DRIVING FORWARD PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS FOR TEACHERS

THE GENERAL
TEACHING COUNCIL
FOR SCOTLAND

gtc
SCOTLAND

Professional Update Phase 2:
Interim Research into Professional Learning
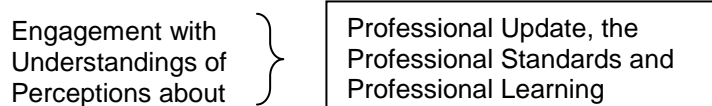
April 2014

Contents

1   Introduction

The second and final phase of the pilot of Professional Update began in August 2013. Following on from those involved in Phase 1 of the Professional Update Pilot (three local authorities and one independent school) an additional eleven local authorities and six independent schools are taking part in Phase 2, involving teachers from the early years, primary, secondary and special sectors. A small group of registered teachers working at Education Scotland and three Scottish Universities are also participating. The pilot phase will conclude in July 2014 prior to the National Roll-out in August 2014.

It is important that GTC Scotland (GTCS) knows and understands the experiences of registered teachers as they begin to engage with and complete the process of Professional Update (PU) as part of this pilot stage. The research and evaluation will allow GTCS to develop appropriately the processes and guidance for PU. It will also enable GTCS to build an informed understanding of the needs of the profession, gain an insight into the emerging picture of the impact of PU and the nature of professional learning (PL).

The evaluation of Phase 1 covered the validation procedures and participant's experience and engagement in the process. This focussed primarily on procedural and operational aspects, and the effectiveness of the PU process.   The findings from this have helped to inform the on-going developments of PU. A number of issues emerged from the Phase 1 evaluation which merit further exploration and these have been used to inform this next phase in the research and evaluation of PU.

At this interim stage we sought to gather the views of all those participating in Phase 2. The focus of the interim research is:

Engagement with
Understandings of   }   Professional Update, the
Perceptions about   Professional Standards and
                              Professional Learning

To assist GTCS in the evaluation, an anonymous and confidential online survey was sent to all 'reviewee' participants late January with a request to complete the survey by late February. It was recognised that participants may be at very different stages in terms of their engagement with PU, however as this survey focussed more on their on-going PL we requested that they complete the survey regardless of their current level of engagement as their views were still important.

This document presents a high level summary of the survey outcomes. All data has been analysed thematically and emerging issues identified. It is reported collectively thus reducing risks of individuals being identified.

2   Survey Methodology

An online survey was the most effective way of collating the views of participants. The aim was to evaluate their experience of taking part in the PU process as follows:

❖   some brief details to determine the respondent population;
❖   details relating to their knowledge of the PU system and what is involved;
❖   details relating to their awareness of, and engagement with, the revised Professional Standards with particular regard to their own self-evaluation and PL;
❖   details relating to the nature and purpose of their PL this year, including issues specific to evidencing impact of PL and use of PL portfolios/profile.

Participants were invited to complete a balance of closed and open questions, with a mix of mandatory and non-mandatory questions. These took the format of:

❖   either specifying their level of agreement or selecting a response from a set of statements;
❖   selecting appropriate criteria/categories from a specified data-set;
❖   some open ended responses;
❖   the opportunity to comment after each section of the survey, should they wish to do so.

3   Respondent Population

The response rate was very encouraging, with nearly 30% of participants completing the survey. This is perhaps indicative of a high level of engagement with the pilot. The following tables illustrate the overall response rates and include a comparison against the original number of invited participants.

The graph below shows the percentage of respondents versus the number of invited participants per employing body. The subsequent table provides a more detailed summary of the respondent population.
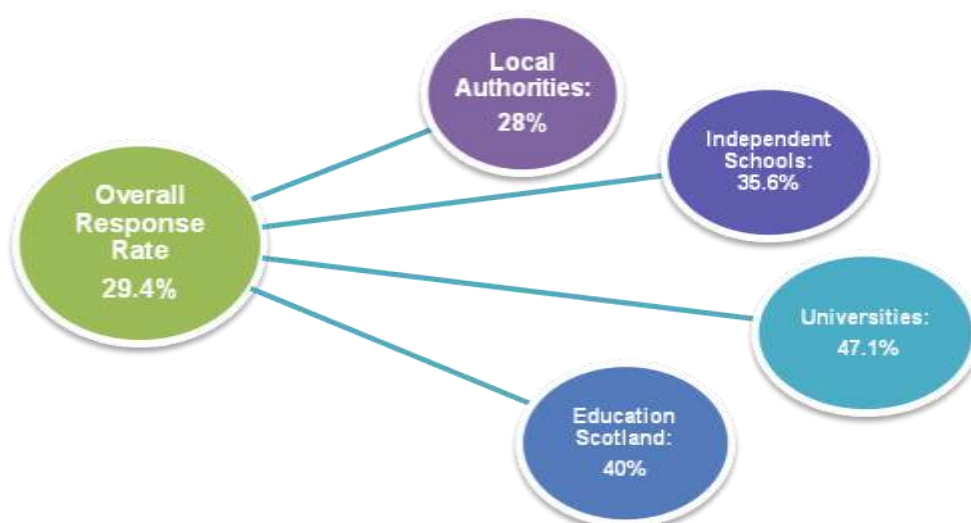
Graph 1: Response rate per employing body

Table 1a: Overview of respondent population

Employer	No. of respondents	% respondent population	No. of invited participants	% of invited participants
Local Authority	291	*81.1*	1040	*85.0*
Independent School	52	*14.5*	146	*11.9*
University	8	*2.2*	17	*1.4*
Education Scotland	8	*2.2*	20	*1.6*
Total	**359**	*100.0*	**1223**	*100.0*

The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the respondents per local authority. There is a significantly lower response rate from the invited participants within Aberdeen City Council; this may not be entirely reflective of their engagement with Professional Update, as a number of participants were invited to complete the survey but had in fact withdrawn from the pilot. It should also be noted that in two local authorities not all teachers participating in the pilot of Professional Update were included in the survey invitation due to the contact information available to us at that time.

There was a fair representation across the independent sector with respondents from each participating school. Although there are three universities participating in the pilot of Professional Update, participants from only two of the universities were invited to participate in the survey, again this was due to the information available to us regarding the participating staff members.

Table 1b: Comparison of respondent population versus invited participants - Local Authority

Employer	No. of respondents	% respondent population	No. of invited participants	% of invited participants	% of respondents 'v' invited participants
Aberdeen City Council	4	*1.4*	52	*5.0*	*7.7*
Aberdeenshire Council	4	*1.4*	15	*1.4*	*26.7*
Dundee City Council	16	*5.5*	71	*6.8*	*22.5*
East Renfrewshire Council	42	*14.4*	144	*13.8*	*29.2*
Falkirk Council	34	*11.7*	55	*5.3*	*61.8*
Fife Council	16	*5.5*	88	*8.5*	*18.2*
Glasgow City Council	17	*5.8*	101	*9.7*	*16.8*
Highland Council	13	*4.5*	50	*4.8*	*26.0*
Moray Council	4	*1.4*	11	*1.1*	*36.4*
North Lanarkshire Council	9	*3.1*	30	*2.9*	*30.0*
Perth and Kinross Council	11	*3.8*	63	*6.1*	*17.5*
Scottish Borders Council	22	*7.6*	54	*5.2*	*40.7*
West Dunbartonshire Council	71	*24.4*	219	*21.1*	*32.4*
West Lothian Council	26	*8.9*	87	*8.4*	*29.9*
Other (not known)	2	*0.7*			
Total	**291**	*100.0*	**1040**	*100.0*	*28.0*

Although the survey was anonymous, participants were requested to supply some brief details to enable us to differentiate between the responses of different groups i.e. employer, sector, type of post/contract, gender and age-range. The following tables illustrate the demographics of the respondent populations.

Table 2: Respondent population by gender and age

Gender	Age-range					Total	%
	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	Over 60		
Female	28	70	91	104	4	**297**	*82.7*
Male	3	18	18	22	1	**62**	*17.3*
Total	**31**	**88**	**109**	**126**	**5**	**359**	*100.0*
%	*8.6*	*24.5*	*30.4*	*35.1*	*1.4*	*100.0*	

Of the respondent population 35% had participated in the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS). Where appropriate, data was examined to identify any possible patterns or distinctions between this group and the 65% of respondents who had not participated in the TIS.

Data relating to protected characteristics and disability was also gathered to help identify or gain insights into any possible issues that may arise for individuals affected by these. 29 respondents declared a disability/protected characteristic:

Disability (5); Pregnancy and maternity (10); Prefer not to say (6); Other (8), these included career break for family reasons (2) and Preparing to retire (2). Some stated that 'other circumstances' that may impact on their engagement with the PU process included sabbaticals, secondment and insufficient supply work.

It is important that we continue to understand the diverse circumstances of individual teachers and continue to develop appropriate processes for Professional Update to ensure we meet needs of all individuals.

It was important for us to have a clear picture of the employment status of the respondent population. This information helps us to understand and recognise any issues unique to particular groups of teachers. Tables 3a-d provide a detailed overview of the respondent population by employing body and post.

Table 3a: Local Authority respondent population by post and sector

Local Authority Post	Sector Early Years	Primary	Secondary	Special	Centrally Based	Other (please specify)	Total	%
Peripatetic Teacher		2	2	4		1	9	3.1
Classroom Teacher	5	96	59	2		2	164	56.4
Chartered Teacher		6	4				10	3.4
Principal Teacher	1	11	36			1	49	16.8
Depute Head Teacher		11	14				25	8.6
Head Teacher	1	12	2				15	5.2
Centrally Based Officer					3		3	1.0
Other (please specify)	1	10	2	1	1	1	16	5.5
Total	**8**	**148**	**119**	**7**	**4**	**5**	**291**	**100.0**
%	*2.7*	*50.9*	*40.9*	*2.4*	*1.4*	*1.7*	*100.0*	

Table 3b: Independent School respondent population by post and sector

Independent School Post	Sector Early Years	Primary	Secondary	Special	Other (please specify)	Total	%
Classroom Teacher		6	18		1	25	48.1
Principal Teacher			9	1	1	11	21.2
Depute Head Teacher	1	3	1			5	9.6
Head Teacher		2				2	3.8
Other (please specify)		2	4		3	9	17.3
Total	**1**	**13**	**32**	**1**	**5**	**52**	**100.0**
%	*1.9*	*25.0*	*61.5*	*1.9*	*9.6*	*100.0*	

Table 3c: University respondent population by post and sector

University				
Area				
	Initial Teacher Education	Post Graduate Teacher Education	**Total**	*%*
Post				
Teaching Fellow	3		**3**	*37.5*
Lecturer/Senior Lecturer	3	1	**4**	*50.0*
Other (please specify)	1		**1**	*12.5*
Total	**7**	**1**	**8**	*100.0*
%	*87.5*	*12.5*	*100.0*	

Table 3d: Education Scotland respondent population by post and sector

Education Scotland				
Area				
	Curriculum / Learning, Teaching and Assessment (including CLD)	Inspection/ Evaluation	**Total**	*%*
Post				
Development Officer	6		**6**	*75.0*
HMI		2	**2**	*25.0*
Total	**6**	**2**	**8**	*100.0*
%	*75.0*	*25.0*	*100.0*	

For the purposes of this interim report we categorised respondents into the following employment groupings:

❖ Teaching staff including Peripatetic, Classroom Teachers, Chartered Teachers and Principal Teachers;
❖ School management including Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers;
❖ Centrally based staff and 'Other', this group included Support for Learning and Community based staff;
❖ University and Education Scotland. Colleagues from these organisations were categorised together given the nature of their role working externally from schools and local authorities but supporting and working with staff at local authority and school level.

