



National CPD Team

Professional Review and Development  
Report on focus groups and visits  
Advice and guidance

January 2006

**This paper addresses four issues:**

1. What experience of the PRD process do teaching staff report? (p3)
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**and includes:**

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## Professional Review and Development

### Introduction

The aim of the National CPD Team is to lead and support the development of world-class continuing professional development (CPD) in Scotland. This paper is the fifth in a series of occasional publications which aim to enrich ongoing discussion, to clarify concerns, to identify possible solutions and to suggest future action. ***The status of the papers lies in the value that you find in them.***

Others in the series are:

- Occasional paper 1: The Contribution of Chartered Teachers, August 2005
- Occasional paper 2: Headteacher Appointment Procedures, August 2005
- Occasional paper 3: CPD Team Visits to Local Authorities, January – June 2005
- Occasional paper 4: Fleshing out the Standards, December 2005

The information in this paper is based on a number of focus group discussions involving senior leaders and classroom practitioners, and from the discussions the team have had on their visits to local authorities and to schools. More information on *the methods used to develop this paper* can be found in Appendix 2 on page 13.

In Appendix 3 on page 14, you will find some *suggested areas for action* which have emerged from discussion with authority officers, school leadership teams and teachers.

### Background

*A Teaching Profession 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (TP21), the agreement reached following recommendations made in the McCrone Report, stated that “all teachers shall have an ongoing commitment to maintain their professional expertise through an agreed programme of continuing professional development.” It also made clear that from August 2003, teachers would be required to engage in an additional contractual 35 hours of CPD, to agree an annual CPD plan with their managers and to maintain an individual CPD record. Guidelines issued by the Scottish Executive Education Department in 2003 placed the process of Professional Review and Development (PRD) at the heart of this commitment.

There is clear evidence that the single biggest element in school improvement is the quality and preparedness of teachers. No other factor makes such a significant contribution to the quality and effectiveness of learning in a school. In addition, the agenda set out in *Ambitious Excellent Schools* and *A Curriculum for Excellence* requires that all pupils should be taught by teachers who are familiar with curricular change, knowledgeable about teaching and learning methodologies, up to date with rapidly changing technology and who can enable them to reach their full potential and equip them for the changing world in which they live. It is therefore important that every teacher has easy access to a wide range of high quality CPD activities which are personally relevant to them at every stage in their career. The basis for good high quality CPD is the professional review and development process.

Several people in the local authorities visited spoke of concern at the lack of teachers applying for promoted posts in schools, particularly at headteacher level. By encouraging and offering appropriate development to leaders at all levels in our schools, PRD can help give teachers the confidence and courage to embrace new and challenging roles.

## The Professional Review and Development Process<sup>1</sup>

Professional review and development (PRD) is the process which ensures that all teachers are fully prepared to carry out their contractual obligations. The process has a number of elements, or components:

- Preparation for the interview, including self-evaluation
- PRD interview with line manager, including CPD needs identification
- The CPD Plan and Record (referred to in this paper as a *profile*)
- Allocation of resources
- Undertaking professional development activity
- Assessing impact of CPD on practice

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The PRD process is intended to ensure that all teachers experience professional development on a continuing basis. The range of activities that can support this development is very wide; any activity that causes a teacher to reflect on and develop his or her professional practice, knowledge or understanding does so. (See Appendix 1) It is therefore increasingly understood that CPD is very much more than attendance at courses or other such events, and increasingly the case that teachers are seeking professional development through collaborative, workplace –based activity, peer support, professional reading, classroom visits and observation, ‘acting’ posts and other practice –based activity.

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### 1. What experience of the PRD process do teaching staff report?

There is a significant level of good practice, and almost all authorities have established local policies and practices. Many of these have been agreed at LNCT and examples can be found on the TAC Team website at <http://www.scottishcouncils.org/tact/LNCT%20Agreements/Forms/AllItems.htm>

Almost all classroom practitioners, principal teachers and depute headteachers interviewed had had a Professional Review and Development interview. However teachers reported very different perceptions of the quality and value of the process, from those who had found it to be helpful, supportive and focussed, to others who spoke of a “tick box” mentality.

