delivery. Formal evaluation has revealed high levels of satisfaction with this programme which evidently has had a significant role in building leadership capacity in the Scottish public sector.

### **'Below surface' dynamics**

In addition to the identified forms of work on leadership development there are additional and important forms of leadership development which merit inclusion into future leadership development programmes in Scotland which would extend the scope and deepen the impact of these programmes.

Staff at all levels of organisations are needing to learn to manage increasingly turbulent and changeable environments, to learn to exercise their own personal and organisational authority in a confident and

appropriate way and to be helped to reflect on how they take up their organisational role. Scoping exercises on identifying leadership needs often identify the need for support and training in managing conflicting and competing agendas; developing self awareness and better understanding of political processes (see for example: Delivering the Future: programme to develop future strategic and clinical leaders in NHS Scotland, Programme Information, April 2006). A lot of what preoccupies staff in organisational life are the covert agendas and below surface dynamics with which they have to contend.

Egan (1994) wrote about how much of staff time in organisations is devoted to what he calls 'shadow side' activities - the internal politics, the personality clashes, the turf wars - those realities that often disrupt effective work but which are not dealt with or discussed in any of the formal settings of the organisation or in traditional management development programmes. He noted that:

'when managers are given the opportunity to name and discuss shadow-side realities, the floodgates open. They say that in times of crisis over 80 percent of their time and energy is consumed with the irrationalities of the system, even in so-called normal times, many managers claim that over half of their energy is taken up by these concerns.'

Stacey, (2010) internationally known for his work on complexity theory, also considers that current leadership development does not sufficiently address the complexity of organisational demands and realities:

'If one thinks of organizations in complex responsive processes terms, then the role of business schools will be to provide opportunities for managers and leaders to understand what they are doing in reflexive ways that take account of the conversational life of organizations, the figurations of power they create and the ideologies which underlie the choices they make. The educational contribution would be that of providing greater insight into the games we are all preoccupied in and such insight would also be the aim of business school research activities. Perhaps we will become acutely aware of the absurdity of training future managers in terms of abstract decision-making techniques only, largely ignoring the complex dynamics of real life in organizations. Perhaps the focus will shift to greater attempts to prepare future managers to deal with difficult people, surely one of their main roles' (p. 228).

## **An 'adaptive challenge' for leadership development work in Scotland**

Heifetz (2002) identified one of the key tasks of leadership as being that of identifying 'adaptive challenges' and managing the adaptive challenge facing the organisation. He differentiates between 'technical' and 'adaptive' problems. Adaptive problems:

'are not amenable to authoritative expertise or standard operating procedures. They cannot be solved by someone who provides answers from on high. We call these adaptive challenges because they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways - changing attitudes, values, and behaviours - people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment' (p.13).

There is an analogy here between Heifetz's conceptualization of 'adaptive challenges' and Grint's (2010) conceptualisation of 'wicked' problems versus 'tame' ones: tame problems are where the causes of the problem are known. Experience provides a guide here, and the problems can be tackled by applying known processes through conventional plans and projects. What Grint terms 'wicked' problems are different. They involve complex, messy and often intractable challenges, that can probably rarely be totally eliminated. There are no known solutions, partly because there are no simple, linear causes – the actual causes are themselves complex, ambiguous and often interconnected – multiple causes and causal chains abound.

### **Adaptive challenges and 'wicked' problems to be faced in leadership development work**

There is also an adaptive challenge facing those who work in leadership development: that challenge is to seek to provide the kind of learning environments which will match and align themselves with the complexities and challenges of current organisational functioning. Existing Scottish leadership development work provides important conceptual and practical support to participants, and is clearly appreciated. However, as participants grapple with their own 'adaptive challenges' in their workplaces, leadership development needs to consider how it can grow and adapt to incorporate work and learning events which would provide staff with a structure and opportunity to examine how they take up their role in the organisation, how they manage their own personal and

organisational authority and how they manage the boundary between their own inner world and the realities of the external environment. In short, how to understand and better manage the complexities of organisational life.

