

Continuous Professional Learning Standard: Summary of SSSC evidence to June 2018

Initial work to consider the development of a new Continuous Professional Learning Standard began in 2014. This paper summarises the following key pieces of evidence / research that have been commissioned by SSSC and outlines the learning from these:

1. **Ongoing Professional Development Schemes and Processes Used by Regulatory Bodies** (Bill Thomson, February 2014, Research commissioned by SSSC)
2. **The Review of Social Work Education: Phase 2 report** (SSSC Report, 2017)
3. **The Standard for Professional Learning (2nd draft,)** (Jackie Borge Consulting, 2016, Research commissioned by SSSC)
4. **Findings from a 6 month sampling of PRTL** (Summary of evidence presented in EMT report on PRTL sampling, 7th May 2018, including estimate resource usage)
5. **Findings from PRTL engagement events (2017/18)**

1. "Ongoing Professional Development Schemes and Processes Used by Regulatory Bodies" (Bill Thomson, February 2014, Research commissioned by SSSC)

Example 1: Community Learning and Development Standards Council Scotland

Overview: > 50% of workforce is volunteers. Membership of CLDSC is free and voluntary. Practitioners work in diverse roles and settings. 2 categories for registration 'Registered Associate Member' and 'Registered Member'. Registrants commit to set of principles: values underpinning CLD, Code of Ethics, Ongoing CPD, and practising using CLD competencies.

CPD Approach: Members undertake minimum 35 hours CPD each year, pro rata for part time staff / volunteers. Practitioners must undertake, reflect upon, record and evidence their commitment to CPD. Employers are expected to have in place mechanisms for workforce development that will include opportunities for CPD, and the means to record it. A standards mark ([SCSM](#)) is awarded (for 3 years) to organisations that meet defined standards in providing CPD for their practitioners. Council also has a role in approving CLD Learning Programmes. CPD Strategy sets out clear vision of what should be achieved. Significant amount of learning material available on website, alongside online planning and e-portfolio tool.

Updates: Revised [Professional Development Strategy](#) published 2015. Focus on growing learning culture. Change of terminology from CPD to professional learning. Strategy aims to ensure: every employer of CLD practitioners has in place a comprehensive professional development strategy and an action plan for implementation; Every CLD practitioner can articulate how professional development is embedded in their work. Vision is for a culture where learning is celebrated, recognised and encouraged; reflected on and shared. Challenge is relished and embraced; critical reflection is embedded in practice.

What can we learn from this? Development of the CPD standards had significant emphasis on ownership from the sector, viewing CPD as a positive, rather than a way of addressing deficits. Focus on learning culture, clear responsibilities for both registrant and employers. No direct QA of individuals records.

Example 2: General Practice, through the Royal College of General Practitioners

Workforce of 4858 GPs (Dec 2013). Statutory requirement for all GPs to have annual appraisal (part of revalidation from 2012), and be revalidated every 5 years. Core guidance in CPD is the GMC specification of Good Medical Practice, setting out the principles and values on which good practice is founded and which places a duty on keeping knowledge and skills up to date. Details of how CPD should be carried out, is remitted to the Royal Colleges and Faculties that deal with specialisms within medicine. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges has Ten Principles for CPD on which these schemes should be based.

For GPs, CPD is linked in to the appraisal system. They require a minimum of 50 credits per year, covering a broad range of general practice experience. Credits are self-assessed and verified at appraisal.

Advice from RCGP suggests GPs should have a personal development plan; a system for recording and reflecting their learning; consider how their learning can be used to improve patient care; claim CPD credits at double the time spent if a demonstrable change in care has resulted.

The Scottish [GP appraisal scheme](#) is managed at a national level by NES. GPs must seek multi-source colleague feedback via a 360 feedback at least every 5 years. There is also a patient feedback tool www.caremeasure.org. Institutions, companies and individuals care apply to have their CPD provision awarded the RCGP Accreditation mark.

Updates n/a

What can we learn from this? The GP system highlights the importance of ensuring that education is not isolated from your job but part of daily practice.

Example 3: Education Scotland / General Teaching Council Scotland

GTCS published 3 sets of revised standards in March 2013. Standards for Registration (links to induction year)/ Career long Professional Learning / Leadership & management.

GTCS established professional recognition awards in 2005 – uptake was minimal.

Professional Update process established in 2014 – teachers must engage in ongoing development, self evaluate against the appropriate GTCS professional standard, discuss this engagement and the impact of this as part of the PRD process. Maintain a professional learning record and portfolio of evidence. 5 yearly confirmation of this to GTCS.

Updates: GTCS has resources and suggestions for teachers to use to help them gather appropriate evidence of professional learning. There is a useful diagram of the professional learning process. The following questions are relevant to the process:

- What you do (your behaviours)
- Why you do it (your values, belief, assumptions, aspirations)
- How you feel (use your emotional intelligence)
- How you think
- How do I know this is important/ worthwhile?
- What difference is it making?
- How do I know?

What can we learn from this? CPD system closely linked in to appraisals / PRD / Professional Update process. Registrants upload information via a template, focusing on specific areas.

2. The Review of Social Work Education: Phase 2 report (SSSC Report, 2017)

“Commitment to develop a new approach to professional learning through a learning strategy that addresses qualifying and post-qualifying learning for the social care and social work workforce in Scotland. “ Key message is to ensure social service workers experience a more integrated approach to professional learning, similar to other professions.

