

**Linking the Standard for Childhood Practice  
and the six leadership capabilities for workers in  
Scotland's social services**

**Guidance to inform leadership development for  
managers and lead practitioners in early years**

**Scottish Social Services Council**

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## 1. Introduction

This document provides information and guidance on the work carried out by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to identify how and where the Standard for Childhood Practice links with the six leadership capabilities developed for managers in Scotland's social services.

The SSSC has developed four [Leadership Pathways](#) for frontline workers, people using services, managers, and corporate and strategic leaders, based on six leadership capabilities. This document focuses on the [Manager leadership capabilities](#) and further detail of how these capabilities can be met in practice are available in the [Managers Leadership Capability Indicators](#) document available on Step into Leadership.

The purpose of the guide is to support **childhood practice managers/lead practitioners** to recognise, develop and provide evidence of the leadership capabilities required to enable them to competently carry out their role.

The guidance enables **childhood practice managers/lead practitioners, their managers, supervisors and trainers** to:

- Identify the links between the requirements for the Standard for Childhood Practice and the Manager leadership capabilities.
- Identify within workers' roles and responsibilities:
  - where leadership capabilities are required
  - how leadership capabilities can be developed
  - how leadership capabilities can be evidenced
- Make clear how any evidence of leadership collected (or in the process of being collected) can be used across the Standard for Childhood Practice and the leadership capabilities.

## 2. Demonstration of leadership by a childhood practice manager/lead practitioner

The assumption is that as a childhood practice manager/lead practitioner you can demonstrate leadership when you:

- work directly with children and young people, adults, families and communities
- contribute to team/collaborative work with colleagues and other professionals
- work with and supervise the work of colleagues
- carry out your roles and responsibilities, illustrating your knowledge of organisational policy, procedure and practice, current literature/research,

SSSC Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers and other legal and organisational requirements within your roles and responsibilities

- display leadership potential for your own managers and other professionals with whom you work.

### **3. Using the links to inform leadership development**

Two resources have been produced to support childhood practice lead practitioners/managers.

**Leadership Capability Grids (LCG).** There is one LCG for each of the Childhood Practice Standards which shows the links to the relevant manager leadership capabilities. Each Childhood Practice requirement has been numbered, in relation to the relevant standard, e.g. 4.1. 4.2 etc for easy reference. The grids can be used by childhood practice managers/lead practitioners to:

- discuss individual leadership and management development with others
- identify demonstration of leadership capabilities in their work.

**Leadership Capability Evidence Record (LCER).** This form provides a framework for individuals to record evidence demonstrating their leadership capabilities. It could be used, along with the [Managers Leadership Capabilities Indicators](#):

- by managers/lead practitioners as they work towards their Childhood Practice qualification.
- as part of an appraisal/staff development programme where ongoing leaderships skills can be tracked against the six leadership capabilities
- as part of personal learning and development plans where progression between the three levels of emerging, established and accomplished can be tracked.

#### **Web links:**

Step into Leadership/Leadership Pathways:

<http://www.stepintoleadership.info/index.html>

Step into Leadership Managers Capabilities:

<http://www.stepintoleadership.info/managers.html>

Step into Leadership Managers Capability Indicators:

[http://www.stepintoleadership.info/assets/pdf/managers\\_indicators.pdf](http://www.stepintoleadership.info/assets/pdf/managers_indicators.pdf)

### **4. Case studies**

The [Managers Leadership Capabilities Indicators](#) provide details of how the six leadership capabilities can be met in practice, and identify the three levels of

progression towards leadership development; emerging, established and accomplished.

Three case studies have been developed which illustrate the leadership learning of early years workers at different levels of leadership development.

1. Cameron is a new manager in the early years sector and his story exemplifies **emerging** leadership capabilities for a manager.
2. Siobhan has gained her postgraduate degree in childhood practice and has recently taken over management of a service. Her story illustrates **established** leadership capabilities.
3. Debbie is an experienced childhood practice manager and has recently been promoted to a more senior, strategic manager role. Whilst Debbie is currently working toward the PDA in Childhood Practice at level 9, her story shows **accomplished** leadership capabilities.

Thanks to Cameron Sprague, Siobhan Moncrieff and Debbie Campbell for sharing their leadership stories with us. In each case study, there are indicators and suggestions in relation to the Standard for Childhood Practice and the leadership capabilities.