A number of issues emerged as being significant in affecting the quality of the PRD process

- **Preparation for the interview**

Preparation for the interview on the part of both the reviewer and reviewee is considered to be essential to ensure a successful outcome, and training is seen as fundamental to this. Many authorities maintain a continuous programme of training to ensure that both reviewer and reviewee understand their respective roles, and the importance of investing time and effort into making this interaction a valuable experience. It is important that the reviewer has credibility and a sound knowledge base regarding the work of the reviewee and the wider work of the school. Both reviewer and reviewee should also be aware of the range and width of CPD activities available to support staff in addressing their development needs, and the value of utilising identified strengths to the benefit and development of others. Many of those interviewed felt that the PRD interview worked best when it was seen as a coaching opportunity, and set within the context of an on-going relationship between teacher and reviewer. More opportunities for teachers to develop coaching skills would therefore be very helpful in improving the quality of PRD

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<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Executive Education Department publication “Professional Review and Development” can be found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/prad03-00.asp>

### Timetabling

All focus groups discussed the importance of good practice in timetabling for the review. In some cases review interviews are postponed at short notice and this is seen by many as devaluing the process and reflecting a lack of respect for the teachers concerned. There is a general understanding of the pressure on senior managers to 'ear mark' this time and also a recognition that within the secondary sector, this is more of a problem for large departments where a greater number of staff need to be reviewed. Teachers highlighted the importance of having adequate time to talk, to be actively listened to and to have the opportunity to engage in a quality two-way dialogue without a feeling of imposing on the reviewer's time. It is perceived that the review interview is more successful when it takes place in a suitable setting, away from constant interruptions and in a relaxed atmosphere. Some authorities and schools have established the practice, wherever possible, of arranging interviews outwith the teaching day, and at a venue outwith the school.

### Self-evaluation

Teachers recognised that self-evaluation is pivotal to the PRD process. However, many teachers observed that they lack confidence in undertaking self-evaluation, and would welcome guidance to carry this out more effectively. It is evident that practice to support self-evaluation varies across authorities, with some authorities using *HGIOS* quality indicators, some using the *Standard for Full Registration* and others providing little or no guidance. Many focus group participants observed that self-evaluation is a skill which newly qualified teachers have mastered through their involvement in the induction year, in which they routinely self-evaluate against the Standard for Full Registration. and that in many cases those teachers who support probationers have benefited and indeed increased their own skills in self-evaluation.

### Interview

The interview itself should be a high quality experience which teachers value, and although practice may vary in this regard, there is increasing evidence that this is so. It is important to ensure that the time given to the interview is protected, and sufficient for the purpose it serves. It is important that the spirit in which the interview is carried out is one of mutual professional trust and confidence so that the discussion can be open and wide ranging, including career aspirations and the improvement of current practice, as well as issues arising from school and departmental plans.

- **CPD plan and record**

We found strong evidence that teachers are fully aware of their contractual commitment to an additional 35 hours per annum for CPD. In fact, there was a measure of concern that in some cases the profession is developing a 'clock watching' culture as teachers endeavour to record and prove the activities undertaken. From discussions in schools, it seems that there are still some misconceptions as to what constitutes good quality, productive CPD activities. In some instances, CPD activities were seen only as attendance at courses. There appeared to be a lack of understanding that CPD is not only about the attendance at a course, but also about the use teachers make of the skills and information gained from such courses within the school setting. Some teachers were unaware that membership of working groups, professional reading, secondments and other similar activities offer excellent opportunities for professional development, and if undertaken outwith the 35 hour working week can be credited to the additional 35 'McCrone' hours.