### **The Tavistock contribution to leadership development**

The Tavistock approach to leadership development focuses on issues around authority, role, leadership and followership in organisations and on the intricate underlying dynamics entailed in managing these complexities. The Tavistock has an internationally established reputation in providing significant and life changing learning experiences in this field. These educational and learning events have become known as "Group Relations Conferences" and have been designed to provide participants with a carefully structured experience which combines experiential learning with reflection and application:

'A group relations conference is a 'real time' learning laboratory where participants can analyse their leadership styles and experiment creatively in expanding their repertoire of leadership skills. Together with conference staff, they can critically examine different models of organisational functioning and appraise their leadership performance' (Tavistock Institute brochure. p 1).

What is unique about these events is that members actually experience - in the carefully managed conference setting - the challenges of intergroup and intragroup relations; the taking up of one's role; how one relates to authority figures and to one's peers. What is unique about this work is that it is not merely a discursive/reflective process but an actual experiential event in which these underlying issues are fore-grounded and experienced in the here-and-now. The conference experiential events are then the subject of individual and group analysis and reflection.

The Tavistock brochure (2009) *What is a group relations conference?* notes that:

'The conference is an intensive experience which enables you to examine and question the nature of your roles as leaders, managers and followers and the place of your organisations in uncertain environments. The conference will offer you opportunities to take part in developing new structures and technologies of practice to mobilise and encourage creative collaboration and inter-dependency.'

In Scotland, the Scottish Institute of Human Relations carries out work in the Tavistock tradition and has provided national and international group relations conferences. These 'real time learning laboratories' have provided rich learning and challenge within leadership development:

'Leicester has made me think a lot more about what (organisational life) means .. and how we all respond to this and create this atmosphere - what is externally induced and what comes from us and how people exercise their leadership and authority, including of course myself, in this environment' (Depute Chief Executive, NHS).

### **Risks entailed in meeting adaptive challenges**

Incorporating these kind of experiential 'learning laboratories' into more traditional leadership development programmes carries a risk. This form of highly participative, experiential learning is not traditional in Scottish leadership development. The addition of this form of learning into more usual forms of leadership development will require courage and an ability to innovate.

Heifetz (2002:14) notes that 'there's a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change. The deeper the problem and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be.'

Leadership development needs to encompass the complexities of the external environment encountered by the participants. In addition to the theoretical, discursive, and reflective discourses of leadership development there needs to be a forum for experiential 'real time learning'. It is in these settings that participants can truly experience for themselves the complexities of taking up a role in organisational life, the issues around leadership, authority and followership in a learning environment where these issues are brought to the surface and are thus available for examination and modification. Such events and experiences offer a rich and powerful form of leadership development.

Marie Kane  
October 2010

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## **REGULATORY BODIES – AN OVERVIEW OF EXISTING INTELLIGENCE ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN SCOTLAND’S SOCIAL SERVICES**

### **Introduction**

The Changing Lives Report (Scottish Executive, 2006a) highlighted the need for strong leadership at all levels of the social services workforce. Transforming Public Services (Scottish Executive, 2006b) reinforced the need for strong, visible and dynamic leadership. Since the publication of these reports work has been undertaken to include and develop the evaluation of management and leadership by the three main Scottish social services regulatory agencies (HMIE, SWIA and SCRC).

### **Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) Services for Children Unit (SFCU)**

In 2004 HMIE Services for Children Unit (SFCU) was established to take on the lead responsibility for inspecting and evaluating services aimed at protecting children and young people across all areas of Scotland. The social services sector includes lead agencies involved in the support and protection of children, young people and their families. The HMIE SFCU inspection process and its findings have provided important intelligence on current leadership which is relevant to the social services sector.