Graph 2: Categorised groups
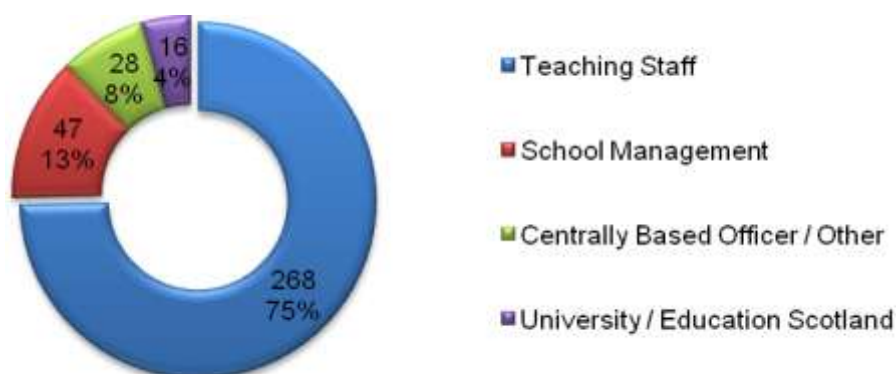
The majority of respondents held a permanent contract. Although it is a small minority of participants in this survey, it is important that we hear the views and perceptions of those employed on a temporary, supply and seconded basis.

Graph 3: Contract type
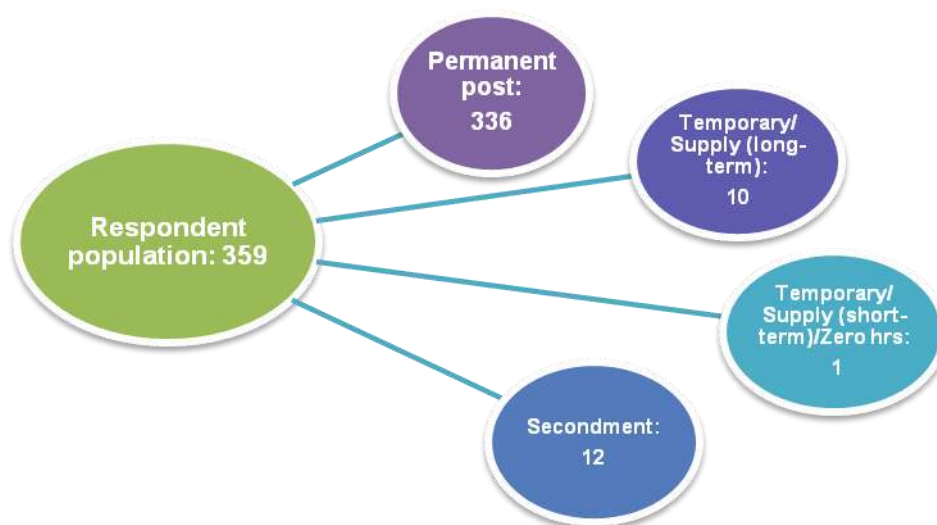
4 Professional Update

It was recognised that individuals would be at very different stages of engagement with Professional Update. For that reason this survey focuses more on engagement with the Professional Standards and professional learning more generally. However, it was also important for us to ascertain current levels of knowledge about Professional Update. The following section reports on this and looks in some detail at the ways in which individuals have been informed about the process.

Graph 4: Question 18 - Level of knowledge of PU at this stage

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a pilot study, the majority of respondents believed they were very or fairly knowledgeable about Professional Update. A closer scrutiny of this data allowed us to identify some patterns within specific employing bodies, for example where there appeared to be a lower level of knowledge about Professional Update across a single authority or school. This level of detail will enable the GTCS to provide feedback to the employing bodies as part of the on-going partnership working.

Only a very small minority of respondents (6 in total) claimed to have no knowledge of Professional Update. All held permanent posts within local authorities. This included 3 Principal teachers (one of whom had just returned from maternity leave), 1 peripatetic teacher, 1 community based, and 1 classroom teacher. Their perceived lack of knowledge is perhaps reflective of their level of engagement with this process to date, and/or possibly related to the nature of their current role.

The survey asked respondents to tell us about the range of sources of information that have informed them about Professional Update. A summary is presented in the graph below. The most used sources of information appear to be from the GTCS (presentations, website and the magazine). Attendance at a staff briefing session within own school/organisation was the most frequently cited source of information. From our experience we are aware that these often also included presentations from the GTCS. Similarly, many local authority briefing sessions were also held in partnership with the GTCS.

Graph 5: Question 19 - Method by which informed about PU (selected all that applied)
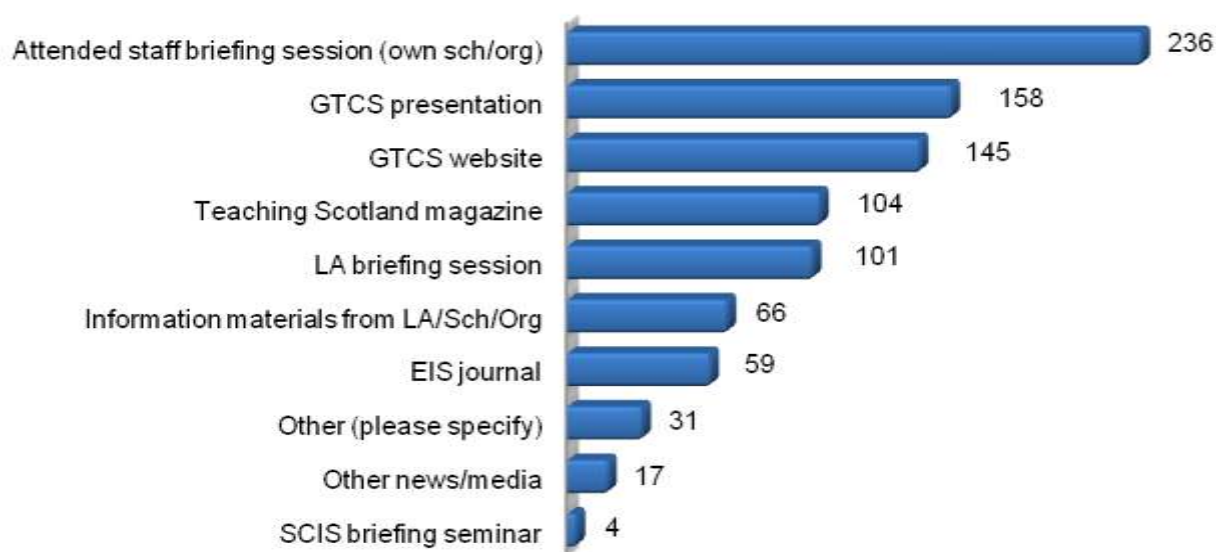

It was clear that those respondents who believed they were very or fairly knowledgeable about Professional Update had referred to a wider range of sources of information. The average ratio of sources used for this group was 3, whereas for those with little or no knowledge it was 1.5.

Of those respondents who indicated they had no knowledge of Professional Update, two of them stated they had not engaged with any sources of information. Three had referred only to materials/briefings from their own organisation and one had referred only to information from news/other media.

This raises an important issue regarding engagement and information sharing as we consider the next stages in the development of Professional Update in preparation for the National Roll-out in August 2014. It is important for the GTCS to continue to engage with the profession and for employing bodies to inform and support their registered teachers. However, for this to be most effective it must be based on a model that emphasises a shift from exposure to engagement. Where respondents have reported the highest levels of knowledge it would appear to relate to individuals proactively engaging with a range of sources of information.

Graph 6: Question 20 - Extent that the information, briefings and support given were helpful in preparing for the PU process
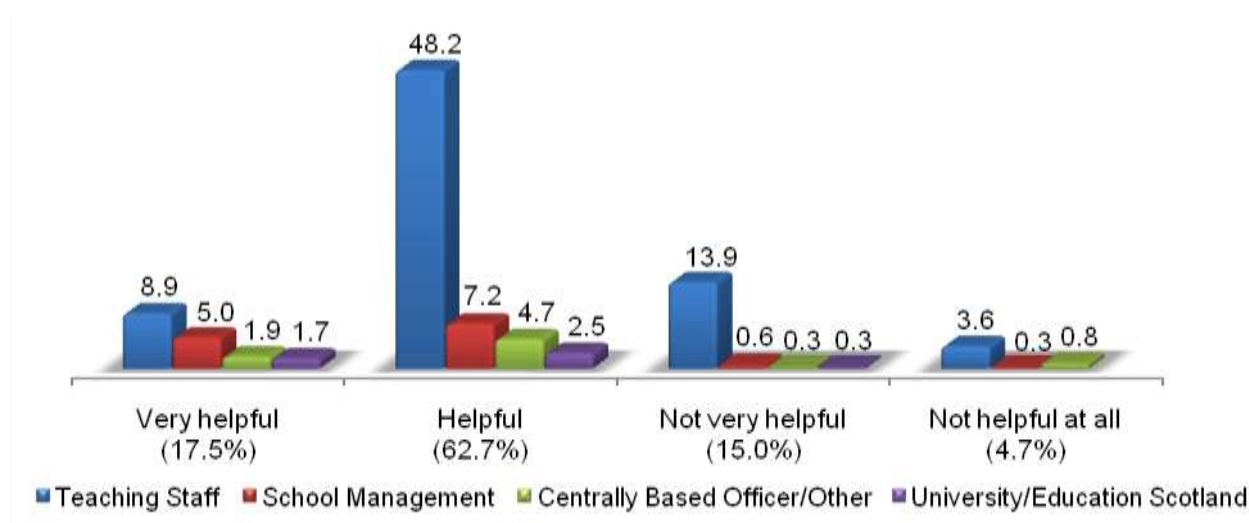
One of the requirements of Professional Update is to keep details up to date on the GTCS register on an annual basis. The majority of participants have checked their details held on the register and updated these as required. There is only a minority of respondents still to check their details this year. Most respondents updated their details via MyGTCS and 17 individuals chose to do so by telephone or email/write to GTCS.

