

# **Middle managers in Scotland's social services: leadership learning framework**

**A report commissioned by the Scottish Social Services Council**

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

### **Background to the project**

- 1.1 This report outlines the third phase of a research project that focused on middle managers in Scotland's social services. An initial scoping analysis of the role and functions of middle managers across different parts of the sector was completed in March 2014. Following this, in autumn 2014, we investigated middle managers' leadership learning needs and their preferred ways of learning using a survey questionnaire and desk research.

### **The scoping analysis**

- 1.2 Key findings from the scoping analysis highlighted the diversity of middle managers' role and functions across the different parts of the social service sector. The size of an organisation, as well as sector, structure and culture, all impact on the middle management role.
- 1.3 Linked to this was potential confusion in defining 'who is a middle manager'. The term means different things in different settings. All middle managers are positioned somewhere in between the most senior tier of management and frontline service delivery. However, no general assumptions can be made about their level of involvement in either strategy or direct practice.
- 1.4 Regardless of organisational size and structure most middle managers experienced a compelling 'tug' towards operational issues. These demands limited their time and capacity to contribute to strategic planning and development.
- 1.5 This finding is noteworthy in relation to middle managers' role as change agents. Although sometimes identified as defenders of the status quo, middle managers hold a critical position in regard to change and innovation. They exercise downward influence as the translators of high level strategic decisions into operational practice. They have an upward influence on strategy development through their knowledge of new initiatives and things that 'work' on the frontline.
- 1.6 The scoping analysis identified that low priority is given to middle managers' own professional development needs. This was explored further in the second phase of research which identified lack of time as a key factor impacting on middle managers' developmental activities. There was clear indication that they prioritised the learning and development of other staff above their own needs. There was also evidence to suggest that more experienced managers found it particularly difficult to access relevant learning opportunities. A number of factors may underlie this including a lack

of appropriate resources/ activities; the higher costs of more advanced training and development and a possible reticence to acknowledge their own learning needs.

### **Leadership learning needs and preferences**

- 1.7 The survey of leadership learning needs and preferences showed that middle managers were strongly motivated to pursue learning for its own sake and not merely to meet organisational requirements or for career development. They were however keen to gain a formal qualification as recognition of their learning.
- 1.8 The majority of respondents favoured face-to-face learning with opportunities for interaction with peers. Opportunities for coaching and mentoring were valued, as was professional supervision by their own line manager. Respondents also found value in blended learning where online resources support face-to-face sessions/activities. The least popular learning and development delivery methods were formal lectures and elearning on its own.
- 1.9 The second phase of research also reviewed existing standards and frameworks relevant to managers in social services. It found a crowded landscape with significant overlap across standards but also areas of divergence. This variation related partly to content, but applied also to their structure and purpose for example, whether they were mandatory minimum standards, guidance documents or more aspirational capability frameworks.
- 1.10 Survey responses did not indicate a high level of familiarity with many of the existing standards. This highlighted the importance of creating a leadership learning resource for middle managers which was accessible, addressed issues that they recognised as relevant and was of practical use.

### **Phase three project brief**

- 1.11 The purpose of the current project was to scope and develop a flexible leadership learning framework for middle managers across Scotland's social services.
- 1.12 It built upon earlier phases of the middle manager project and continued to use key stakeholders, including a reference group of middle managers, for advice and feedback.
- 1.13 The leadership learning framework required to take into account existing occupational standards, primarily the Leadership and Management for Care Services National Occupational Standards (LMCS NOS) and the Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) Standard. It needed to take cognisance of other relevant standards for example, Contracting, Procurement and Commissioning (CPC).
- 1.14 At an early stage it became apparent that there was no single leadership learning framework that would be applicable across the different sectors and agencies which make up Scotland's social services. As indicated by the earlier research the diversity of role and functions of middle managers is a key factor. They carry a different balance of operational and strategic responsibilities dependent on their work context. Their priorities for leadership learning and development vary accordingly. Feedback from the focus group strongly endorsed this finding and indicated that organisations would need to tailor any leadership learning framework to fit their own requirements.
- 1.15 Consequently (and despite concerns detailed above about a 'crowded landscape') it was decided that an overarching leadership learning framework for middle managers would be the most useful contribution this project could offer. A Middle Manager Leadership Learning Framework (the framework) was developed to meet the needs of the project. It built upon elements of both the LMCS NOS and the CSWO Standard. This framework encompasses the span of activities in which middle managers are involved while recognising that the relevance of different elements will vary. A leadership learning framework can be designed by individuals or organisations to fit the specific role and function of a middle manager or group of managers within an organisation. The framework is structured into nine separate domains, each of which can be used as a modular component if a formal training programme is being developed.