Vision is of an excellent and co-owned approach to professional learning between the learning providers and employers that spans the social work career journey. Clear that the continued splitting of education and professional learning was at odds with our need to realise an integrated approach and outcomes. Term ‘professional learning’ is being used to invoke a shift beyond existing silos of ‘education’ and ‘practise’ / qualifying education and professional development, towards an integrated and whole systems approach to professional learning that is co-owned and co-produced by relevant actors across the social work sector.

Aim to move towards a culture, infrastructure and practice where professional learning is everyone’s business.

Priorities of the review are:

1. Realising a co-owned approach to professional learning
2. Updating the framework and standards for social work education
3. Developing a supported year and professional standards for newly qualified social workers
4. Improving selection standards and widening access.
5. Continuous professional learning

Findings from the review: a clear appetite for strengthening the place of learning in professional practice. However learning was found to occupy a marginal place in the current culture, identify and resourcing of social workers.

What we can learn from the review?

Importance of co-owned approach to professional learning

New CPL standard must complement the development in social work education / assessed year in practice

3. The Standard for Professional Learning (2nd draft)

Work commissioned by SSSC, however the proposed standard was not approved. The paper provides definitions of professional learning, and highlights potential responsibilities for employers and registrants.

The proposal suggests the standard should be in four parts:

- Expectations of social service workers
- Entitlements of social service workers
- Roles and responsibilities
- Links to role related standards, competences and indicators.

Proposal includes a new role for employers in verifying that an individual's work meets the standard. Verification would involve ensuring that:

- The minimum quantity of professional learning has taken place
- Professional learning has been appropriate to the individual worker's role and development goals
- The worker can reflect on their learning and provide examples of ways in which they have used their learning (or plan to use it) in their work
- Future goals are identified to future develop the worker professionally

The standard would like to a number of existing frameworks and competencies, including the Codes of Practice, The Continuous Learning Framework, Leadership Capabilities Indicators, Common Core Skills, National Occupational Standards.

What can we learn from this?

Paper highlights the importance of clear roles for employer, registrant and regulator, and in linking to existing frameworks. The proposed model is based on setting a minimum standard of achievement, and then monitoring compliance. However, given current focus on improvement, there could be opportunities to develop the standard in a different way that would encourage improvement and ownership from the sector.

4. Findings from 6 month sampling of PRTL [Summary of evidence presented in EMT report on PRTL sampling, 7th May 2018]

Evidence from a 6 month sampling of PRTL from the workforce (excluding social workers) has highlighted the following common themes:

- difficulty understanding the current requirements
- difficulty navigating the website
- registrants not clear what is expected
- not clear about 'reflective learning' therefore have difficulty 'writing reflectively'
- required hours not met
- overly descriptive at the expense of reflection
- difficulty demonstrating how learning informs practice
- information poorly presented
- only having one method to evidence their learning
- causes anxiety to registrants
- registrants get frustrated when their PRTL is returned
- feeling demoralised by the process

This picture is reinforced by the percentage of submissions requiring to be returned to the registrant for further work. Of the **130** non-social work PRTLs sampled, over **32%** (40) had to be returned.

Estimate resource use to support non-social work PRTL sampling

The current PRTL process involves significant staff resource in both registration and learning and development teams. The weekly average time spent by Registration staff identifying non –social work PRTLs to sample ranges between 12-18 hours per week. Learning and Development adviser time reading, quality assuring and communicating with registrants ranges between 36 and 64 hours per week.

Resources breakdown for 2% PRTL sampling of non social work registrants (16/10/2017 – 04/04/2018)

Team	Task	Average hours per week
Registration Team	Administering processes relating to PRTL	12-18
8 x Learning and Development Advisers	Reading and processing PRTLs (8x 2-4 hours)	16-32
	Re-assessment and telephone calls (8x 30-60 minutes)	4-8
1 x Learning and Development Adviser (Quality Assurance)	Quality assurance	4-6
	Total (Learning and Development Team)	24-46 hours
	Total Registration and L&D	36-64

What can we learn from the PRTL Sampling?

The current system of quality assurance is resource intensive and provides SSSC with little or no collectable data of the benefits and outcomes. SSSC is unable to demonstrate to our stakeholders (including Scottish Government) that this operational activity is fulfilling its strategic outcomes. In planning the future system, we need to think about what data could or should be helpfully gathered. Over 30% of (non social work) PRTL submissions are returned for further work. Of these, many registrants have misunderstood what is expected of them, or what is required in terms of reflection. By making sure

the new system is easy to understand and of benefit to both individual, employer and SSSC, there is potential to increase engagement and decrease the amount of SSSC resource required to support the system.

Findings from PRTL engagement events (2017/18)

Over 40 engagement events, workshops and presentations on PRTL took place in the six months to May 2018, reaching around 750 registrants.

Themes were consistent with those highlighted in the 6 month PRTL sampling (above), with many participants unsure about the PRTL requirements or what was expected of them.

What can we learn from this?

Current PRTL approach is viewed as a process to do to meet the regulators requirements. We have an opportunity to change this approach, and to work with the sector to make PRTL much more useful and engaging.