### CPD portfolio

The majority of those contributing to the focus group discussions said that they keep a CPD portfolio of reflection and evidence to supplement and extend their CPD profile. They regarded this as good practice regardless of their experience or aspirations. The depth of evidence and material contained within a portfolio varied greatly and was frequently influenced by the teacher's current involvement in national accredited training.

- **Allocation of resources**

A variety of practice is beginning to develop in schools in relation to the involvement of staff in resource allocation. Some schools have begun to give each teacher a basic allocation of funding to support his or her CPD, with the opportunity to bid for a further allocation from a centrally held resource. In other cases, the school has a staff committee which recommends – or decides – how the resources available for CPD should be allocated on a whole school or even individual basis. Where this kind of development is occurring, schools report that this makes a significant contribution to the degree of ownership that staff have of the PRD process.

- **Assessing impact of CPD on practice**

This is an area that many teachers, schools and authorities are finding a significant challenge. Everyone we interviewed was sure that the big increase in CPD activity across the profession was having a significantly positive effect on pupil attainment and achievement, but no one we met was confident that they had effective or comprehensive ways to assess this. There was general consensus that given the rich mix of CPD activities in which teachers engage, it was often not possible, or perhaps desirable, to make a direct connection between an individual activity and improved practice. It was however, seen as important to take a holistic view.

There are perhaps three levels at which assessment of impact of CPD can be considered:

Individual level: Most teachers have regularly evaluated the quality of the staff development they have undertaken, but the development of CPD records, the increased use of CPD portfolios and reflective logs or journals means that this is now much more structured. Research evidence would suggest the most significant impact comes from CPD which is sustained over a period which is current and relevant to the teacher's professional context, which is undertaken collaboratively with colleagues and which produces outcomes or learning that are shared with others rather than one off courses.

School level: School CPD coordinators usually plan a programme of CPD for colleagues which has at its heart the delivery of the school improvement/development plan. In most cases the school plan will include consideration of the CPD priorities required to ensure success, and some indicators or measures of how this will be monitored.

Local authority level: Almost all authorities have good procedures for evaluating opportunities offered at local authority courses, which are used to plan future programmes. These tend to be evaluation sheets completed at the end of the experience, and have limited value in measuring how much impact new learning, skills or abilities will have on classroom practice. In some cases the local authority has developed long-term evaluation strategies which ask teachers to look back some six months or so after a course to consider whether it has had any lasting impact. This can also provide useful, if rather limited, information.

Increasingly teachers would welcome more ways to show the impact of resources being devoted to CPD, as a means of demonstrating the value being added to pupil learning. This might help protect a resource which they value and wish to see continuing.

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## 2. Which part of the process is seen as valuable?

- **Self-evaluation**

It is clear that time set aside for personal reflection and self-evaluation is welcomed by the profession. Self-evaluation is recognised as being a good way for teachers to consider the outcomes from the

personal development activities they undertake and to evaluate how these impact on learning and teaching within the school. It also allows time to determine future personal development requirements and to highlight areas of personal strength which could be shared with colleagues. The focus groups believed that active participation in self-evaluation could lead to a greater understanding of the school development planning cycle, which in turn can encourage teachers to engage more fully in the school improvement agenda.

- **Planning CPD**

On the whole the PRD interview is regarded as a positive experience as most teachers appreciate the opportunity to engage in a professional discussion with their line managers and welcome constructive feedback from them. In the majority of cases this contributes to teachers feeling more valued as a member of the school team. Some groups felt that, in the past, access to development opportunities could depend on being in the 'right place at the right time,' whereas this system permits greater consistency of opportunity across a school. The interview is regarded as an excellent forum to discuss future career pathways and the strategies needed to prepare for this. Some teachers also spoke of the reassurance they got from knowing that their proposed plan of action was regarded as appropriate and of interest, and from the opportunity to discuss ways in which their particular areas of knowledge and expertise could be shared within the school and local authority as part of their professional development.