The quality indicators used during these inspections included evaluating the effectiveness of operational and strategic management (HMIE, 2005). The focus was on operational management systems, alongside individual and collective strategic leadership, within and between key agencies. The quality indicators recognised: the importance of identifying clear values, vision and aims; the need for effective strategic deployment of resources; and the necessity of developing collaborative partnerships and strong corporate leadership.

The leadership and direction required to provide continuous improvement, through the monitoring and development of services was identified as a key quality indicator which was evaluated throughout the inspection process (HMIE, 2006; HMIE, 2007). The need for quality leadership at a strategic level, and within agencies and teams, was identified as crucial to achieving change and improvement. The inspectors were tasked with

judging the ability and capacity of leaders within agencies and multi-agency partnerships to lead improvement and implement change. The 2009 report on the findings of the joint inspections of services to protect children, conducted between 2005 and 2009, was published (HMIE, 2009). One of the clear concluding statements was: 'Where there is effective leadership and direction, outcomes for vulnerable children and families are improved' (HMIE, 2009: 42). This finding was associated with those in positions of senior leadership, who were clear about their individual and collective responsibilities. This finding is linked to the view that establishing a clear vision, along with shared values and aims, amongst senior officials leads to a clearer understanding of individual and collective responsibilities. To achieve this, it was identified, requires leaders who are committed to involving staff in the process of formulating a clear vision, with shared values and aims.

The report also highlighted the association between the ability to lead change and improvement with having established groups of leaders who saw themselves as being accountable for scrutinising and monitoring performance. Improvement was associated with a joint approach by leaders to evaluating performance and a shared approach to establishing priorities for improvement (HMIE, 2009: 34).

The report (HMIE, 2009) was clearly commenting on a wider range of sectors than just social services, there are, however, important transferable messages providing intelligence for today's social services' leaders. The need for strong leadership within individual agencies, and as part of corporate and multi-agency partnerships, is clearly associated with better outcomes for people who require care, support and protective services; it is also linked to the ability to lead change and improvement.

## **Social Work Inspection Agency**

In 2009 the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) completed its initial performance inspection programme and as part of that process every local authority completed a self-evaluation. The themes within the self evaluation tool included management, leadership and the capacity for improvement. The management role was identified as involving the effective implementation of national and local strategic plans and objectives. Other managerial functions were defined as being concerned with performance, staffing, the commissioning of services and financial responsibilities. Leadership was viewed as having a vision for the service,

with good communication with the workforce and the ability to lead strategic change. The theme concerning the capacity for improvement focused on the potential for improvement across all areas, particularly improved outcomes for people using services (SWIA, 2009).

The SWIA performance inspection process involved all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland, with leadership of social services being judged as good or very good in 19 councils, adequate in 8 councils, and weak or unsatisfactory in 5 councils. In the councils where leadership was judged as good, staff reported that they felt empowered to express their views, regarding senior managers as approachable and accessible. This was complemented by good support and direction from line managers, and firm leadership from senior managers. In the councils where leadership was seen as weak staff believed that there was a negative leadership culture at all tiers of the organisation, with lines of accountability being unclear, and with little face-to-face contact between senior managers and frontline staff.

The inspections, in terms of leadership, focused on three dimensions: vision and values, leadership of people, and the leadership of change and improvement (SWIA, 2010a). Their main conclusions were: that leadership was of critical importance in determining how well social work services performed; senior managers were often stronger in creating a vision for social work services and in leading people than they were at leading change and improvement; the performance of leaders had a direct impact on staff morale and confidence; senior managers had a critical role in terms of quality assurance processes, governance, and the confidence of the workforce; and effective leaders consistently self-evaluated more accurately than those with significant leadership deficits. These findings reinforce the central role of leadership in ensuring high quality services and improved outcomes for people who use social services.