Graph 7: Question 22 – Checked details held on the GTCS register within the past year
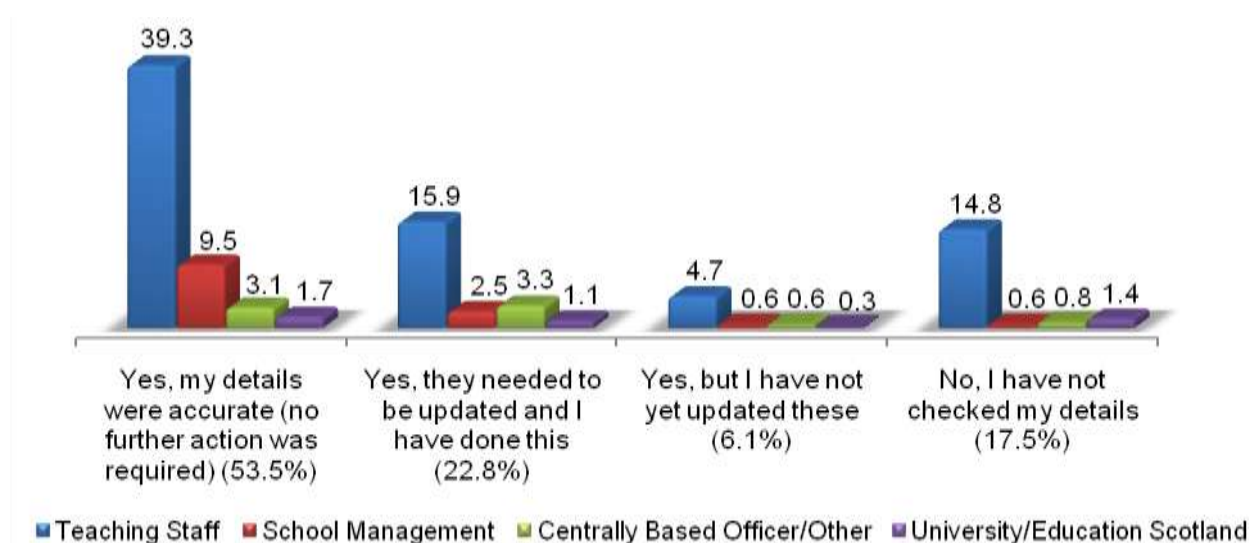
Respondents had an opportunity to comment on this process. Many of those who had not yet updated their details stated that this was on their 'to do list' but it was often stated as not being a priority. In general, the feedback suggests this process was very straightforward and easy to do via MyGTCS with the main issue being remembering your password. There were a couple of comments from respondents expressing disappointment at not being able to record postgraduate qualifications.
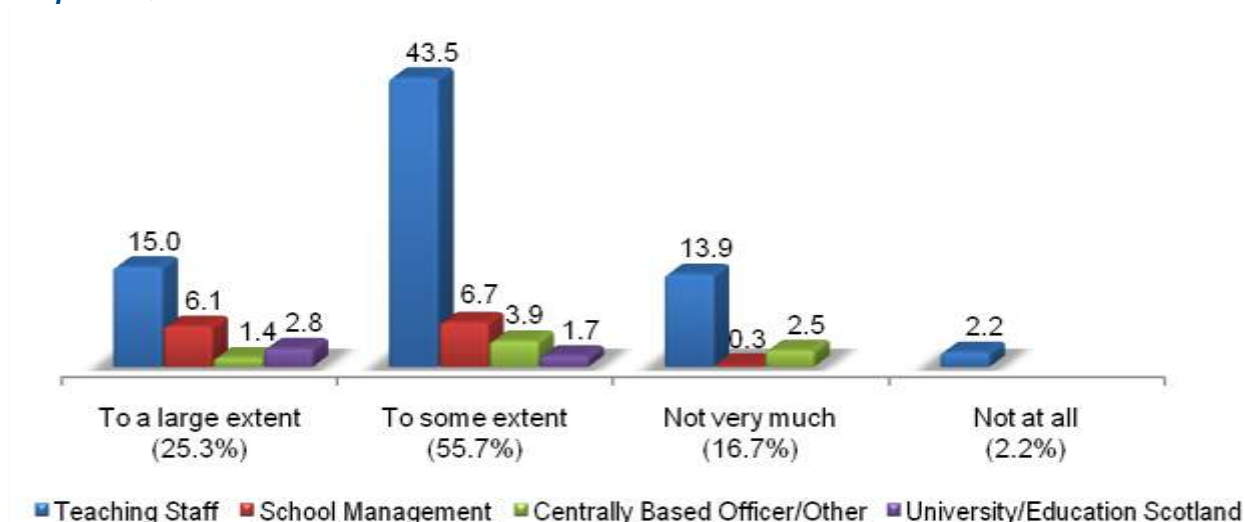
5   Professional Standards

Use of the Professional Standards is a key aspect of the Professional Update process. Teachers will be required to self-evaluate against the Standards and use them to plan their professional learning. Therefore it was important to ascertain the extent to which individuals used the Standards and how useful they believed they were. The Phase 1 evaluation also explored this although it is important to note that the teachers participating in Phase 1 were reflecting against the previous version of the Standards.

The new Professional Standards came into effect from August 2013 and are designed to be used in multiple ways, for example:

- ❖ as a benchmark standard for competence (Standard for Full Registration only);
- ❖ as a framework for self-evaluation;
- ❖ as a framework for planning professional learning;
- ❖ as a tool to instigate discussion and professional dialogue;
- ❖ as a prompt to consider professional values.

In this section we asked respondents to tell us a bit about their current awareness and use of the revised Professional Standards. In particular, how they used these for their own self-evaluation and professional learning. The first two questions asked about current engagement and familiarity with the new Professional Standards.

Graph 8: Question 25 - Extent familiar with the new Professional Standards

*Graph 9: Question 26 - Extent engaged with the Professional Standards to help self-evaluate and plan PL*
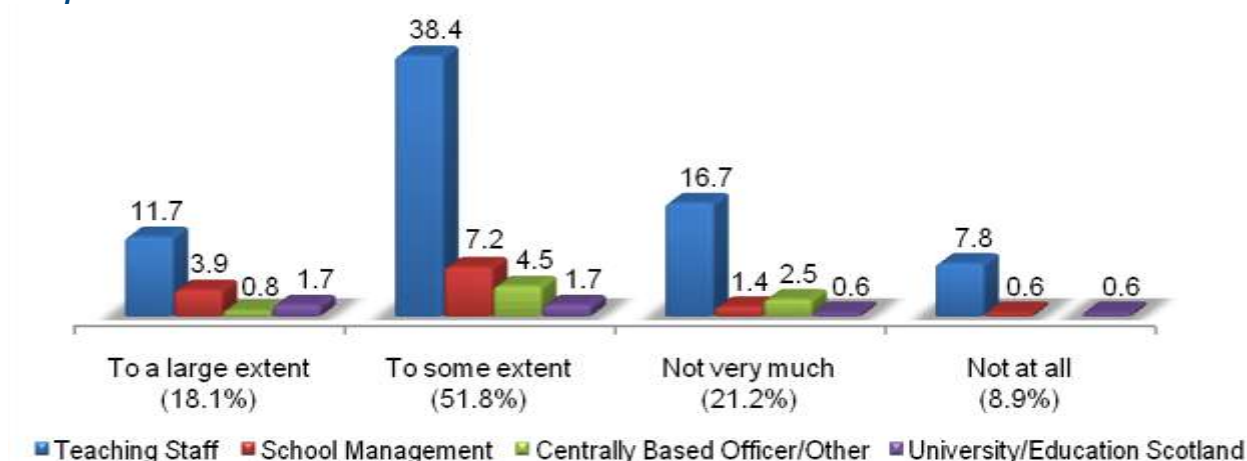
Overall, familiarity and engagement with the Standards is largely positive with over 80% of respondents stating they were familiar with the new Standards to a large or some extent and 70% engaging with the Standards to help self-evaluation and plan their professional learning to a large or some extent. This is a positive shift from the data reported as part of the Phase 1 evaluation with only 58% reporting they engaged with the Standards, to a large or some extent.

It may be interesting, and perhaps surprising, to note that there is a marginally higher engagement and familiarity with the Standards from those who did not participate in the Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS).

This provides an encouraging insight into the initial uptake of the new Professional Standards and the value being placed upon them. At this early stage of engagement with the new Standards it is important that we try to build an understanding of the ways in which individuals have used the Standards and the extent to which they have found these useful.

Graph 10: Question 29 - Extent the Professional Standards were useful in facilitating self-evaluation and for planning PL
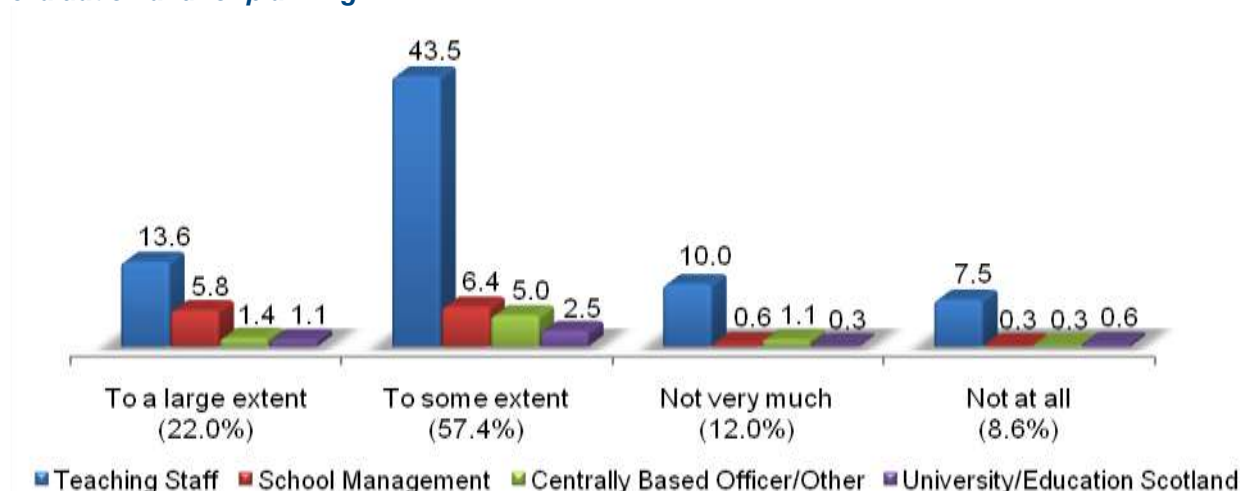

Whilst it is important for individuals to become familiar with the Standards and engage with them it is of greater importance that they find them useful in facilitating their self-evaluation and professional learning. A very positive picture is emerging from this survey with nearly 80% of respondents reporting that they found the Standards useful in facilitating their self-evaluation and helping plan professional learning to a large or some extent. This compares favourably with the Phase 1 evaluation where only 68% of respondents believed them to be useful to a large or some extent.

Of those respondents who believed the Standards were not at all useful in helping to facilitate their self-evaluation and planning of professional learning, 80% had stated they had no engagement with the Standards, with the remaining 20% stating they had very little engagement and 77% were either not at all familiar or not very familiar with the Standards.

The survey also asked participants to tell us a bit more about the ways in which they used the Standards to self-evaluate and plan professional learning. Twelve possible purposes were identified and participants were invited to provide us with a qualitative response to expand on these.