This was acknowledged and welcomed during pilot discussions. There are a collection of resources including practice guides, reports, video clips and websites which are linked to each of the domains. These are a starting place for learning and development not a comprehensive resource bank. As with all online resources, they will need regular review and updating to ensure their relevance

and to check that links remain active.

### **Structure of project report**

- 1.16 The report will firstly look at the position of a leadership learning framework for middle managers in relation to existing standards and qualifications within social services. It will consider the differences between mandatory occupational requirements and a developmental route which individuals and organisations are free to use or adapt according to their own priorities.
- 1.17 The proposed leadership learning framework is not an accredited award and as such cannot be specifically matched to the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework](#) (SCQF). It is nonetheless important to consider where an award for middle managers might be placed and the expected level of knowledge, understanding, skill, critical analysis and autonomy in relation to learning outcomes.
- 1.18 The relationship between the [Continuous Learning Framework](#) (CLF), the six leadership capabilities used in social services and the framework will also be addressed.
- 1.19 A brief outline of the research methodology and consultation strategy for the separate phases of the middle manager project will be included.
- 1.20 The framework will be prefaced with a discussion of different ways it might be used to suit different needs and contexts. The framework itself is addressed to middle managers. It includes a visual diagram presenting the nine separate domains or areas of learning. Each domain is outlined with a short introductory descriptor of how this relates to the middle manager role followed by more detailed learning outcomes.
- 1.21 The final section of the report is focused on leadership learning resources for middle managers. These have been matched to the different domains within the framework in order to help identify relevant resources. However, there will be a degree of crossover between topic areas.
- 1.22 Planned future developments include the integration of the framework within the [Step into Leadership](#) website. We have included a brief outline of each resource in order to help people find what is most relevant to them with minimum time and effort. This was considered to be particularly important in light of the demands placed on middle managers; it aims to encourage increased take-up and allow rapid focus on resources relevant to individual needs.

There is also an Appendix detailing current leadership and management texts relevant to social services. There has been significant development in this area over recent years with generic literature adapted to make it more accessible and relevant to social service managers. While many of these resources are targeted at frontline managers there is also material which is useful for those in middle management roles. In view of the breadth of middle managers' remit across the sector, resources relevant to both frontline and more senior managers will be relevant to some individuals.

## **2.0 Key factors underpinning a leadership learning framework for middle managers**

### **Standards and benchmarking**

- 2.1 Qualification requirements for the social service workforce, including managers of registered services, are set by the SSSC as the workforce regulator. Approved awards incorporate assessment against occupational standards or assessment of work based competence.
- 2.2 The [LMCS NOS](#) underpin qualifications for registered managers in social services. These managers are required to hold both a practice and a management qualification.
- 2.3 Managers in non-registered services for example; fieldwork settings, are not required by the SSSC to hold a management qualification. Employers may, however, stipulate their own qualification requirements for specific posts.
- 2.4 Many, but not all, first line managers will hold a management qualification which is either an SVQ4 Leadership and Management for Care Services or an award mapped against these occupational standards.
- 2.5 There are no specific mandatory requirements for leadership and management qualifications for middle managers. By definition middle managers can be expected to function at a level which meets, but goes beyond, the occupational standards set for first line managers.
- 2.6 A new standard has been developed for CSWO and those aspiring to be in this role. The [CSWO Standard](#) will apply to those holding the CSWO role in local authorities. An accredited award for CSWOs will be available from autumn 2015.
- 2.7 Aspects of the CSWO standard may be applicable to middle managers, particularly those who aspire towards more strategic roles. Middle managers would not, however, be expected or be able to meet the full range of competencies required at CSWO level.



- 2.8 A leadership framework for middle managers needs to be positioned between the LMCS Services NOS and the CSWO standard. However, it differs from both of these in not being a mandatory requirement. It is not an accredited award although the framework (see section 4.0 below) could be used to inform the structure and content of an award.
- 2.9 Elements of other occupational standards for example, CPC and [Standard for Childhood Practice](#) also have relevance for those in middle management roles and these will be reflected in the framework.
- 2.10 Leadership standards and frameworks used by partner agencies for example, [NHS Scotland Leadership Qualities Framework](#), should also inform middle managers' leadership learning and development. The integration of health and social services is intended to support better outcomes for people using services. Systems and processes which are aligned across professional boundaries will contribute to this.