Following on from this first round of performance inspections, SWIA (2010c) have produced a 'Guide to Leadership' for use by council led social work services. This is directed at senior managers and elected members, with the aim of helping them to assess the quality of their strategic leadership. The guide contains important statements about the importance of leadership in public services, acknowledging that there is a well established body of evidence in the UK and internationally, which recognises the crucial impact that effective leadership can make. It is also acknowledged that at a time of increasing demands on public finances,

effective leadership and management, and collaborative partnership working, are essential.

The SWIA guide defines effective leadership as the ability to: look ahead and plan, anticipating future demands; communicate a vision to provide a sense of direction, which inspires and unites people with a shared sense of commitment; adapt leadership styles to suit particular circumstances; develop a high performing senior management team; drive change and manage communication effectively during periods of change. The guide goes on to suggest that the desirable characteristics of effective leaders should include self awareness, along with the ability to lead change through people and collaborative working.

SWIA's role, in terms of performance inspections, will change in April 2011 when a new regulatory agency, the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS), will take over the role of 'providing public assurance on service quality, holding councils and service providers to account and targeting support for service improvement' (SWIA, 2010b, p.3). This new body will continue to inspect and judge the quality of social services management and leadership.

### **Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care**

In 2008 the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (SCRC) introduced a grading system for the services they were responsible for inspecting and regulating. In November 2008 they completed a grading exercise with 30 per cent of their registered services. One of the themes they graded was the quality of management and leadership within these services. This theme assessed how the service was being managed and how it was being developed to meet the needs of the people to whom it offers support. They reported that within all services the quality of management and leadership received the poorest grading profile, compared with the other four grading themes (SCRC, 2008:12).

In 2009, a further report (SCRC, 2009), repeated this finding, identifying that the quality of management and leadership was still the poorest grading profile compared with the other four grading themes. This finding was based on results from 10,361 (71per cent) of the 14,545 services registered at 31 March 2009. There were 11,992 graded inspections carried out in 2008/09, with some services having had more than one inspection. The services inspected and graded were classified into three

types: services for children (childminders, day care, secure accommodation); services for adults (care homes, housing support services, offender accommodation); independent healthcare services (hospitals and hospices).

The SCRC report puts this finding into a more positive context by looking at the overall picture for these three types of services. Although the quality of management and leadership was the poorest grading profile compared with the other four grading themes, it was relatively positive for 71 per cent of services for adults and 81 per cent of services for children. The independent healthcare services also had the majority of gradings in the mid range. This is an interesting finding as it indicates that the grading process was more critical of the quality of leadership and management than the other themes which were concerned with the quality of care and support, the care environments, staffing levels, qualifications and information. The leadership and management profile, within these regulated services, is therefore not perceived to be a strength in terms of how services are managed and developed.

## **Summary**

The current three main Scottish Social Services regulatory agencies (HMIE, SWIA and SCRC) have each recognised the importance of developing inspection and grading indicators, which attempt to evaluate the quality of leadership and management. These three inspection agencies each have a different focus: HMIE-SFCU is more concerned with a corporate, multi-agency, view of leadership and operational management processes and information systems; SWIA focuses on council-led social work services; and the SCRC is concerned with individual service providers, which includes a range of services that are part of a broader definition than social services.

The three main reports which summarise these agencies' first rounds of inspections (HMIE, 2009; SWIA 2010a; SCRC 2009) include relevant intelligence concerning leadership and management within Scottish social services. The need for effective management and leadership at all levels of social services is required to lead and implement change and improvement, to provide services which continue to improve outcomes for people, who require a range of care, support and protective services. It is also required to ensure that social services are actively engaged, at all levels, in developing and maintaining collaborative multi-agency

partnerships and strategic developments. Thirdly, developing and maintaining a motivated, confident and competent social services workforce is also dependent upon a culture and style of leadership, throughout social service agencies, which is empowering, inclusive, approachable, accessible, consistent, firm, fair and supportive.

Peter Connolly  
September 2010

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## LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS AND THE ROLE OF COMPETENCIES AND FRAMEWORKS

### Levels of conceptualisation for leadership

In current leadership theory, leadership can be conceptualised as an individual process, a dyadic process, a group process and an organizational process (Yukl, 2010). These levels can be viewed as a hierarchy, as depicted at Figure 1.0.