Graph 11: Question 27 - Purposes for engagement with the Professional Standards to self-evaluate and plan PL (selected all that applied)
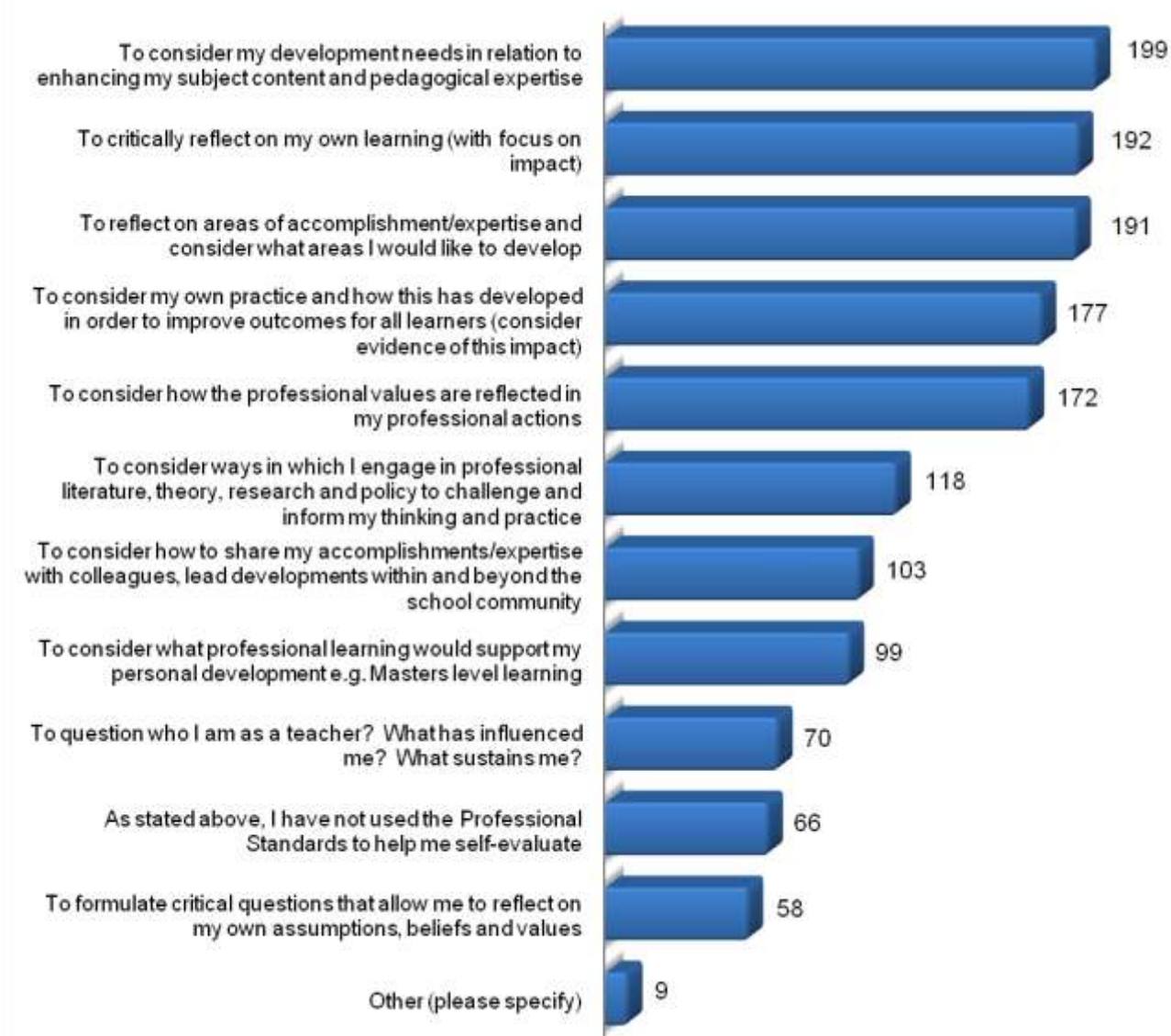
Three respondents commented that they were using the Standards as part of their mentoring role/supporting a student or as part of their SQH programme of study. These themes also emerged strongly in the qualitative data. The Standards appeared to be a significant part of academic study, often relating to leadership qualifications.

> The Standards have encouraged me to consider my future career options and explore the most relevant CLPL.

> They provide me with a context and focus for my professional reflections.

From the qualitative responses the most frequently cited uses of the Standards related to:

- ❖ identifying development needs/auditing current practice to identify PL plan;
- ❖ "matching" learning and teaching to the Standards;
- ❖ reflecting on skills and linking to job/role specific competencies identified in Standards;
- ❖ career development – helping career planning/as part of leadership development;
- ❖ informing/focus of discussion at PRD;
- ❖ prioritising/narrowing focus of PL;
- ❖ reflecting critically on practice and professional actions/questioning practice;
- ❖ engaging in the enquiry process.

> The Standards are a useful starting point for exploring my development needs by helping me identify the areas I should target as a priority. I can then decide whether personal reading and research would be most helpful, whether I need advice from colleagues, whether I need to apply for a course or ask to work with/observe someone with proven expertise in that area or seek advice from my mentor.

> Engaging with the Standards has ensured that I actually do what I intend to do. I now take time to self-evaluate and carefully plan in the light of being involved in the pilot year. This has been good for me and undoubtedly the young people I teach.

> I use these as guidance on the standards I should expect of myself, particularly in the career-long professional learning. They also enable me to ensure I maintain high standards and can identify areas to develop as needed.

Some respondents had not fully engaged with the Standards, citing various reasons for this, with time to engage being one. One person cited difficulty in printing the Standards from the webpage which prohibited them from engaging with them.

> I am way too busy to engage too much.

> I have received no information about the new Professional Standards and how they should be used in planning professional learning. More direction would be useful.

Whilst it must be recognised that individuals will need time and support to familiarise and engage with the Standards it is also essential that individuals, as part of their on-going professional responsibility, should be encouraged to be more proactive. For example, the GTCS website has an entire section dedicated to the Professional Standards with reflective questions and supportive tools to help engagement.

It would appear from this data that there is an emerging picture showing a varied use of the Standards which is beginning to go beyond the traditional model of using Standards to benchmark or audit/prove competence. This is important for Professional Update where the focus is very much on professional learning and using the Standards in productive and challenging ways to guide and think about professional practice. A number of individuals referred to identifying development needs and it is important that we continue to support and promote the profession to work critically with the Standards to identify areas of accomplishments and develop expertise, not just focusing on development needs, which could be perceived as a deficit model.

> Unless you set aside the time to go through the standards and reflect in a meaningful way then you do not really get to grips with the Standards and the necessary actions to maintain and improve your professional learning.

Engaging with, and familiarising yourself with, a new suite of Professional Standards is a demanding undertaking for teachers. It is important that individuals have opportunities to familiarise themselves with the Standards and support to help them engage with them.

My current BEd 4 student and I are working closely together to unpick each part of the new Standard. I feel lucky to have this opportunity as it seems staff in general need a lot more time to familiarise themselves with it.

The survey asked respondents to identify the factors that have helped/supported their engagement with the Standards and any factors that may have limited or hindered their engagement.
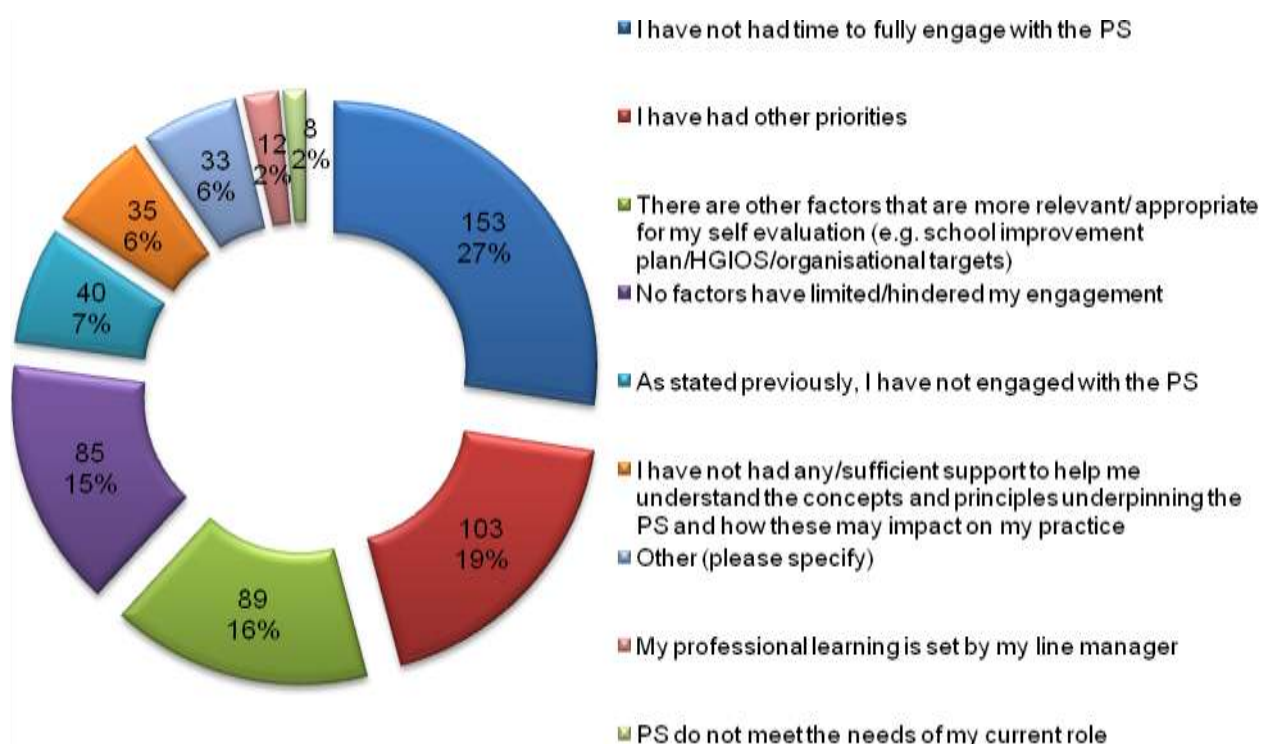
Graph 12: Question 30 - Factors which, if any, have helped/supported engagement with the Professional Standards to self-evaluate and plan PL (selected all that applied)

- Professional dialogue with colleagues
- Time to read and reflect on the new PS
- PRD meeting
- In-service session
- School/LA/Organisation support materials
- GTCS support materials
- As stated previously, I have not engaged with the PS
- Other (please specify)

A diverse range of responses were provided by those stating the 'other' factor, these included; being part of the Professional Update pilot; further study; and own research into these areas.

Of those stating they had used the GTCS support materials 93% believed these were useful/very useful. Respondents reported that they found the support materials to be clear, detailed and provided useful overview of the process making expectations clear. Several individuals stated that they were good starting points for further discussion with colleagues.

The biggest influencing factors that have hindered individuals' engagement with the Standards have been time and competing priorities. This was further confirmed in the qualitative responses with the majority commenting on time as the biggest restriction. There were also a few concerns that there were too many changes happening simultaneously.

> As well as planning, implementing, assessing and creating resources for the new Nationals, there is not enough time in the day for any kind of meaningful reflection and/or discussion about the Professional Standards.
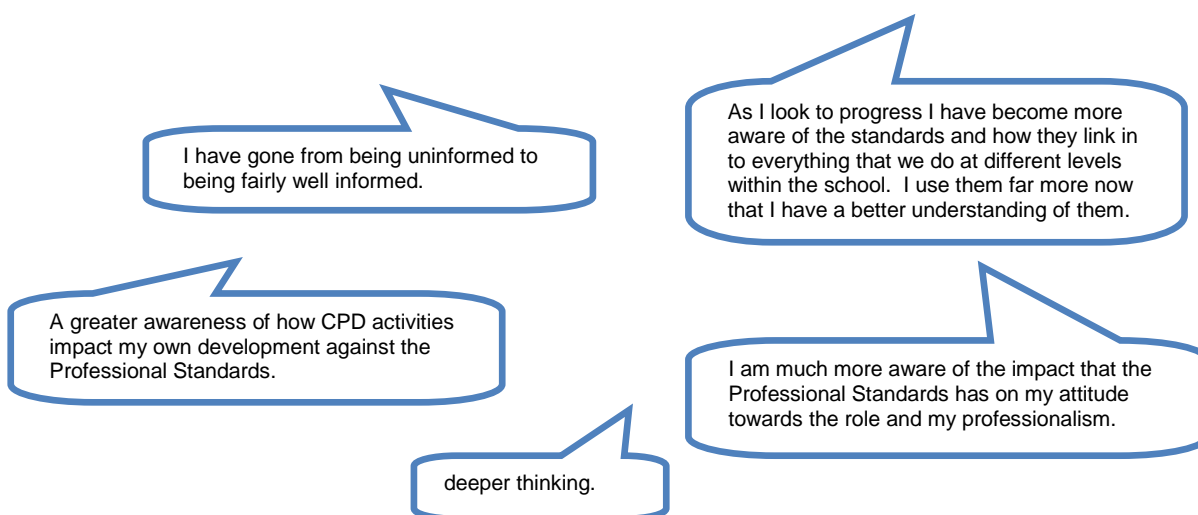
> Too much change at the moment – concentrating on pupils don't have time to think about me.