## 1. Cameron's story

From a young age I knew I wanted to work with, and help, people. In the past I have worked with adults with additional support needs, in social events for older people in my community and with children and young people in a variety of settings. My experiences working at summer camp gave me a desire to continue working with children in the outdoors which in turn led me directly to completing my BSc in Outdoor and Environmental Education. While working at a local primary school I completed my NVQ 3 and 4 in Children's Care Learning and Development. In 2012 I joined my current employer on the Early Years Early Action project. The Early Years Early Action project not only brought me back to working with early years aged children again, but also married my learning from my NVQ 3 and 4 with my BSc qualification. Becoming a member of the project team has been a great experience for me. I have been encouraged to develop my skills and knowledge, and through training, support and supervision, have been introduced to active reflection using the [Continuous Learning Framework](#) (CLF). All of this is helping to make me a more knowledgeable and confident practitioner.

I have recently gained a new post in the organisation; that of Centre Practice Manager and this has led me to start the PDA Level 9 in Childhood Practice. The experience has been a positive one for me, but it also has been challenging. The work on the PDA has really given me a much deeper respect for the management process and also improved my confidence with each new piece of learning I complete. The work continues to stretch my thinking and maybe more importantly has forced me to reflect on my own practice regularly. The use of the CLF continues to help to tease out the direction of my own personal learning with a stronger leadership focus.

At times it can be challenging managing my schedule with the Early Years Early Action project, managing my centre, completing my work on the PDA Childhood Practice Level 9 and my personal commitments, but I am getting there. My staff team has been great in bearing with me and assisting my learning. The successful running of the centre in my tenure is a reflection of their hard work and patience. As we move towards centre appraisal time I plan to strengthen the use of the CLF with my team, building on my personal experience of using the CLF framework to help build professional reflection more fully into day to day practice and to help my colleagues to identify appropriate personal learning pathways.

Cameron is already demonstrating **emerging leadership capabilities** through **Empowering - 'involving people in development and improvement'** learning from the views and insights of employees, people who use services and their carers and using this to continually improve practice (Standard for Childhood Practice 18), and **Motivating and Inspiring** -in recognising and valuing the contribution of others and **inspiring people by personal reflection** -in having high expectations of himself and supporting and encouraging others to do so too.

### Standard for Childhood Practice

In his work building new relationships with his new staff team and supporting his own and his staff's continuing learning and development Cameron is showing that he 'Values and develops an environment for learning that enables and supports learning for themselves and for others and where reflective practice is valued and developed' (Standard for Childhood Practice 2)

### Leadership Capabilities Indicators for Managers

Cameron could now use the [Leadership Capability Grids](#) in conjunction with his course work to track his emerging Leadership Capabilities and record this using the [Leadership Capability Evidence Record](#)

### Step into Leadership

At this stage of his career, Cameron might find it useful to use [Plan Your Pathway](#) (hyperlink: [http://www.stepintoleadership.in fo/managers\\_questions.html](http://www.stepintoleadership.in fo/managers_questions.html)) to help him think about his own leadership skills and vision for his leadership development.

## 2. Siobhan's story

I returned to further education after 18 years after gaining a BA in Applied Consumer Studies and latterly working part-time in retail management. My journey along the path of early education and childcare began when I was working in the voluntary sector, co-ordinating a multiple births support group and helping at my children's school and nursery. I gained access to the SVQ 3 Children's Care Learning and Development, through support from a community nursery training programme, and was able to underpin it through my voluntary role. During my studies, I successfully gained my first employed position as a nursery manager and due to my previous experience and qualification I accessed the Postgraduate Diploma in Childhood Practice at the University of Glasgow.

During this time I engaged in the childhood practice mentoring programme and have received valuable and supportive guidance from my mentor. This continues to be a very positive experience, providing me with a wider knowledge base to help build skills.

As a relatively new manager in early years, some of the challenges I have faced have been the reluctance of practitioners to be fully on board or cope with change, due to an increase and higher expectations around appropriate registration and qualifications and a lack of perceived professional esteem. By taking time to listen and understand the views and feelings of my staff and supporting them to reach more positive personal targets and outcomes, we have all been able to move forward. This approach has often required me to adapt my leadership style in response to individual situations and issues.

To support my own, and my team's, ongoing development and build on the recognised strengths in my team, I have accessed the [SSSC Workforce Solutions toolkits](#); the Continuous Learning Framework, Step into Leadership learning logs and personalised pathways. My aim now is to deliver workshops to my team to facilitate their engagement with the tools available, helping to build self-reflection in practice and delivering positive outcomes for children and their families.

In looking ahead I recognise that the sharing of knowledge, multi-agency partnerships, and reflective practice, will ensure continuing improvement and better outcomes for every child and their family. On a personal level, I have registered my interest in becoming an ambassador for careers in social services and look forward to further develop my leadership capabilities and accessing resources to support my learning.

In drawing on her earlier management experiences and developing her new learning, skills and qualifications pathway, Siobhan is 'taking responsibility for own personal learning and professional development needs' (Standard for Childhood Practice 2) By **adapting her leadership and management styles** to take account of the requirements of the context and the needs of individual staff, Siobhan is demonstrating **established self- leadership capability**.