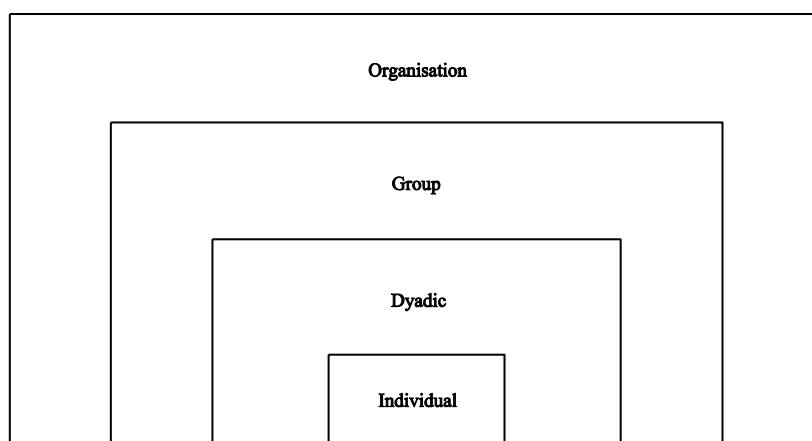


Figure 1.0: Levels of conceptualisation for leadership processes

A brief explanation of each level is detailed below:

- intra-individual: at this level, leadership approaches include decision-making, motivation, and cognition to explain the behaviour of the individual leader. This approach can also be found in some of the theories about cognitive decision processes within leaders and in the description of leader traits and skills associated with motivation to become a leader. This level also involves identifying personal objectives and priorities, managing one's time efficiently, monitoring one's own behaviour and its consequences, and trying to learn to be more effective in accomplishing personal objectives
- dyadic: this level of leadership usually focuses on the immediate relationship between the leader and another individual, who is

usually the follower. Most dyadic approaches view leadership as a reciprocal influence process between the leader and another person; this approach makes an implicit assumption that leadership effectiveness cannot be understood without examining how leader and follower influence each other over time

- group: at this level, two key topics include the nature of the leadership role in a task group, and how a leader contributes to group effectiveness. Comprehension of group effectiveness provides important insights about leadership processes and relevant criteria for evaluating leadership effectiveness
- organisation: the organisational level of analysis describes leadership as a process that occurs in a large open system in which groups are subsystems.

These 'levels' of leadership fit with the current levels of analysis of the organisation, namely tactical, operational, and strategic. This is shown at Figure 2.0: Levels of analysis.