> Not enough time to engage much due to pressures of new National qualifications.

Respondents were asked to tell us what would help them to further engage with and understand the concepts and underpinning principles for the Professional Standards. The majority of comments cited time. This included time to read, reflect on, negotiate, 'unpick' and engage in dialogue about the Standards. Time for dedicated CPD sessions focusing on the Standards was also a high priority. A small number of responses wished to see examples of 'good practice' using the standards.

From the qualitative data, it would appear that there has been a shift in the way in which individuals engage with and use the Professional Standards as part of practice. Respondents were asked to tell us how, if at all, their engagement with the Professional Standards had changed. Changes reported included, but were not limited to:

- developing awareness, familiarity and/or better understanding of the Standards;
- using them on a regular basis;
- being more reflective about practice;
- focusing more on PL and/or more focused PL.

> I have gone from being uninformed to being fairly well informed.

> As I look to progress I have become more aware of the standards and how they link in to everything that we do at different levels within the school. I use them far more now that I have a better understanding of them.

> A greater awareness of how CPD activities impact my own development against the Professional Standards.

> deeper thinking.

> I am much more aware of the impact that the Professional Standards has on my attitude towards the role and my professionalism.

The majority of respondents did report positive changes in their practice. A number of respondents did note that they previously had a strong engagement with the standards, usually as part of their academic/further study, and therefore reported no real changes. There were only two responses that indicated a negative perception with one stating "I now resent them".
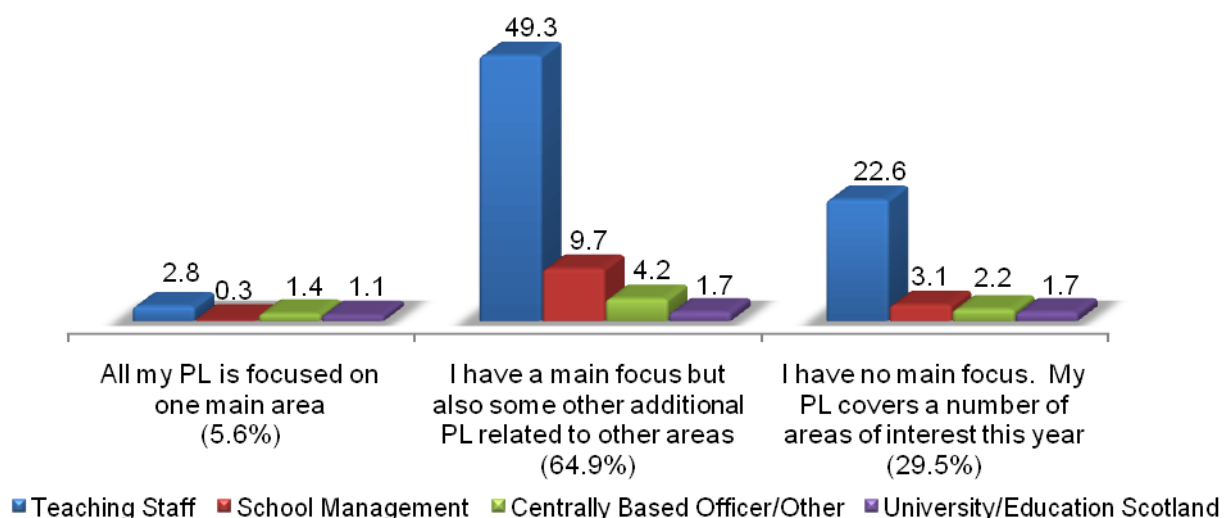
6 Professional Learning

The Professional Update process is underpinned by professional learning. The survey asked participants about the nature of their professional learning. It is important for GTC Scotland to have an informed understanding of the nature of professional learning to help plan and develop Professional Update, ensuring the process is meaningful and providing appropriate guidance.

6.1 Nature and purpose of your professional learning

Teachers were asked about the nature and focus of their professional learning over the past year. The majority of respondents (65%) stated that their professional learning generally focused on one key area with some additional PL related to other areas. Nearly 30% of respondents had no main focus for their professional learning.

Graph 14: Question 37 - Description of professional learning for this year

The following appeared to be the dominant issues informing the focus of individuals' professional learning:

- ❖ changing or new role/remit including leadership activity;
- ❖ national or local initiatives, with particular emphasis on Curriculum for Excellence and new Nationals;
- ❖ PRD discussions;
- ❖ self-evaluation;
- ❖ masters/further study;
- ❖ specific areas of interest/skill.

Other less frequently cited issues informing PL included meeting the specific needs of learners and professional enquiry activity.

It is evident from the data gathered that individuals engage in a fairly broad range of professional learning activities. The table below shows the range of activities individuals engaged in and the main focus of this learning.

Table 4: Question 39 - Nature and focus of professional learning this year (selected all that applied)

Focus	Nature					Total	%
	Further academic study	Practitioner enquiry/ research	Leadership activity	Collaborative learning with others	Attendance at PL course/ event		
About enquiry/research practices	27	48	11	41	12	**139**	*2.9*
Assessment	29	89	45	165	70	**398**	*8.4*
Child protection/specific policy related training/GIRFEC	21	53	18	89	81	**262**	*5.5*
Classroom organisation and management	16	61	25	99	15	**216**	*4.5*
Current research in a particular area (i.e. current research about assessment)	29	67	20	59	25	**200**	*4.2*
Curriculum area/development (inc. School development)	37	122	97	209	97	**562**	*11.8*
Educational policy	26	39	31	62	30	**188**	*4.0*
ICT training	21	54	18	79	56	**228**	*4.8*
Leadership	30	32	87	56	41	**246**	*5.2*
Local or National Initiative	17	49	41	92	63	**262**	*5.5*
Pedagogical expertise	37	76	48	119	48	**328**	*6.9*
Professional Values	32	60	70	115	45	**322**	*6.8*
Social, Emotional, Behavioural, and special educational needs	29	68	19	84	64	**264**	*5.6*
Specific teaching strategy/approach	22	90	35	160	59	**366**	*7.7*
SQA/National Assessment	17	48	26	94	70	**255**	*5.4*
Subject knowledge	75	125	36	140	105	**481**	*10.1*
Other	2	8	5	9	7	**31**	*0.7*
Total	**467**	**1089**	**632**	**1672**	**888**	**4748**	*100.0*
%	*9.8*	*22.9*	*13.3*	*35.2*	*18.7*	*100.0*	

Collaborative learning with others and leadership activities are somewhat vague descriptions, therefore the survey asked respondents to provide further detail about the nature of this professional learning.

Graph 14: Question 40 - Collaborative Learning with Others - from list supplied, specific activities engaged in
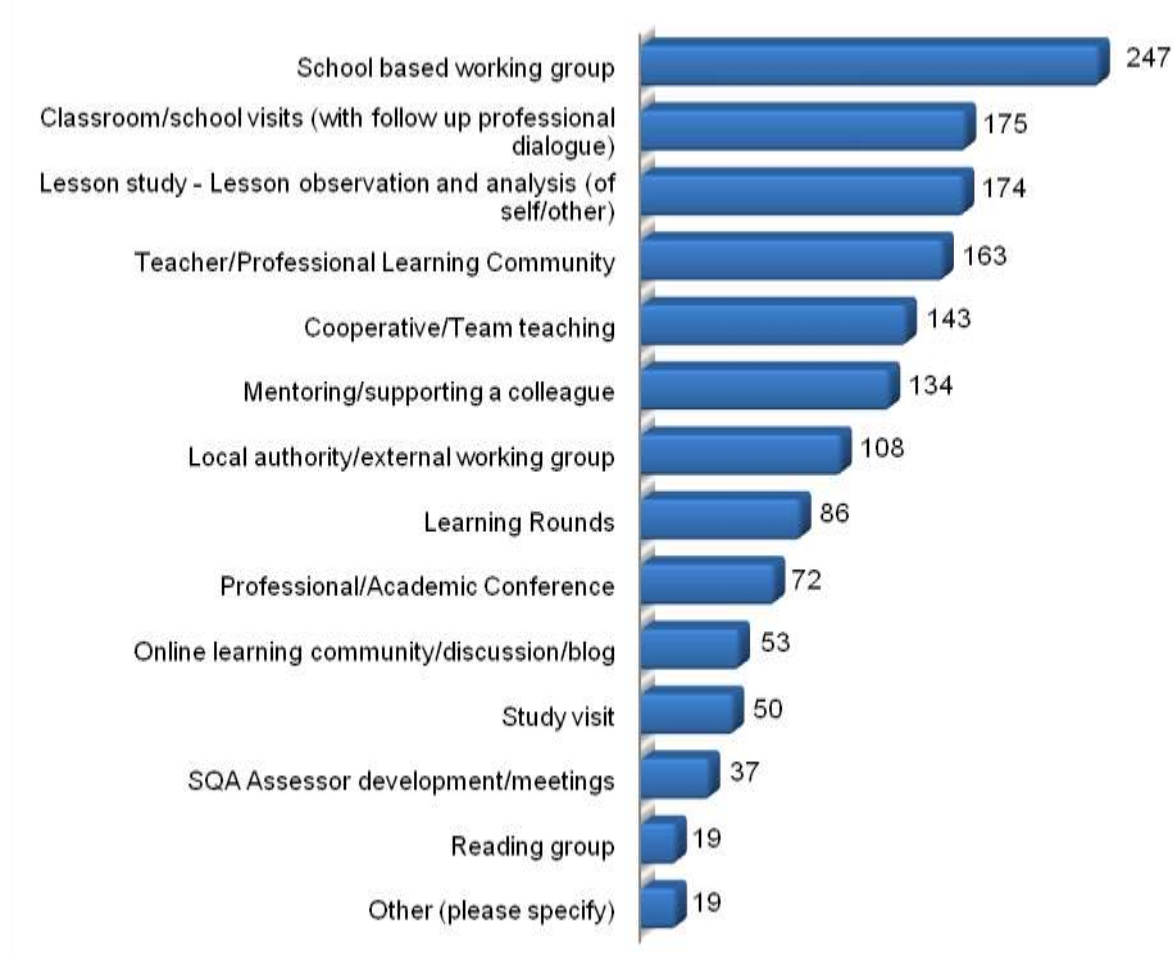
'Other' collaborative learning activities included:

- ❖ study groups;
- ❖ international educational study trip.

Graph 15: Question 41 - Leadership Activity - from list supplied, specific activities engaged in

'Other' leadership activities included:

- ❖ leadership courses;
- ❖ coaching and mentoring.

There was no significant difference identified between those respondents who had participated in the TIS and those who had not in terms of the nature of professional learning they engaged in.