## **SCQF**

- 2.11 The SCQF is Scotland's national qualifications framework. It uses two separate measures to enable people to understand and compare different Scottish qualifications. The first measure is the level of challenge or difficulty of a qualification or a learning programme. The second measure is the number of credit points awarded. These indicate the length of time it takes to complete the learning. One SCQF credit point represents an average of 10 hours of learning time. A 20 credit award equates to approximately 200 hours of study.
- 2.12 All accredited qualifications in Scotland are mapped against the SCQF. This makes it possible to broadly compare qualifications, even when the mode of study is different such as an SVQ award and a university course.
- 2.13 There are 12 levels within the SCQF with Level 12 being the most demanding and equivalent to a doctoral (PhD) award. There are [SCQF level descriptors](#) for each level. The level descriptors outline the general outcomes of learning at SCQF levels under five broad headings:

- knowledge and understanding (mainly subject based)
  - practice (applied knowledge and understanding)
  - generic cognitive skills (eg evaluation, critical analysis)
  - communication, numeracy and IT skills
  - autonomy, accountability and working with others.
- 2.14 The requirements for a registered manager include a management qualification (mapped against the LMCS NOS) at SCQF Level 8 or above. Many registered managers will undertake an SVQ 4 LMCS and this award is set at SCQF Level 10. An honours degree also equates to a Level 10 award.
- 2.15 Postgraduate or masters level study is at SCQF Level 11. This is sometimes confused with post-qualifying study where the SCQF level will depend on the specific award. The CSWO award, which is currently being developed, will be at SCQF Level 11.
- 2.16 A qualification or learning programme for middle managers would be set at a minimum of SCQF Level 10 in order to match, or go beyond, the demands of the LMCS award. A strong argument can be made for SCQF Level 11 to reflect heightened expectations of the social service workforce. Many middle managers will hold a professional qualification in social work, nursing or occupational therapy, all of which are now degree professions. It is important, however, not to disadvantage experienced managers who hold previous qualifications.
- 2.17 The issue of SCQF Level 10 or 11 is less critical because the framework is neither mandatory nor formally accredited. The relevant SCQF Level descriptors would be used to determine the detailed content and assessment criteria of an accredited route if this was being developed. Similarly, middle managers wishing to evidence [recognised prior learning](#) (RPL) towards an accredited award would need to match their learning against the relevant descriptors.
- 2.18 Middle managers who are aspiring to more strategic roles and who may wish in future to undertake the CSWO award should be able to demonstrate relevant learning outcomes at SCQF Level 11.

## Continuous Learning Framework

2.19 The [Continuous Learning Framework](#) (CLF) provides an overarching framework for learning and continuous improvement across the social service workforce. It is not mandatory but identifies the capabilities required at both individual and organisational level to support workforce development.

2.20 The CLF is complemented by six [leadership capabilities](#) which were developed at a later stage:

- vision
- self-leadership
- motivating and inspiring
- empowering others
- collaborating and influencing
- creativity and innovation.

2.21 These leadership capabilities can be demonstrated at all levels of an organisation and are not limited to those in formal leadership roles. They are designed to build on the personal capabilities and are integral to organisational cultures which support continuous learning and development.



Figure 1: Inter-relationship of leadership capabilities with CLF capabilities.

- 2.22 Neither the CLF nor the six leadership capabilities are mandatory. They can be used in different ways to support individual and organisational development in social services including within the leadership learning framework for middle managers.

### **3.0 Research methods and consultation strategy**

#### **Phase one: scoping analysis of the role and functions of middle managers in Scotland's social services**

- 3.1 The research for the scoping analysis was undertaken using a variety of methods, selected to deliver the most reliable findings possible within the timescale.
- Desk research was carried out to investigate relevant literature about the role and functions of middle managers across a range of settings.
  - There was consultation with the Scottish Social Services Leadership Strategy Group, both individual members and focus group discussion.
  - There were telephone interviews with other key stakeholders which helped to inform the survey design.
  - The survey questionnaire was distributed to a sample of middle managers across the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.
  - There was a focus group with a reference pool of middle managers to discuss the interim findings and explore emerging themes.
  - The findings were analysed and collated into a final report that was submitted in March 2014.