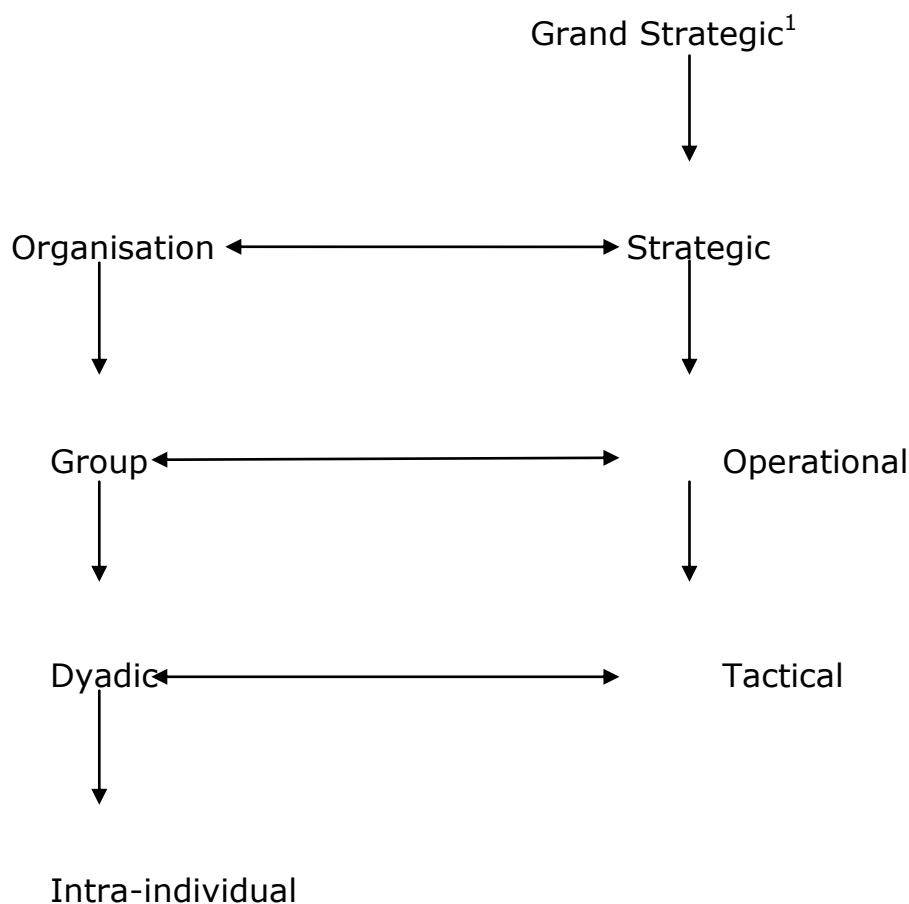


Figure 2.0: Levels of Analysis

<sup>1</sup> The grand strategic level is used for 'state' or the intra- country level of analysis

Looking ahead, this 'level' approach may be useful for further education and training strategies and associated interventions as it is important to consider that the knowledge and skills that are required at each level is different.

For policy makers, researchers and educators, we consider that this approach has significant implications for further development of leadership in the social services sector.

Further work is required to develop further this analysis to understand — in greater detail — the leadership required at each level. This is important. Leadership — at different levels — requires varying degrees of cognitive complexity and differential time – horizon foci. Moreover, the approach brings in notions of the environment and corporate factors across levels of the organization ranging from the strategic level down to the tactical level of leadership. One of the most useful aspects of this approach is that it may incorporate these broad notions into the critical tasks and individual capabilities required at each level of leadership. Critical tasks are the direct product of the key mission, strategy, and design elements unique to each level of leadership. Individual capabilities capture the various leader background factors, preferences, capabilities, and skills at each level. Education and training can then be designed and introduced at each level to improve capability, the endgame being to provide improvement in professional/clinical leadership effectiveness.

This must all be understood in an environment (external and internal) which is constantly changing.

### **The role of leadership competencies and frameworks**

Following on from Bolden and Gosling's (2006) finding that competencies had become 'ubiquitous' in management thinking and implementation, Carroll et al (2008) noted a subsequent 'colonization of leadership' by competency based frameworks (2008: 363). Many competency-based frameworks, dated both before and after those comments were made, can be quickly identified using a basic internet search. Some, such as the 3M Leadership Competency Model (Corporate Executive Board 2000) and the University of Edinburgh Leadership and Management (Competency) Framework (University of Edinburgh 2010) are specific to leadership. Others, for example the Christian Aid Framework (Christian Aid 2010), incorporate leadership and management competencies into a wider staff development framework.

The Continuous Learning Framework (CLF) is not primarily a competency-based framework. The first element of the CLF, 'Knowledge, skills, values and understanding', incorporates National Occupational Standards (NOS) which 'bring together the knowledge, understanding, values and practical skills required to do the work and present these as statements of competence' (SSSC/IRISS 2008: 8). The second element, 'Qualifications and training', is to an extent underpinned by competencies in that the NOS are the basis for some of the qualifications relevant to social services, such as SVQs, and inform the content and development of others. However, the final two elements of the CLF are based around 'Personal capabilities' and 'Organisational capabilities' respectively. Phelps et al (2005: 69) argue that 'it is impossible to discuss capability without comparing it to competency', and quote the earlier distinction drawn by Cairns (2000) of competencies as individual and measurable skills assessed against agreed standards and capabilities as combinations of knowledge, skills and individual qualities that enable those possessing them to respond effectively and appropriately to a range of familiar and unfamiliar circumstances. For Phelps et al, the distinguishing feature of capability-based approaches over competency-based ones are the emphases that capabilities place on adaptability to change and continual learning.