Collaborative learning with others was ranked as the most popular form of professional learning. Engaging in practitioner enquiry and research was the second most popular type of professional learning with attendance at courses/events following. This is a distinctly shifting pattern from the professional learning reported in Phase 1. This saw course/event attendance feature as the most popular type of professional learning with collaborative learning being the second most popular closely followed by practitioner enquiry and research.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the focus of professional learning was dominated by curriculum development, subject knowledge and assessment. It may also be worth noting that whilst practitioner enquiry and research was rated highly as a type of professional learning it was the lowest rated focus for professional learning.
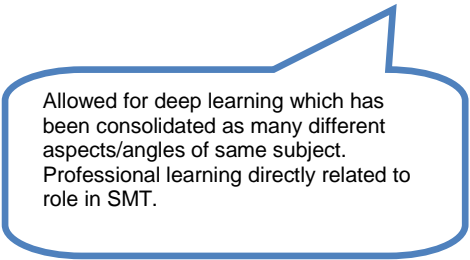
Respondents were invited to tell us a bit more about why particular kinds of professional learning were most appropriate to meet their learning needs. A number of respondents chose to tell us more about the specific focus and what they learned (for example a new strategy for assessment) rather than explore the way in which they have learned about it. Key themes emerged that help to explain the perceived value of different kinds of professional learning and the nature of the learning taking place. The following factors emerged as important when planning/engaging in professional learning:

❖ ownership of PL;
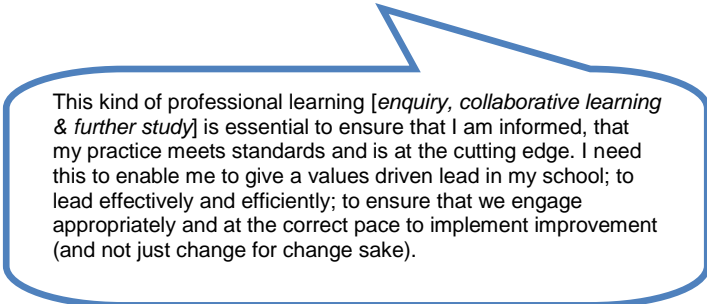❖ flexibility in the planning and design of PL;
❖ relevance of PL to the individual.

Learning *through* leadership was valued as well as learning *about* leadership. Collaborative learning was dominant and it was evident that a range of types of learning was taking place under this 'umbrella' heading of collaborative learning. Several key dimensions/purposes were identified:

❖ sharing practice, experience and exchanging strategies;
❖ cascade model of PL;
❖ cheap and easy;
❖ reflecting with colleagues & professional dialogue.

The 5 types of professional learning (Further academic study; practitioner enquiry/research; leadership activity; collaborative learning with others; attendance at PL course/event) identified in the survey appeared to be appropriate general categories that encompass the range of professional learning. These are the categories used in the MyGTCS online profiles for Professional Update. However, it is essential to note that these are deeply interrelated and are not discrete categories. The richest and deepest professional learning happens when an individual engages in a range of types of professional learning for a specific purpose.
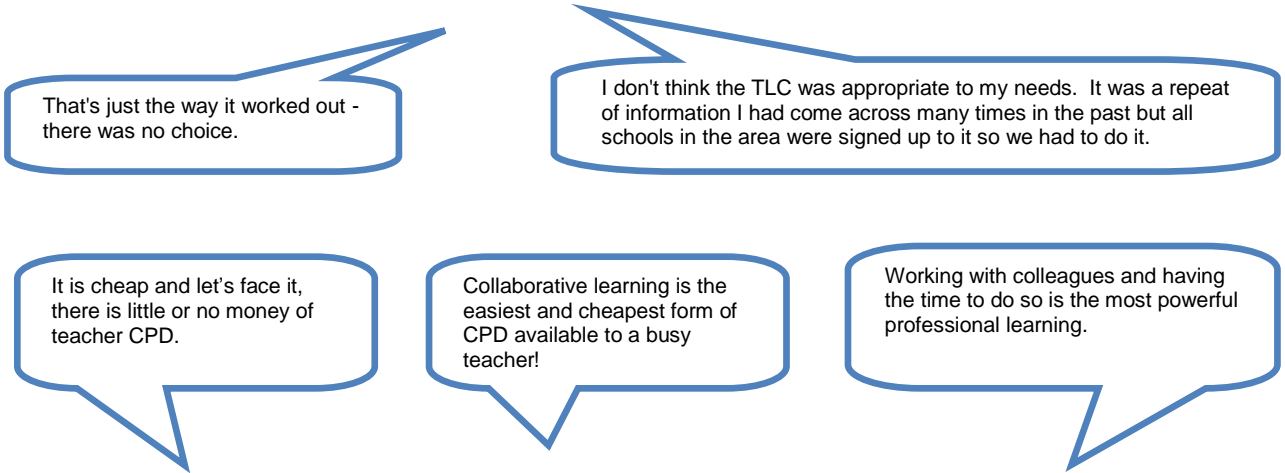
Allowed for deep learning which has been consolidated as many different aspects/angles of same subject. Professional learning directly related to role in SMT.

This kind of professional learning [*enquiry, collaborative learning & further study*] is essential to ensure that I am informed, that my practice meets standards and is at the cutting edge. I need this to enable me to give a values driven lead in my school; to lead effectively and efficiently; to ensure that we engage appropriately and at the correct pace to implement improvement (and not just change for change sake).

It is evident from the data that professional learning should be appropriate, meaningful and provide sufficient challenge to the individual. An individual's ownership of the process and appropriate flexibility in the planning of professional learning is of significant importance to ensure PL is relevant and engaging.
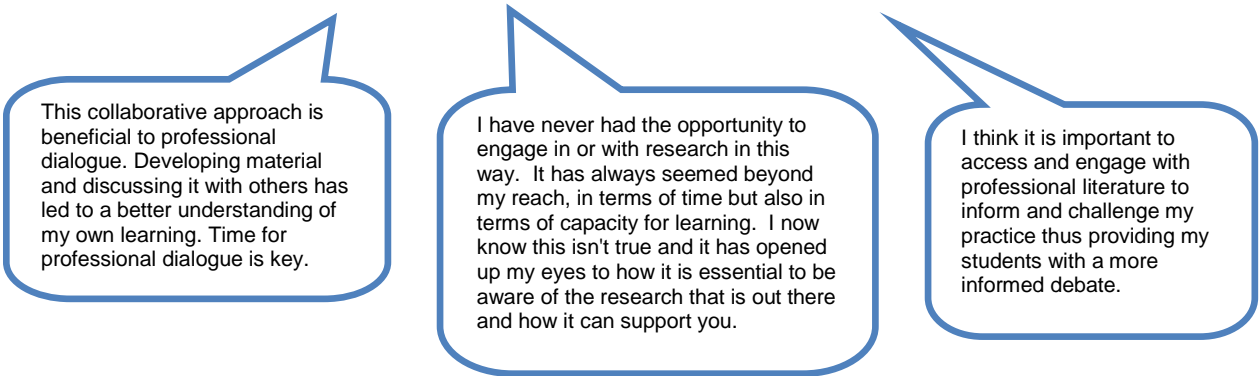
That's just the way it worked out - there was no choice.

I don't think the TLC was appropriate to my needs. It was a repeat of information I had come across many times in the past but all schools in the area were signed up to it so we had to do it.

It is cheap and let's face it, there is little or no money of teacher CPD.

Collaborative learning is the easiest and cheapest form of CPD available to a busy teacher!

Working with colleagues and having the time to do so is the most powerful professional learning.

Caution should also be exercised in promoting a 'one size fits all' approach. Collaborative approaches to teacher learning can provide rich, challenging and critical learning opportunities but they can also lead to surface level learning and repetition of practices that are unchallenged. Where respondents noted the most significant changes to or benefits of their professional learning this was when understandings were challenged and changed and this often appeared to relate to engaging in reading and research as part of the learning. Therefore, it is important they are well designed, appropriately challenging and meeting the needs of the individuals involved.
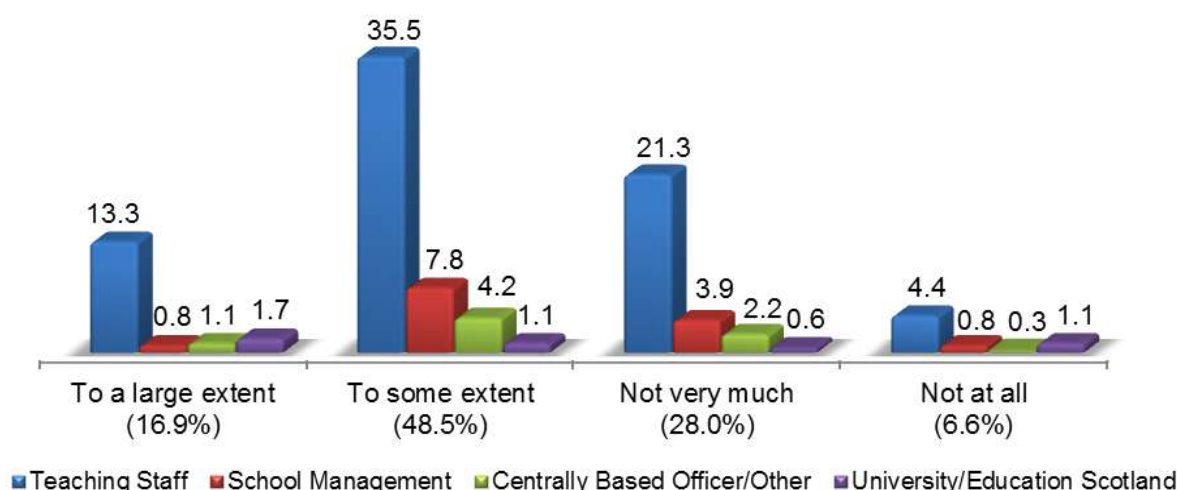
This collaborative approach is beneficial to professional dialogue. Developing material and discussing it with others has led to a better understanding of my own learning. Time for professional dialogue is key.

I have never had the opportunity to engage in or with research in this way. It has always seemed beyond my reach, in terms of time but also in terms of capacity for learning. I now know this isn't true and it has opened up my eyes to how it is essential to be aware of the research that is out there and how it can support you.

I think it is important to access and engage with professional literature to inform and challenge my practice thus providing my students with a more informed debate.

Graph 16: Question 43 - Extent the nature of PL has changed this year compared with previous years

Respondents had the opportunity to tell us in what ways they believed their professional learning had changed. The most significant change appeared to be that professional learning was now far more focused, reflective and planned for and stronger links to the standards were noted. In addition respondents reported that they felt they had greater ownership and autonomy and were now thinking more about the impact and changes to practice resulting from the professional learning. A number of respondents explained that their professional learning had changed because of a change in their role, those currently in a seconded post reported significant and deeper changes in their professional learning.

I have a say in what I want to do.
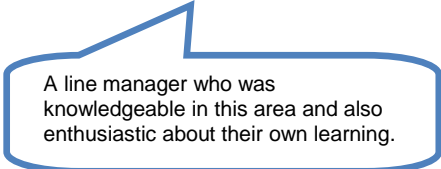
I think I am more aware and critical of my development.

I have made a conscious decision to develop myself professionally to keep up with the many changes Scottish Education is going through at the moment. It is my belief that 'treading water' would only lead to being 'left behind' in a professional sense. I target more CPD opportunities, working groups, and do a lot more professional reading than I have in the last few years to ensure that I can have confidence in my career.

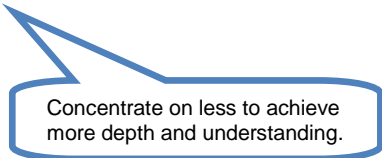To help inform next steps for Professional Update and develop possible support materials for employers and individuals, respondents were asked to consider what would help challenge and support them further in planning their professional learning. The following emerged as dominant themes:

- ❖ time to reflect on learning, evaluate impact, engage in PL, attend courses;
- ❖ increased course provision and access;
- ❖ regular/more professional discussion (often stated with line manager);
- ❖ learning coach or PL mentor.

In addition some respondents stated that access to and engagement with current research and space to continue to develop something beyond an initial year. The importance of working in a supportive and challenging culture with effective leadership was also highlighted as an important issue.