- **Good relationships bold?**

The involvement of school senior managers as reviewers is seen as beneficial for a number of reasons, particularly where they are seen to be proactive and well prepared for the PRD interview. Reviewers who are seen to have an in-depth knowledge of how a member of staff operates within his or her class and department, can encourage genuine, informed decisions to be made on development needs, and aid the identification of individual strengths which can be used to improve the performance of others, thus benefiting the whole school. This also enhances the credibility of the reviewer. If the experience is seen as worthwhile and positive, it can contribute to improved working relationships and build trust with senior managers.

- **Impact on Learning bold?**

As noted above, there is general agreement that the Professional Review and Development process is a worthwhile and valuable exercise. There is also a growing understanding that it is an essential element in the school improvement agenda.

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### **3. In what way can the quality of the experience be improved?**

There are a number of ways in which those we interviewed felt that the PRD process could be improved.

- **PRD policies**

Many authorities have recently reviewed their PRD policy with a view to simplifying and streamlining their procedures, and this is recognised and welcomed. It is also understood that there has to be sufficient rigour in the process to guarantee value but that paperwork needs to be manageable. Arrangements should be simple and involve minimal bureaucracy. The roles and responsibilities of the reviewer and reviewee need to be clearly stated to guarantee as far as possible a consistent experience for everyone across schools and across the authority.

- **Developing teacher ownership of PRD and CPD**

Although many, or perhaps most, teachers are now engaging fully with the PRD process there is still a need to develop understanding that this is not something that is 'done to you' but that it is a two way process, the purpose of which is to enhance teachers' skills and abilities, and to prepare them to carry out their duties more effectively, in order to impact positively on learning and teaching within the school. It is recognised that teachers must acknowledge their own

responsibility for identifying suitable CPD activities other than courses to take forward their development needs. A focus on the impact and effect of CPD on learning and teaching, rather than on hours spent in any given activity, is needed to enhance the process further.

- **Ensuring good training for PRD**

Quality training is high on the agenda as a way to improve the whole PRD process. It is agreed that this is necessary for both the reviewer and the reviewee and that it is important for local authorities to maintain training provision in this area. In the best cases observed, training emphasised the commitment required in the preparation for the interview to ensure a productive outcome. The focus was on interpersonal skills, active listening and giving positive, constructive feedback. It was seen as essential that reviewers knew how to empower others, to give the opportunity to discuss long-term prospects to plan an appropriate career pathway and to recognise leadership qualities.

Equally, it was seen as important that the reviewee had realistic expectations of the process, and good skills in self-evaluation.

- **A climate of respect and trust**

For best impact, reviews need to take place within an ethos of mutual respect and trust where confidentiality is respected. The venue for the meeting should be private and free from interruption for the duration of the interview. Conditions should prevail that are free from tension thereby allowing a professional dialogue in a relaxed atmosphere conducive to a positive outcome. Although the majority of authorities have a yearly review meeting, it is suggested that additional intermediate, perhaps less formal discussions would be of benefit.

- **Headteacher PRD**

Some of the headteachers we met had a less positive picture of PRD in relation to their own professional review and development. In a few instances headteachers said they had not been given the opportunity to engage fully with the process, and they thought that this restricted their ability to discuss their development needs with their line manager. The groups were clear that the best outcomes from a headteacher review interview required the same procedures, ethos and attention that applied to all other teachers. A further area of concern was the perception that there was a lack of planned quality CPD opportunities available at headteacher level, especially for experienced headteachers, to address their identified development needs.

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#### **4. In what ways can the PRD process act as a contributory factor in changing the culture of schools?**

All groups agreed that there are many initiatives taking place in education presently, which are changing the culture of our schools, and the PRD process is certainly a positive contributory factor to this. The focus groups were also clear that the headteacher plays a key role. Where the headteacher is proactive, takes a clear lead and is seen genuinely to promote the benefits and values of the professional review, this encourages teachers to engage fully with the process.