#### **Phase two: leadership learning needs of middle managers**

- 3.2 The second phase of research involved additional desk research and a further survey of a sample of middle managers across sectors.
- Desk research was carried out to compare and contrast a range of leadership standards and frameworks.
  - Findings from the research into the role and functions of middle managers helped inform a second survey questionnaire looking at leadership learning needs.
  - The draft survey design was sent for consultation to the Scottish Social Services Leadership Strategy Group and other key informants.
  - The survey questionnaire was distributed across the sectors using links established in the earlier phase of the research.
  - Findings were analysed and presented in a report submitted in November 2014.

## **Current and final phase: leadership learning framework for middle managers**

3.3 This concluding phase of the project drew together the previous findings in order to draft a leadership learning framework with detailed learning outcomes and to consider the options for a leadership learning framework.

- There was additional telephone consultation with key informants about what should be included in a leadership learning framework.
- The draft Middle Manager Leadership Learning Framework, designed to allow optimum flexibility in selection of frameworks across this diverse group of managers, was sent for consultation to a sample of workforce development managers and other stakeholders across the sectors. It was also circulated to a reference pool of middle managers who had agreed to participate in a focus group discussion. A structured half-day session was spent examining the draft learning outcomes (these formed part of the framework) in detail and sharing views on how they might be used within a leadership learning framework.
- There were discussions with SSSC representatives about the appropriate SCQF level for a leadership learning framework, linked to the outcomes within the framework.
- Desk research was carried out to identify relevant leadership learning resources and to link these to the broad areas encompassed in the framework.

#### **4.0 Using the leadership framework to support a learning framework for middle managers**

- 4.1 The framework has been designed to take account of the diversity of role and function of middle managers across Scotland's social services. Some occupy a distinct tier in the middle of an organisation while others span strategic responsibilities and close involvement in direct practice.
- 4.2 Central to the framework are two key domains: (1) keeping people who use services at the centre and (2) self-leadership, integrity and personal effectiveness. These are qualities, capacities and principles which underpin the middle management role regardless of organisational context. The framework has been represented as a fan diagram which incorporates operational tasks and strategic overview. There are seven separate domains designed to encompass the broad range of tasks which middle managers undertake.
- 4.3 The relevance of each of the domains will depend on the specific role and responsibility of a middle manager. This in turn will reflect differences in their work environment for example, size of organisation, management structure and sector of social services. None of the domains are more important than others. Their significance is dependent on whether or not a middle manager is involved in the area of responsibility described within the learning outcomes. An individual's leadership learning pathway might address all areas included in the framework or it might be more selective.

#### **Using the framework as an individual middle manager**

- 4.4 Boyatzis (cited in Goleman, 2002) presents a five stage model of self-directed learning.
- The first discovery: my ideal self – who do I want to be?
  - The second discovery: my real self – who am I? What are my strengths and gaps?
  - The third discovery: my learning agenda – how to build on my strengths while reducing my gaps?
  - The fourth discovery: practising new behaviours, thoughts and feelings to the point of mastery.
  - The fifth discovery: developing supportive and trusting relationships that make change possible.
- 4.5 In this context, the first discovery could be framed around the current role and responsibility of a middle manager in their specific work setting. Alternatively it could include the capabilities that they aspire towards even if these are not absolute requirements for their current post. This process will highlight which areas of the leadership learning framework are significant.

- 4.6 The second discovery involves a detailed review of existing knowledge, skills and capability. Based on the individual's experience and previous learning and development it is likely that they will already be able to demonstrate many of the learning outcomes within some domains of the framework. It may also highlight areas where they have limited experience or wish to develop enhanced leadership capacity.
- 4.7 Setting a learning agenda is the third discovery. It gives the opportunity to design a learning framework tailored to an individual's own needs and priorities. Their learning agenda is not only about the knowledge and understanding they wish to pursue or the enhanced skills they want to develop. It is also about their personal learning style and what works for them. It is about timescales and feasibility, taking into account existing commitments. A learning agenda needs to be sufficiently challenging to motivate but if it is over ambitious there is a risk of feeling discouraged by limited progress.
- 4.8 The fourth discovery acknowledges that 'unlearning' is often more challenging than 'learning'. An experienced manager and leader will have tried and tested ways of dealing with work challenges. Some of these will be effective and some may be less useful. When trying to do something differently there is a need to break habits which are deeply familiar and embedded in practice. It is not a comfortable place to be and can feel like stepping back from a position of 'unconscious competence' to 'conscious incompetence' in a developmental model of learning. When planning a learning framework it is helpful to deliberately build in opportunities to practise new skills until they become second nature.
- 4.9 The fifth discovery acknowledges that this is hard work and motivation can dip. Other people can lend valuable support but can also help to evaluate progress. Working with others on a similar learning framework provides an opportunity to share diverse experiences and perspectives. There is a range of activities which can support collaborative learning such as action learning sets, coaching circles and peer consultation.
- 4.10 The five stage model of self-directed learning is simply one example of how the framework might be used. Alternatively, middle managers might choose domains within the framework which are of particular interest or relevance to their professional development. Or they may decide to work systematically through all the learning outcomes, recording progress as they go. There are suggested resources linked to each of the areas within the framework. These offer a starting point for learning but other materials or activities can be sourced.