Siobhan shows **established self-leadership (demonstrating and promoting resilience)** by actively contributing to the building of strategies which build resilience in the workplace and 'taking responsibility for own professional learning and development and that of the workers for whom they are responsible' (Standard for Childhood Practice 2)

Siobhan's **emerging** leadership capability is apparent when sharing her **vision**, seeing how her practice, her teams and that of the wider service, **can best make a difference**

### Step into Leadership

In addition to the SSSC tools Siobhan is already using, she might find it useful to systematically review her leadership capabilities using the [Leadership Capability Grids \(hyperlink\)](#) and [Evidence Record Leadership Capability Evidence Record \(hyperlink\)](#) to identify which Leadership Capability and progression level she will incorporate into her Personal Development Plan as she further develops herself, her team and her centre.

### 3. Debbie's Story

Coming from a military family lifestyle involving much travel, I have been fortunate to gain a vast and varied experience of childcare, from early childminding experiences to supervisory and managerial experiences in Germany, England, Northern Ireland and latterly Scotland.

My current learning journey truly started when I joined my current employer five and a half years ago as a Childhood Practice Manager. To meet SSSC registration requirements and further enhance my skills and knowledge, I embarked on my SVQ Children's Care Learning and Development level 4. This journey was in itself quite a challenge, as I struggled to balance the demands of a management role within five independent centres with study and family life. Support within my job role was offered by my line manager using strategies such as reflection using the [Continuous Learning Framework](#), which was to prove enormously beneficial in highlighting strengths and areas for development and, through reflection, in providing guidance around appropriate next steps to support progression in my skills and knowledge. Support was also made available through the Synergy Mentoring Programme, where I was invited to participate in the pilot stages of the [Mentoring Guidance](#). My involvement in this pilot scheme was to prove a turning point in my self-belief and engagement with my learning pathway. My mentor was and remains a valuable support in helping me to balance and prioritise demands, enabling me to step away from the emotions generated by certain situations, helping to tease out my thinking and empowering me to take control and clearly identify next steps. I cannot emphasise enough the value of this support; suffice to say that had it not been there I honestly believe I would have been unable to continue to work at this level in the childcare profession that is my passion. My growth in confidence is such that I have extolled the benefits of mentoring to childhood practice graduates.

Having achieved my Children's Care Learning and Development level 4 award, I subsequently completed an action research paper, developing an area of provision I had responsibility for; this was something which I never believed I would have the opportunity to try, least of all successfully complete, leading to my current stage, studying to complete my PDA in Childhood Practice level 9. The knowledge and skills which I have gained and continue to develop during this journey through qualification and understanding of CLF and mentoring are having a positive impact across my area of responsibility

Debbie is demonstrating her on-going commitment to her 'own professional learning and development and that of the workers for whom she is responsible' (Standard for Childhood Practice 2) and **Improving own leadership (Self-leadership-accomplished)** through a clear awareness of her own strengths and areas for improvement using feedback from within and outwith the organisation.

Debbie is showing that she has the 'knowledge and understanding needed to support evidence informed practice' (Standard for Childhood Practice 13) and **Support the creation of a learning and performance culture (Motivating and Inspiring -accomplished)** by using a range of evidence in her research to evaluate the service and use this to continually improve.

In **Inspiring people by personal example and Driving a knowledge and management culture (Motivating and Inspiring)** Debbie is demonstrating that she is **accomplished** through a commitment to continual improvement and creating a culture of embedding knowledge sharing at the heart of practice.

Debbie demonstrates her **Vision** – seeing how best to make a difference, working to improve outcomes for those who use her services.

With a new job role and increased responsibility for a range of staff, this would be an ideal time for Debbie to use the **Leadership Capabilities Feedback for Managers** (<http://www.stepintoleadership.info/managers.html>) which is a 360degree feedback tool. Debbie could select her line manager, colleagues at the same level as herself who she will be working collaboratively with, her staff team, service users or other professionals with whom she works to provide feedback which she can use to inform her leadership and management learning journey.

and the services we offer to children and their families. Within my own leadership pathway I have recently been promoted within the company to Direct Services Co-ordinator, where I line manage other Childhood Practice Managers who in turn manage a range of services including day care, out of school care and crèche work in urban, rural and remote areas, in addition to contributing to organisation-wide strategic planning. I am now in a position to share not only the knowledge regarding practice which I have gained through qualification and experience but also the skills developed through the CLF and mentoring programmes. My increased confidence, skills and knowledge enable me to guide and support my staff team on their own individual learning pathways. I sincerely hope that as a manager and leader I can inspire, motivate and support colleagues and others to embrace and enjoy their qualification pathway. Let the learning continue!