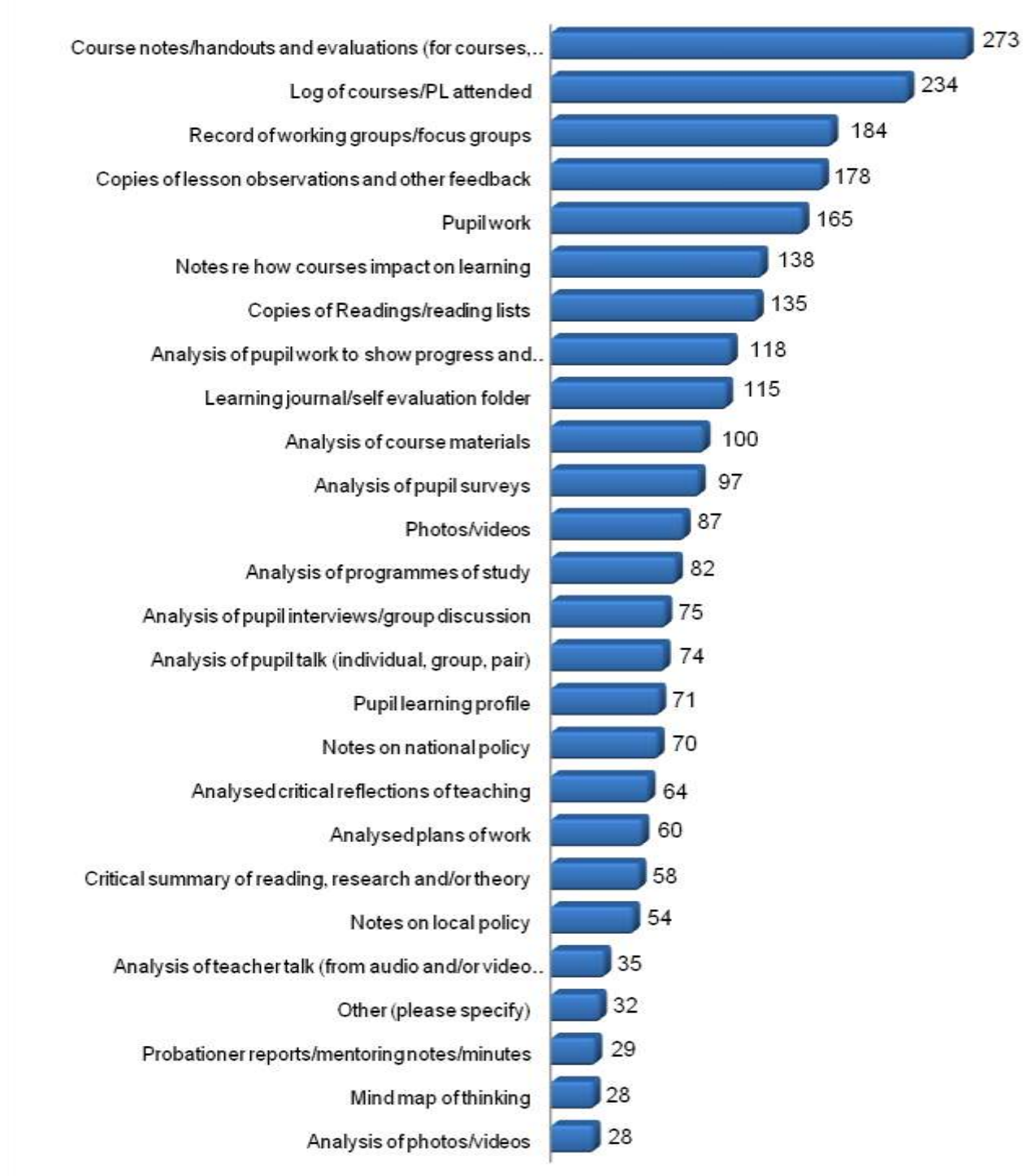A line manager who was knowledgeable in this area and also enthusiastic about their own learning.

Concentrate on less to achieve more depth and understanding.

6.2   The impact of your professional learning

Professional Update requires teachers to keep a record of their professional learning and a portfolio of evidence of impact. Many teachers already maintain a professional learning record but there is now a far greater emphasis on the impact of that professional learning. The Phase 1 evaluation indicated that the understanding of the nature of evidence of impact was somewhat limited. It was reported at that time that the nature of evidence of impact gathered tended to relate more to record keeping of courses and professional learning activities.

As can be seen from the graph below there is still a significant focus on 'record keeping' aspects of evidence gathering. Evidence that focused more on the analysis was, on average, used by less than 30% of the respondent population.

Category	Value
Course notes/handouts and evaluations (for courses,...	273
Log of courses/PL attended	234
Record of working groups/focus groups	184
Copies of lesson observations and other feedback	178
Pupil work	165
Notes re how courses impact on learning	138
Copies of Readings/reading lists	135
Analysis of pupil work to show progress and..	118
Learning journal/self evaluation folder	115
Analysis of course materials	100
Analysis of pupil surveys	97
Photos/videos	87
Analysis of programmes of study	82
Analysis of pupil interviews/group discussion	75
Analysis of pupil talk (individual, group, pair)	74
Pupil learning profile	71
Notes on national policy	70
Analysed critical reflections of teaching	64
Analysed plans of work	60
Critical summary of reading, research and/or theory	58
Notes on local policy	54
Analysis of teacher talk (from audio and/or video..	35
Other (please specify)	32
Probationer reports/mentoring notes/minutes	29
Mind map of thinking	28
Analysis of photos/videos	28

From the qualitative data it was possible to gain an insight into respondents' perceptions about the nature and purpose of evidence of impact.

Some respondents reported that they did not feel confident with regards to what counted as evidence, stating they were unsure what they should keep, didn't know how to measure impact, and were cautious that this was very subjective.

Whilst there appeared to be recognition of impact on own professional learning there was a slightly greater focus on evidence of impact on pupils. Sources of evidence included:

- ❖ pupil comments & feedback;
- ❖ pupil results/assessments/academic results;
- ❖ pupil enjoyment/motivation and/or engagement in learning activity;
- ❖ classroom observation.

The purposes of gathering and using evidence varied somewhat. The main purposes identified included, evidence that provided opportunity to:

- ❖ reflect;
- ❖ refer back to work done/reminder of content;
- ❖ track pupil progress;
- ❖ record what has been done;
- ❖ track own development and progress;
- ❖ critically reflect on practice and impact on pupils;
- ❖ inform future planning/work.

For some the process of gathering evidence of impact was a positive experience with one commenting that this "makes me analyse rather than just record".

> It gives me evidence to critically look at what I have done and relate it to the impact it has on those in my care. It helps me keep track, and decide what needs to change the following year.

> Just reading this list excites me as it opens up the idea that I COULD use these things. Very exciting!

However, some respondents did not value the need for gathering and using evidence of impact of professional learning. There is a perception by a minority of respondents that this is only about "jumping through hoops", "proving" what you have done, or as a way to "check up on teachers". Although this is a perception by a minority, a larger number of respondents did believe that evidence is of use as it is a way of keeping a record of what you have done and a number of respondents stated that they were unsure why they were gathering evidence.

Graph 18: Question 50 - Extent appropriately prepared/knowledgeable to develop evidence of impact

To a large extent (10.7%): Teaching Staff 6.6, School Management 3.3, Centrally Based Officer/Other 0.3, University/Education Scotland 0.6

To some extent (63.9%): Teaching Staff 48.2, School Management 7.7, Centrally Based Officer/Other 5.2, University/Education Scotland 2.8

Not very much (20.9%): Teaching Staff 16.3, School Management 1.7, Centrally Based Officer/Other 1.9, University/Education Scotland 1.1

Not at all (4.4%): Teaching Staff 3.6, School Management 0.3, Centrally Based Officer/Other 0.6

■ Teaching Staff   ■ School Management   ■ Centrally Based Officer/Other   ■ University/Education Scotland

Using evidence of impact is a key part of the Professional Update process and it is clear from the data that this is an area that requires further development and support for individuals. The main areas for support identified by respondents included:

- examples of portfolios and evidence used;
- training/CPD;
- time to gather and analyse evidence;
- clear & detailed guidance about what counts as evidence/what is required.

This is an issue that GTCS have been working on and three case study examples of teachers' evidence of impact will be available on the website.