### **Using the framework within a social service organisation**

- 4.11 Many social service organisations will have existing strategies for

management and leadership development. As a minimum, they will have systems in place to ensure that the workforce, including registered managers, achieve the necessary qualifications to meet registration requirements. Larger organisations may have an in-house leadership development programme; others may support managers to undertake accredited external courses.

- 4.12 The framework is intended to support and not replace existing arrangements. Within the focus group discussion, participants shared ideas on how it might be integrated within a learning and development strategy. It is one of a range of tools which could be used to identify learning gaps or priorities for middle managers' leadership development.
- 4.13 If the LMCS NOS are already being used as a benchmark qualification within the organisation, some of the learning outcomes within the framework will already be covered. There is no value in duplication so focus would be directed on the areas which are additional.
- 4.14 A leadership learning strategy within an organisation will identify those domains or aspects of the framework which are most relevant to its staff. Learning pathways can then be designed, either for individuals or for a group of managers, using a mix of formal input, peer activities and self-directed learning.
- 4.15 Use of the domains to structure a modular development programme may be helpful. Again this will enable managers to focus on the learning outcomes most relevant to their role and function. A modular approach could involve a structured course of learning or less formal developmental sessions for example; a regular monthly meeting where each of the nine domains is taken as the focus for a session and specific resources are used as preparation or to structure discussion.
- 4.16 It is hard to meet the learning styles and preferences of a diverse range of staff. However, the survey of middle managers' leadership learning needs demonstrated that solitary learning or elearning on its own was not rated highly by respondents. Facilitated sessions, face-to-face contact and interaction with peers were valued alongside access to online resources. This deserves consideration when developing leadership learning opportunities for a group of middle managers.



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- 4.19 Resources within the framework can support middle managers' leadership learning and development without them needing to engage with others. It was clear, however, from the survey responses that peer interaction is highly valued. While some people may learn most effectively on their own, many appreciate the opportunity for collaborative learning, including face-to-face contact with other managers.
- 4.20 The framework below (diagram and text) is presented as a document addressed specifically to middle managers in social services. This diverse group includes managers from a range of professional backgrounds and specialisms which raises some issues in regard to terminology. Within the framework we use 'social services' to include managers working across different sectors and employed within fieldwork, day and residential provision.

Within the consultation process queries were raised about the language of 'people using services and carers'. Some respondents felt that this matched the culture of adult social care provision better than that of children's services. They held the view that it did not adequately reflect engagement with involuntary, or unwilling, clients. We note these reservations but have not amended the language used within the framework other than to include families as well as carers in some places.

## 5.0 Middle Manager Leadership Learning Framework for Scotland's social services

- 5.1 There are differences in the middle management role across the range of organisations and sectors within Scotland's social services. Some middle managers span direct practice and organisational strategy while others represent a distinct middle tier between senior management and front line services. While there are leadership activities common to all middle managers there are also challenges which are context specific.

We hope that the leadership learning outcomes for middle managers will resonate with your experience wherever you work. The intention is for you to identify and engage with those areas which are relevant to your own leadership role and workplace.