The greater perceived flexibility of application of capabilities as opposed to competencies arguably provides fitness for use across organisations with varying sizes, structures and staff development needs, and the CLF has been designed to play a role in supporting staff development across the full range of social service organisations. This contrasts with many competency-based frameworks which have either been developed for or tailored to a specific organisation (for example, the 3M Leadership Competency Model (Corporate Executive Board 2000), the Centrica Leadership Competencies Framework (Centrica 2005) and the Christian Aid Framework (Christian Aid 2010)) or to a number of organisations with common features, such as in the case of the Leadership Competency Framework for Welsh Local Government (WLGA 2007).

The purpose of the CLF is not explicitly leadership and management development but supporting broader workforce development, although 'Personal capabilities' are grouped and described in terms of 'Managing relationships' and 'Managing self'. The CLF 'aims to continuously improve the quality of outcomes for people who use social services by supporting the people who are delivering those services to be the best they can be' (SSSC/IRISS 2008: 6). Its target users are all those individuals working

in the social services sector and all the organisations that employ them, rather than subsets of the organisation currently occupying management positions. This can be distinguished from the more limited intended user groups of some competency-based leadership and management development frameworks. For example, the University of Edinburgh's Leadership and Management (Competency) Framework has been designed as a structured process to develop leadership and management skills across a grade-limited section the University's professional services staff (Edinburgh University, 2010). Similarly, the main uses of the 3M leadership competency model (as a leadership talent review tool; for targeting leadership talent development; and for longer-term leadership succession planning (Corporate Executive Board, 2000)) suggest its applicability to a limited section of the workforce.

In common with the majority of competency-based frameworks dedicated to or incorporating leadership and management development, the 'Personal capabilities' element of the CLF describes a series of sub-elements. Some competency-based frameworks divide these sub-elements into core and non-core competencies. For example the Leadership Competency Framework for Welsh Local Government (WLGA 2007) distinguishes between five 'core' competencies derived from local government 'transformational agenda drivers' and a further eight competencies drawn from those already in use by local government organisations in Wales at the time when the new Framework was being developed. The CLF does not divide into core and non-core or prioritise any of the 13 capabilities described in 'Personal capabilities'. Instead it acknowledges that 'Job roles across the social service sector are diverse. Each will require some personal capabilities related to managing self and some related to managing relationships. However, it is at the discretion of the organisation to decide which personal capabilities are relevant for each job role.'

In addition to the descriptions of sub-elements within the framework, both the CLF and the competency-based frameworks we examined provide a staged schema for progress in the development of competencies/capabilities. Ordinarily this consisted of four identified stages, variously identified and described, although the Christian Aid Framework incorporates five (Christian Aid 2010) and in the Glasgow City Council Leadership Competency Framework the number of stages varies with individual competencies with a minimum of three stages for each (Glasgow City Council 2007).