Teachers said they believed that involvement in the process as a reviewer has given the senior management team a 'better feel' for the school and a better understanding of the work of the teachers, and that this in turn is breaking down perceived barriers including the reluctance of staff in some instances to trust senior managers. When praise was offered it was seen as more valid, because it was based on real knowledge and understanding of the teacher's work.

The focus groups discussed the ways in which many of the new teachers have had a positive impact on the culture within the school and their contribution to an increased understanding of the benefits of self-evaluating against a standard. The majority of teachers who had worked with a national standard (in particular new teachers, those on chartered teacher programmes and SQH candidates) recognised the benefits to self and school of self-evaluation and indeed tended to be proactive in seeking out their entitlement to a professional development and review interview. It is clear from all groups that the

process itself appears to be creating an ethos of openness in which staff recognise the benefits of professional dialogue and the sharing of good practice. It is suggested that the process is helping teachers to move away from the 'Scottish culture' of not promoting their talents, to one where teachers feel comfortable in recognising their skills and abilities and using these to develop others.

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## **5. Summary of conclusions drawn from focus group discussions**

Almost all teaching staff in schools are engaging in professional review and development procedures. However there are groups of teachers who are not benefiting, particularly short-term supply teachers, teachers returning to work after a career break, peripatetic teachers and newly qualified teachers who are working towards achieving the Standard for Full Registration by the alternative route.

More consistency in headteacher professional review and development would impact very positively on many aspects of school improvement. Headteachers have a crucial role in promoting the benefits of the PRD process, and their approach will impact on the attitudes of the teachers in their school. It is vital that headteacher interviews are of a high quality so that they can model this experience at school level. Headteachers told us they would wish to ensure that interviews focussed on personal professional development and that they should not be viewed as an opportunity to monitor school performance.

Self-evaluation and personal reflection is at the heart of the process. Teachers should appreciate the huge personal part they play in improving learning within their classrooms. Many teachers reflect on the quality of their teaching and evaluate the impact of their lesson on pupil learning with a view to improving the experience for future pupils. However it is evident that many teachers are uncomfortable with the formal process of self-evaluation and would welcome access to a self-evaluation toolkit to support and guide them through this part of the cycle.

Thorough preparation by the reviewer and reviewee prior to the interview can determine its success in terms of outcomes. Almost all authorities provide training in these areas and it is important to maintain this training to ensure that new teachers who join the profession, and newly promoted teachers taking on a line management role are familiar with the procedures.

The best outcomes of a review interview happen when the interview itself is held in a relaxed comfortable atmosphere away from the bustle of school life and free from interruptions. There must, however, be sufficient rigour in the process to make it credible. On completion of a successful interview the teacher should be clear about the types of development activities they will undertake.

## **6. Some principles for consideration in relation to PRD:**

- There is an ongoing commitment to maintain professional expertise at every stage of a teacher's career, regardless of post.
- PRD is a means of ensuring teachers are well prepared for their contractual obligations, and is fundamental to engaging teachers in high quality CPD.
- Effective CPD is based upon self-evaluation and personal reflection. This includes preparing for the PRD interview, and is effective when undertaken against the relevant Standard or against CPD for Educational Leaders
- PRD is undertaken with line managers and is incorporated within the range of existing quality assurance arrangements
- Development needs can be met in a great variety of ways including collaborative activity (see Appendix 1 for some suggested CPD activities)
- The process should be simple, easy to understand and to operate.
- Self-evaluation and personal reflection using tools such as relevant standards or CPD for Educational Leaders
- Teachers are required to maintain a CPD record, which identifies professional development and training needs, indicates how these might be addressed, and includes an evaluation or reflection of

impact on classroom practice. This should be discussed at the annual review, and from it should emerge an agreement of development activities for the year ahead. The record and plan form the teacher's *'profile'*

- Identified development needs should be a balance of personal professional development priorities, and those required to address the school and local authority improvement plan, and the national priorities for education.
- PRD should assist with planning future career progression.
- Each teacher is responsible for meeting his/her own development needs, in whatever way is most appropriate

### **Contact the team:**

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## **Appendix 1**

### **CPD Activities<sup>2</sup>**

A CPD activity is anything that has progressed a teacher's existing skills or enhanced her or his professionalism.