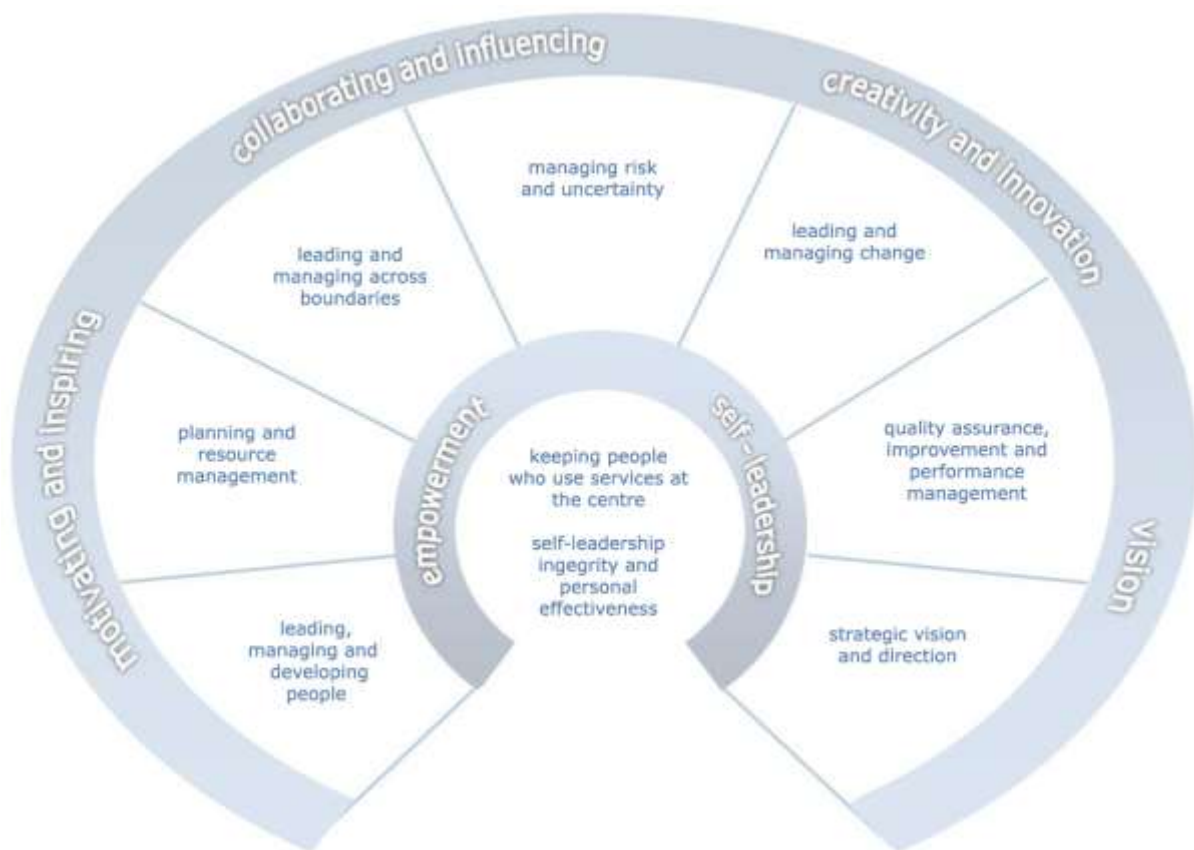


Figure 2: Middle Manager Leadership Learning Framework for Scotland's social services

## **Leadership learning outcomes**

### **Self-leadership, integrity and personal effectiveness**

- 5.2 Middle managers in social services lead and manage others most effectively when their practice is informed by a strong and explicit value base. They understand the importance of self-leadership and are committed to their own personal and professional development. They recognise that leadership requires work on oneself as well as engagement with others.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of core values and professional ethics within social services
- recognise and articulate their own personal and professional values and principles, understanding how these may differ from those of others
- represent and promote core social work/social care values in interactions with people who use services, carers, staff and colleagues in other agencies
- manage complex ethical and professional dilemmas including being prepared to take appropriate action if ethics and values are compromised
- demonstrate a clear sense of their own professionalism and confidence to act with appropriate authority
- demonstrate critical awareness of their own strengths and limitations and the impact of their behaviour on others
- adapt to different people and situations while remaining authentic
- take responsibility for their own emotions and prejudices and understand how these can affect their judgment and behaviour
- commit to a work-life balance which supports their own health and wellbeing and reflects a positive workplace culture
- critically reflect on their own leadership and management practice including actively seeking, analysing and acting on feedback from a range of sources
- pursue opportunities for personal learning and take responsibility for their continuing professional development.

## **Keeping people who use services at the centre**

- 5.3 Middle managers in social services make a significant contribution to shaping organisational culture and values. They set an example for staff in the way they lead and manage others, enabling workers to contribute, take initiative and gain new skills and confidence. Keeping people who use services and carers at the centre of planning, designing and delivering care and support is integral to an inclusive and participatory leadership approach.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- actively promote self-determination, citizenship and autonomy for people who use services, families and carers
- advocate for the central importance of people who use services regardless of competing organisational pressures and priorities
- engage with diverse individuals and communities including those who are marginalised or whose needs and expectations may pose challenge
- recognise and promote the value of people's active participation in service design and delivery
- provide opportunity, and support if required, for people who use services, carers and communities to be fully involved as partners and co-producers
- ensure a sustained commitment to improving outcomes for people who use services, families and carers.