6.3   Creating and maintaining a portfolio of your professional learning

Keeping a record of your professional learning and a portfolio of evidence of impact is a requirement of Professional Update. The structure and format of these portfolios and records of learning will vary. They should support critical reflection and professional dialogue as part of the PRD process. It is important for GTCS to understand the ways in which teachers use and/or intend to develop/use records of professional learning and portfolios of evidence. The survey asked respondents to tell us about their professional learning portfolios.
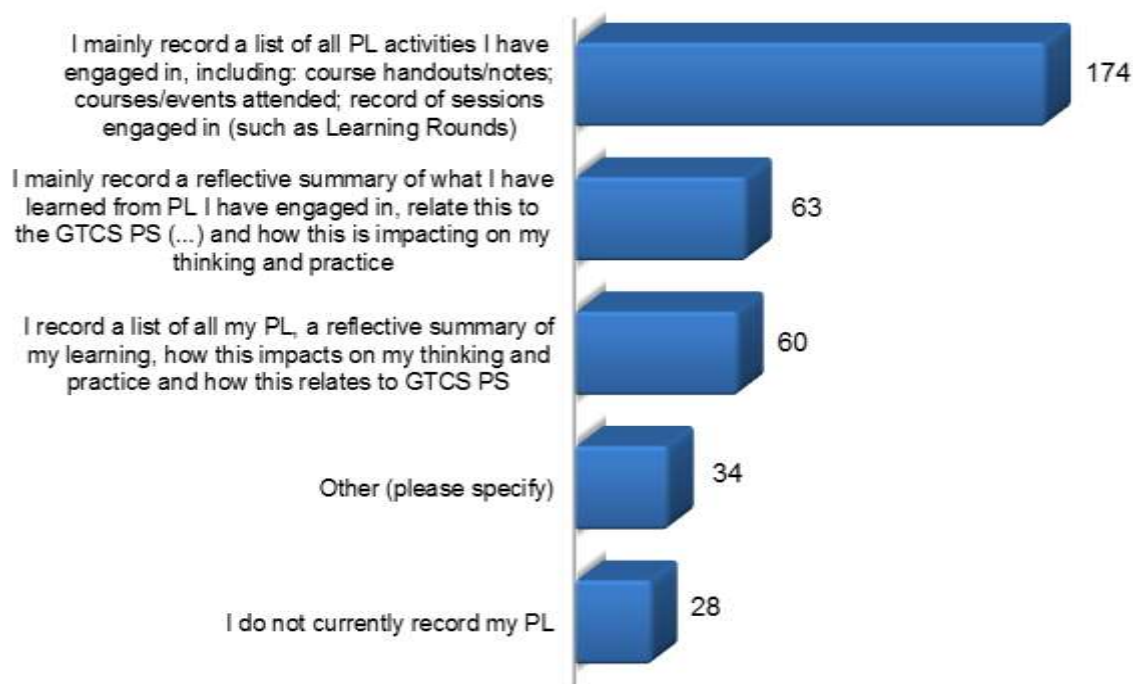
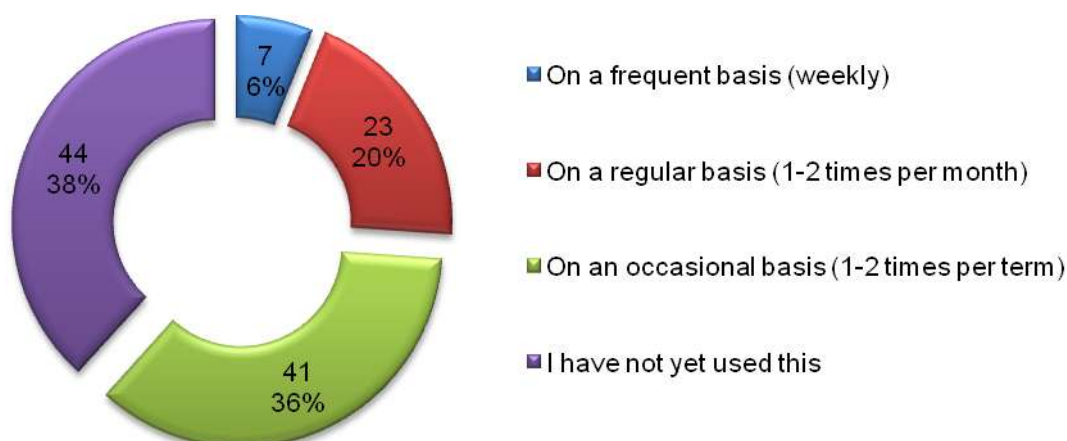*Graph 19: Question 52 - Currently have a portfolio of evidence of PL*
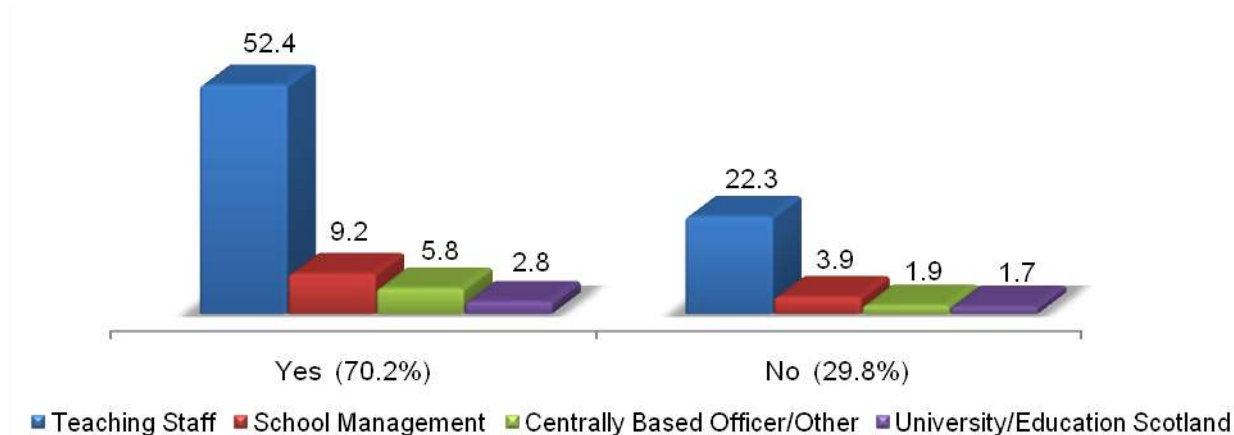
Graph 21: Question 54 - System used/will use to record PL and evidence of impact of PL
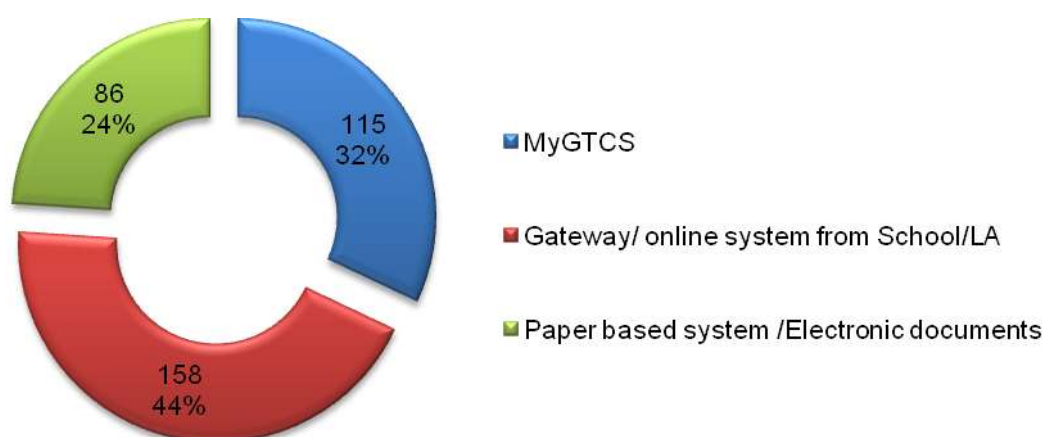
Graph 20: Question 53 - Description of the way in which PL currently recorded

Graph 22: Question 55 - Frequency that MyGTCS is used for this purpose

None of the 'Centrally Based/Other' respondents used the online profile on a frequent or regular basis.

In general, respondents who were using the MyGTCS online profile viewed this favourably. Respondents indicated that it:

- ❖ helped focus their professional reflections and development;
- ❖ helped provide a stronger connection to the Standards;
- ❖ helped keep a central record of all professional learning;
- ❖ was very straightforward to use.

There were also a number of suggestions and issues raised that might help inform further development to help ensure it meets the needs of individuals. The suggestions included:

- greater flexibility including, what can be uploaded, cluster PL by theme/focus, create 'other' options;
- drop down menus had too much information/not always clear;
- the layout of the Standards on the system could be made simpler/easier to read;
- further guidance with pop-up examples;
- automated reminders sent out to record PL (perhaps quarterly).
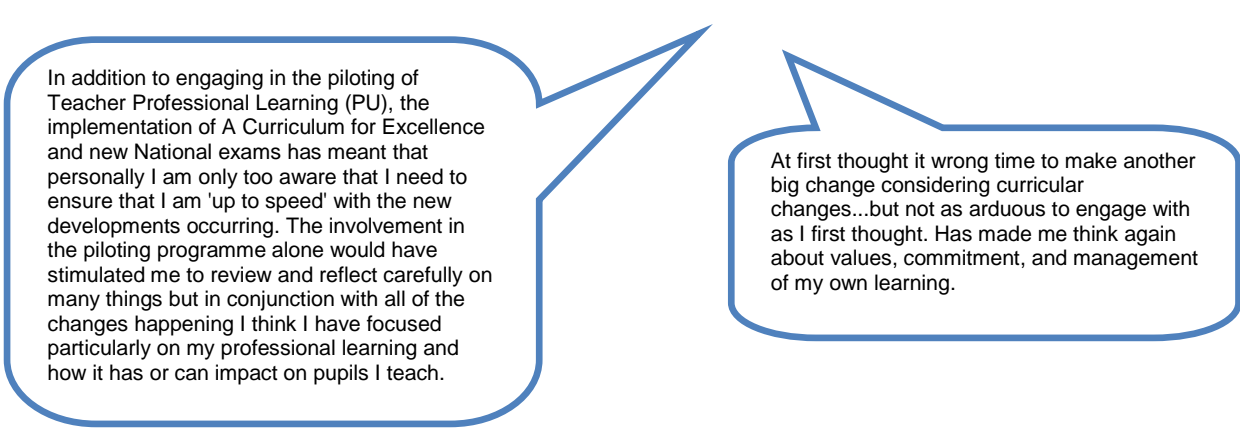
The comments above related specifically to the MyGTCS online profile system. Respondents were also asked to reflect on the overall value of keeping a record of professional learning and portfolio of evidence of impact. There was a mixed response to this question with a majority of respondents viewing the process positively. The benefits mirrored the points raised above about the MyGTCS system with many respondents stating that it was a useful process that helped to keep them focused on their professional learning and development and reflect on their own progress. A number of respondents commented that it would help to inform discussion at PRD meetings. Others, however, did not perceive the same benefits and felt it was not a useful process to help improve teaching/impact on practice or they were not yet sure what use it would be.

There were a few comments from respondents not using the MyGTCS online profile who suggested that a standardised portfolio for all would be useful.

The main concerns noted related primarily to the need for time to fully engage with the process, for individuals to become familiar with and develop their understanding of the nature of evidence of impact and for further guidance and advice to be published by GTCS.

7   Concluding Remarks / Recommendations

Overall, the data has shown that there appears to be a positive response to Professional Update, the Standards and the shifting nature of professional learning. 31 respondents have stated they would be happy to be involved further, for example by participating in focus groups or sharing examples of their professional learning as part of the final pilot phase.

In addition to engaging in the piloting of Teacher Professional Learning (PU), the implementation of A Curriculum for Excellence and new National exams has meant that personally I am only too aware that I need to ensure that I am 'up to speed' with the new developments occurring. The involvement in the piloting programme alone would have stimulated me to review and reflect carefully on many things but in conjunction with all of the changes happening I think I have focused particularly on my professional learning and how it has or can impact on pupils I teach.

At first thought it wrong time to make another big change considering curricular changes...but not as arduous to engage with as I first thought. Has made me think again about values, commitment, and management of my own learning.

However, respondents did raise some pertinent concerns about the process. The most significant concern raised was the pressures teachers are facing at present with the current curricular changes and there was concern that insufficient time would be dedicated to professional learning. A further concern related more to a possible disconnect between the vision for Professional Update and the reality in practice.

> I was looking forward to the ERD process after listening to speakers from GTCS at a variety of events. Great to be given the freedom to develop professionally. However, the reality is nothing like the vision. Just another way for line managers to control teacher.

> I fear that the Professional Update process may turn out to be an opportunity missed to make a really positive difference to the education system in Scotland if time is not managed properly.... It is only human nature to deal with immediate priorities first and to put off others until there is time to deal with them. With time so short there is a real danger that staff may not devote an adequate amount of time to truly reflecting on their CPD, but may just do what they need to do to get by because the time is simply not there.

The issues raised are significant at this final stage of the pilot. It is important then for the GTCS to continue to work in close partnership with local authorities, independent schools, universities and further education colleges and ensure, as far as possible, these are considered as we move towards the national roll-out in August 2014.

7.1   Next steps for development

- ❖ GTC Scotland should continue to develop support and guidance for the profession that will:
  - help teachers and employers engage with and negotiate the Professional Standards;
  - promote proactive engagement with the Standards, professional learning and the processes of Professional Update which will encourage a move from exposure to engagement;
  - promote engagement in a range of professional learning that challenges and enhances professional values, knowledge and actions and planning professional learning as part of a self-evaluation cycle.

- ❖ Further guidance and support about the nature and purpose of evidence of impact and maintaining a portfolio will be required, including exemplars.

- ❖ GTC Scotland should continue to develop the MyGTCS online profile to ensure it meets the needs of users and the requirements of Professional Update.

- ❖ GTC Scotland will host a focus group session with volunteer participants from this research to further explore issues raised, to help inform the next stages of development for Professional Update.

- ❖ A final evaluation of Phase 2 of the pilot of Professional Update will be conducted. This should look at specific issues relating to the processes of Professional Update, including engagement with and experiences of the PRD process, coaching & mentoring approaches, and the professional learning record and portfolio of evidence.

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GTC Scotland aims to promote equality and diversity in all its activities

Direct weblinks

Main site:
www.gtcs.org.uk

Probation department:
www.gtcs.org.uk/probation

Probation site for teachers:
www.in2teaching.org.uk

Registration department:
www.gtcs.org.uk/registration

Professional Update:
www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-update

Professional recognition:
www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-recognition

Fitness to Teach:
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Research:
www.gtcs.org.uk/research