There is considerable diversity in terms of how different stages are labelled and described. The Glasgow City Council Leadership Competency Framework calls the different stages 'Levels', numbering them and for each level providing a brief description of expected behaviours together with 'Development indicators' for each competency which describe behaviours which would indicate the potential for further development (Glasgow City Council 2007). By contrast, the University of Edinburgh Leadership and Management (Competency) Framework uses 'Levels' but labels them D to A and couches them in terms of performance expectations for staff in that job grade. Thus Level D represents 'Not yet demonstrated' and Level A represents 'Demonstrates an advanced level of expertise well above that expected for the job grade. Continuously seeks to improve working practices, role models successful behaviours and attitudes, and encourages others to do the same' (University of Edinburgh 2010). The CLF uses the overarching descriptors 'Engaged', 'Established', 'Accomplished' and 'Exemplary', and provides a description of what a worker at each of the stages will be able to demonstrate and how they will behave. For example, in relation to the 'Established' stage, the CLF states that:

'Social service workers at this stage will be able to consistently demonstrate the personal capability in practice. They will be reflective practitioners who actively engage in their own continuous learning but continue seek advice and support as appropriate. They will begin to demonstrate an ability to focus on the development of others as well as themselves' (SSSC/IRISS 2008:19).

There are differences in the numbers of leadership and management-related competencies identified in different frameworks and whether/how those competencies are grouped. The CLF 'Personal capabilities' element groups capabilities in terms of 'Managing relationships' (5 capabilities) and 'Managing self' (8 capabilities). The competency-based frameworks examined are generally expressed in more functionally related terms. For example, the Christian Aid Framework groups management and leadership competencies under 'Operational Leadership and Management' (4 competencies) and 'People Leadership and Management' (4 competencies) respectively (Christian Aid 2010). The University of Edinburgh Leadership and Management (Competency) Framework groups competencies under the headings 'Communicating and working with people' (3 competencies), 'Developing business success' (4 competencies) and 'Building for the future' (2 competencies', although different definitions of the competencies are provided for those in lower and higher

grades (University of Edinburgh 2010). 3M's Leadership Competency Model (Corporate Executive Board 2000) provides an alternative scheme, grouping competencies based on levels of leadership responsibility. 'Fundamental' competencies are those which develop as an individual passes through successive management positions (3 competencies), with 'Essential' competencies developed as an individual acquires unit or department management responsibilities (4 competencies), and 'Visionary' competencies those that will need to be developed if an individual is to assume increased levels of responsibility (5 competencies).

### **Where next/recommendations/new models**

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.

Recent research into leadership development (e.g. Burgoyne et al., 2004) indicates that key predictors of impact include opportunities for constructive feedback (assisting self-awareness and reflection), integration with organisational systems and strategy (increasing situational relevance) and facilitation and support from managers both prior to and following the intervention (optimising opportunities for experimentation and experience).

Much of this, however, is inhibited by the competency approach that appears to shift the burden of responsibility onto the individual manager and/or leader with little concern for the context and relationships in which they find themselves.

Organisations should endeavour to develop opportunities for their members to articulate and explore their experience of leadership in all its richness.

However, although the desire to select and measure people in leadership positions will remain, simply adding more terms to competency lists will not solve the problem. It will fail to capture the sense-making nature of such conversations and how meanings emerge and transform over time. At best a competency framework will only ever be a simple representation of a highly complex and changing landscape.

It would seem then that in order to progress in a constructive manner, there is a pressing need to gain a more thorough understanding of the process of managerial and professional leadership across the sector.

Therefore, to escape from the repetitive refrain of competencies, more consideration should be placed on reflection, discussion, and experience. Of note, as Hewison et al (2009a) state: 'Even although a significant corpus of NHS leadership research has been produced, current policy prescriptions owe more to rhetoric and the selective incorporation of values than they do to empirical evidence.'

In addition attention should be paid to:

- a broadening and redefinition of who is engaged in leadership work and on the constitution of leadership in different sites and from different organizational positions (or 'non-positions') (Carroll et al, 2008)
- construction of reflective communities and contemporary apprenticeships (to allow: experience, interaction, situation, embodying, sustain and, relational, engaging to remove any distinction between subject, object, mental models and cognitive frameworks) (Raelin, 2007)
- talk across boundaries to bring in psychological and discursive approaches
- complementary dialogue between the agendas, discourses, and audiences of both practitioners and academics to align to discourse and identity

Dr Brian Howieson  
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