## **Leading, managing and developing people**

- 5.4 Middle managers in social services are responsible for leading, managing and developing workers as well as role-modelling participatory leadership across the organisation. In addition to their direct supervisory responsibilities, they indirectly influence how other staff are managed and supervised. This in turn impacts on how practitioners and support staff interact with people using services, families and carers.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- demonstrate an inclusive, enabling and participatory leadership approach with individuals and teams working within the organisation
- take lead responsibility for reviewing, overseeing and participating in the safe selection and recruitment of workers
- initiate, develop and implement systems, procedures and practices to support staff engagement, development and retention
- initiate, develop and implement systems, procedures and practices that ensure health and safety at work
- role-model and promote a culture which values staff health and wellbeing and supports work-life balance
- provide reflective supervision which includes both challenge and support and is responsive to workers' diverse learning needs and professional experience
- actively support and encourage learning and development for individual staff and teams including the provision of coaching and mentoring support
- identify and address any concerns with the quality of staff performance at individual, team or service level
- be prepared to challenge and address any breach of professional values, ethics and/or codes of practice including seeking support or specialist advice when required
- monitor, oversee and support workforce development in order to continuously improve the quality of support for people who use services, families and carers
- promote and contribute to a learning culture across the organisation.

## **Planning and resource management**

- 5.5 Middle managers in social services are responsible for using resources effectively to achieve best possible outcomes. They plan for future needs, demands and changing expectations. They monitor and oversee current activity, intervening as necessary in response to changing factors in the internal or external environments.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- understand and operate competently within the financial and business context of social services
- manage financial and other resources in accordance with best value principles, giving due attention to quality and sustainability as well as cost
- ensure that appropriate systems, structures and procedures are in place so that resources within their service area are managed effectively
- develop and support systems for devolved decision making within teams and services
- intervene and take decisive action when resources are not being used efficiently or effectively
- plan operations and manage resources to meet current and future demands and changing expectations, both from within the organisation and at a wider policy level
- develop, implement and review business plans, team and service plans to reflect organisational strategies and plans
- understand and work with principles of good practice in social care contracting and procurement, whether in the role of purchaser or provider.

## **Leading and managing across boundaries**

- 5.6 Middle managers in social services work across professional and organisational boundaries. They recognise that collaborative gain is possible when people work together to achieve better outcomes for people using services and for unpaid/informal carers. They know that effective partnership working needs trust, respect and interdependence. Valuing different perspectives and working constructively with competing priorities requires skill, commitment and perseverance.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- identify and make good use of opportunities for collaboration and cooperation across organisational and professional boundaries, both internal and external, as well as with people who use services, families and carers
- communicate clearly and effectively across boundaries including actively listening to, seeking understanding and taking account of, differing perspectives
- build and maintain trust with colleagues in their own, and other agencies
- explore challenging issues and express constructive dissent when required, even if this feels risky and there is pressure to conform
- foster a culture of openness, collaboration and cooperation in the design, planning and delivery of services
- lead and manage collaborative work with networks, communities, other professionals and organisations, engaging partners and other stakeholders in shared decision making
- make sure that partnership working and integrated services stay clearly focused on outcomes for people who use services, families and carers.

## **Managing risk and uncertainty**

- 5.7 Middle managers in social services are involved in overseeing complex practice issues and dilemmas. They are concerned for the safety and wellbeing of those who use services, carers and staff. They understand the legislative context for protecting those who are at risk of harm. They are aware that people have the right to take risks and that leading a full life includes a degree of risk.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- demonstrate clear knowledge of the legislative and policy framework within which risk is managed
- lead and support a culture that allows staff and people who use services to make informed choices and take risks appropriately
- ensure that systems and processes are in place to assess and manage risk responsibly while also valuing the importance of positive risk-taking/risk enablement within people's lives
- respond to complex ethical and professional issues and make informed judgements in areas of uncertainty
- work with conflicting opinions and judgements while maintaining clear focus on people's safety and wellbeing
- take responsibility for gathering, analysing and using accurate and detailed information for decision making while recognising that decisions may require to be made in the absence of complete information
- support practitioners to take responsibility in dealing with risk while ensuring robust systems to oversee and review safe practice
- exercise professional judgement in bringing significant risk concerns to the attention of senior managers and relevant agencies.