The list that follows is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive:

- activity related to achieving national standards (Standard for Full Registration, Standard for Chartered Teacher, Standard for Headship) or CPD for Educational Leaders;
- self-evaluation and personal reflection including preparation for the professional review and development meeting;
- subject-based activities including involvement with professional bodies and associations;
- attendance at in-service;
- membership of school committees and task groups;
- developing school, local authority and national policies;
- visits to and from colleagues in other schools;
- co-operative teaching;
- lesson observation and analysis;
- secondments;
- professional reading and research;
- mentoring/supporting colleagues;
- curricular planning/development;
- management and leadership development opportunities;
- teacher placement;
- working with others, including as part of inter-agency teams involving colleagues from social work, health service, etc and
- working with parents/carers.

As part of the professional review and development process, the teacher and line manager should agree which activities will be considered as contributing to the additional contractual CPD requirement.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Method**

Given that one of the aims of this paper is to contribute to the discussion presently happening around professional review and development, it is important that it reflects current issues and ideas, and feeds them back into the discussion at a point in time when it can help that discussion to move on. This does

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Professional Review and Development, Scottish Executive 2003

not allow time for detailed and painstaking research across the whole field of study; it requires that we take soundings within it. The focus group approach, on which this paper is based, is such a sampling technique, in two senses. It takes a sample at a certain point in time, out of all the possible points in time when it could be taken. It also takes sample groups of people, out of all those who are involved with the issues. A sample may represent the population from which it is drawn more or less completely, so it is important that this paper is seen as a contribution to the debate, rather than as a series of answers to the questions that have arisen within it.

Nevertheless, this paper is based on the thinking and experience of colleagues who are deeply professionally involved in the professional review and development process. The National CPD Team is grateful to them for their willingness to share this experience, to give the time and effort necessary to attend the focus groups, but above all for the quality and clarity of their thinking.

## **Appendix 3 : Suggested Areas for Action**

### **National**

- Review, amalgamation and reissuing of the SEED booklets
  - Professional Review and Development (2002)
  - Continuing Professional Development (2002)
- Seek opportunities to:
  - promote greater teacher familiarity with the Standard for Full Registration, Standard for Chartered Teacher, 'CPD for Educational Leaders' and the Standard for Headship
  - promote awareness of the range and many different types of CPD activities
  - emphasise the link between PRD, CPD and School Improvement
- Develop self- evaluation toolkits based on the standards
- Support the development of tools to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of CPD
- Support the promotion of Coaching as a CPD activity for teachers at all levels

### **Local Authority**

- Review existing PRD policy and procedures, clarifying the purpose in identifying strengths as well as development needs, and recognise the importance of its use to plan career progression
- Make provision for short term supply teachers, returning teachers, peripatetic teachers and alternative route probationer teachers to engage with the process
- Promote the wide range of CPD opportunities available other than attendance at courses
- Provide training in the Professional Review and Development Process for the reviewer to include
  - PRD policy and procedure training
  - Listening skills
  - Giving positive feedback
- Provide training in the Professional Review and Development Process for the reviewee to include
  - PRD policy and procedure training
  - Using a self-evaluation toolkit
  - Maintaining a portfolio
- Provide resources to support good professional development activities

### **School**

- Create an ethos of openness and transparency
- Establish a school culture which promotes a learning community and supports individual development
- Make suitable arrangements to meet identified development needs, so far as is possible, within existing resources
- Ensure the sharing of good practice through collaborative working
- Encourage collegiality and discussion about practice among peers

### **Teachers**

- Approach PRD in a spirit of openness, professional confidence and trust
- Engage in self-evaluation
- Take the initiative in seeking out and undertaking a wide range of CPD activities
- Be prepared to share strengths with others
- Ensure that what is learned is applied in practice