## **Leading and managing change**

- 5.8 Middle managers in social services play a pivotal role as change agents within their service/organisation. Their influence is both downward and upward. They translate high level strategy and policy decisions into operational systems and procedures and provide feedback for senior managers about the impact of change. They support innovation at grassroots level, identifying new working practices which may be of value across the organisation and making senior management aware of these.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- understand the wider context for change and identify adaptive changes which enable teams and services to respond to new needs, demands and expectations
- clearly communicate the rationale for change to staff and inspire commitment to the change process
- use a range of communication approaches to ensure that all those affected by the change feel informed and involved in the process
- identify and be responsive to the impact of change, loss and uncertainty while still ensuring progress in the desired direction
- sustain personal resilience and openness in the face of anxiety, conflict or hostility
- tolerate uncertainty and the risk of failure while supporting creativity, innovation and experimentation within teams and services
- ensure that staff retain a clear focus on people who use services, families and carers while adapting to change and discontinuity
- provide a range of channels for staff to provide feedback on change
- communicate proactively with senior managers to identify issues and risks that may be generated by change, particularly where this is likely to have a negative impact on service viability, or on the quality of services provided.

## **Quality assurance, improvement and performance management**

- 5.9 Middle managers in social services oversee the quality of care and support offered to people using services and their carers. They value outcomes that make a difference in people's lives. They review and evaluate organisational performance at team and service level. They seek to include information that reflects personal outcomes in systems that measure performance and inform plans at all levels.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- promote and support a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement
- support and oversee responsive procedures for feedback from people who use services, carers and staff, using this information to drive improvement
- use 'soft' information, eg qualitative data about personal outcomes, as well as quantitative data and statistical reports, to inform performance improvement
- lead, evaluate and implement systems, procedures and practices that monitor, report and use key aspects of performance
- communicate effectively with external stakeholders about organisational performance, quality standards and continuous improvement
- demonstrate a commitment to self-evaluation and reflection based on experience and feedback.

## **Strategic vision and direction**

- 5.10 Middle managers in social services act as the key lynchpin between those responsible for strategic vision and direction and those engaged in direct services and support. They contribute in-depth knowledge of frontline practice ensuring that this informs organisational strategy and policy. They develop systems and procedures to enable strategic decisions to implement effectively at an operational level. They look outward to the wider external context and inward to the organisation's internal reality.

Middle managers need to be able to:

- contribute to the development of organisational vision and direction which reflects shared values, purpose and aspiration
- ensure that the views and concerns of staff and people using services are represented and reflected within their organisation's strategic vision
- represent and communicate that vision to others
- motivate and inspire others in support of the vision
- maintain broad awareness and understanding of the social, political and economic and professional context of social services
- critically analyse and evaluate current and emerging developments in the local and national context relevant to the delivery of social work and social care services
- evaluate the impact of their organisation's strategic plans and policies, and provide constructive feedback to influence the direction of the service/organisation
- contribute to and oversee the development of operational systems, procedures, practices and policies which support organisational strategy and direction.

## **Appendix One: Social services management and leadership texts**

Aldgate, J., Healey, L., Barris, M., Pine, B., Rose, W., Seden, S. (2007) (eds.) Enhancing social work management: theory and best practice from the UK and USA, London, Jessica Kingsley

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Bilson A. and Lawler, J. (2010) Social work management and leadership: managing complexity and creativity, London, Routledge

Coulshed, V. and Mullender, A. (2006) Management in social work (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan

Gray, I., Field, R., and Brown, K. (2010) Effective leadership, management and supervision in health and social care, Exeter, Learning Matters

Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2008) Leadership and management in social care, London, Sage

Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2009) Management and organisations in social work (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Exeter, Learning Matters

Hafford-Letchfield, T. (2010) Social care management, strategy and business planning, London, Jessica Kingsley

Hafford-Letchfield, T. and Gallop, L. (2012) How to become a better manager in social work and social care: essential skills for managing care, London, Jessica Kingsley

Hafford-Letchfield, T. and Lambley, S. (2014) Inclusive leadership in social work and social care, Bristol, Policy Press

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Lambley, S. (2009) Proactive management in social work practice, Exeter, Learning Matters

Martin, V., Charlesworth, J. and Henderson, E. (2010) Managing in health and social care (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) London, Routledge

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Mackian, S. and Simons, J. (2013) Leading, managing, caring: understanding leadership and management in health and social care, London, Routledge

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