

Guidance Notes

1. Introduction

The *National Standards for Educational Improvement Professionals in Wales* have been agreed by Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and by the Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) as the common basis for understanding, developing and improving the work and leadership of Education Improvement Professionals (EIPs) in Wales.

The Standards provide a key element in creating the “professionalisation” of an area of work that can be difficult to characterise. Through National Standards the distinctive skills, areas of knowledge and understanding and attitudes associated with the advice, support and challenge roles fulfilled by EIPs are defined, though not prescribed. They cover task and people skills as well as behaviours.

The Standards are relevant to EIPs whether they work in a service provided by a single Local Authority, or by consortia and collaboratives of Local Authorities. They are intended to promote greater consistency of practice both within and across services. They offer a set of “building blocks” that can be used flexibly and adapted to local and detailed circumstances in order to authenticate the variety of features of how EIPs function and execute their role. The Standards can be aligned with other quality frameworks that operate both as internal processes (e.g. corporate performance management procedures) and external Council processes (e.g. Investors in People.) Use of the Standards can provide an important source of evidence that can be fed into such frameworks.

The Standards are relevant to advisers, advisory teachers, education officers with school improvement briefs, educational consultants, specialist inclusion staff, Early Years Learning professionals, Athrawon Bro i.e. all working in a professional capacity to promote the educational achievement and well-being of children and young people. Some specific sections are appropriate for Headteachers working alongside Local Authority colleagues.

This guidance is intended for use by Heads of Service, Senior Managers/ Team Leaders and individual EIPs.

2. Interpreting the Standards

The Standards are intended for use at three levels:

- the individual
- the team
- the whole service

They provide a common language for describing and crediting the work of EIPs within and across services, and with their clients.

They are presented within three key areas which cover the work of EIPs. Each of these is sub divided into sections; for each standard there are exemplification criteria which aid consistency of interpretation.

‘Managing self’ focuses on the personal characteristics that enable individual self-evaluation and personal development.

‘Professional Leadership and Management’ details education leadership roles along with specific leadership and management skills and abilities necessary to ensure effective service delivery.

‘Supporting Educational Improvement and Children’s Well-being’ covers national and local priorities and identifies the skills, knowledge and understanding required to create the right environment that promotes the achievement and well-being of children and young people.

This key area emphasises knowledge and understanding of national, Local Authority and community systems, characteristics and cultures. For EIPs, irrespective of situation, knowledge and understanding of these contexts are essential to their effectiveness.

Using the Standards

3. Individual Education Improvement Professionals

The Standards will raise a number of questions from individuals:



3.1 What do the Standards mean?

The Standards can be used initially by senior managers in activities to identify strengths and areas for development at whole service level. This process will familiarise all EIPs with the Standards and help to ensure a common interpretation of them across the whole team. It will also support the process of identifying which are generic to the whole team and which are role specific.

Alternatively the assessment of strengths and areas for development can be carried out within teams or by individuals but this will require some prior work to ensure that there is a common interpretation of the Standards and which relate to particular roles.

At a later stage the assessment will be based on the collective outcomes of performance management and will form the basis for the training and development plan.

3.2 Which Standards are relevant to my role?

The Standards are not presented in relation to specific roles within an Education Improvement Service. Some EIPs will work at whole school/setting level providing support and challenge; some will provide training and support for the curriculum or leadership and management; for others their work is less discrete and they will work across both of these strands.

Key areas 1& 2, 'Managing Self' and 'Professional Leadership and Management', apply to all EIPs.

The applicability to specific posts of the Standards in Key Area 3, 'Supporting Educational Improvement and Children's Well-being', will be a decision to be made within each service as they are introduced. As described above, this can be an activity carried out as a whole service activity or carried out in teams. It will assist familiarisation with the Standards, support the development of a common interpretation of them, help to develop a sense of ownership and consistency within teams.

3.3 How do I know how well I match the Standards?

Each EIP will use the self- evaluation profile to carry out self-assessment in order to identify strengths and areas for development. It will prepare the EIP for a review meeting and be the means by which professional development needs are identified.

- Only the Standards which have been agreed with their manager as relevant to the individual's role should be assessed.
- Judgements should be based on reflection of evidence.
- Judgements can be usefully graded. A four level grading model is included in the self-evaluation profile:
 1. Practice is consistently very good, much of it exemplary and could be shared with others. The EIP is self motivated to continue to improve his/her practice.
 2. Practice is consistently good. The EIP recognises his/her development needs and is able to address them.
 3. Practice is good in most respects. The EIP is willing to improve his/her performance and acknowledges that some support is required.
 4. Practice is good in only a limited number of respects. The EIP is in need of regular support and encouragement.

Where the standard is not applicable to the EIP's specific role it should be marked as not applicable (N/A).

Grading should be based on professional judgement taking into account the available evidence. Grading will be benchmarked in the review meeting with the line manager/team leader. If peer/stakeholder review is included in the review process, the outcomes can provide an additional contribution to benchmarking of the judgements.

3.4 What evidence do I need?

Possible sources of evidence are given in the introduction (p.7). The self- evaluation profile requires individuals to note the sources of evidence for each of their judgements.

It must be stressed that this is evidence normally collected during work activities. The evidence should be referenced not duplicated; EIPs should be able to provide reference to any evidence which supports their judgement for each of the Standards (see self -evaluation profile).

Individual services may choose to develop individual professional portfolios. Typically such a portfolio would include the job description, self-evaluation profile, performance management outcomes and records of CPD. Overall such a profile would provide a record of professional goals, growth and achievement and could be a foundation for career-long, self-directed professional development.

4. Whole Service

An initial introduction to the Standards at whole service level enables all EIPs to:

- have a common understanding of the Standards
- know which are relevant to their role
- know how to assess their own performance
- understand how the Standards are used in the performance management process
- know how they are expected to evidence their performance
- know how their professional development needs will be met

5. Teams

EIPs will work in teams that are line managed by a senior manager/team leader. It is essential that the team has a shared understanding of the Standards and which apply to their role. This will contribute to the achievement of consistency across the team and support peer review as part of the performance management process.

6. Performance Management

Effective performance management is a crucial process for individual and service development. The Standards offer opportunities for EIPs and their managers, through the performance management process, to:

- set and meet clear targets to achieve the aims of the service
- contribute to the improved learning, achievement and well-being of children and young people in schools and other settings

It is therefore essential that use of the Standards is integral to the performance management procedures within the service. Individual services or Local Authorities may operate different models of performance management. The Standards are however sufficiently flexible to allow integration into a range of models; they are role specific competencies and as such will add rigour to performance management systems where self-evaluation criteria are more generic in nature.

The Standards are intended to be used for self-evaluation and assessment by the line manager/team leader in identifying strengths, areas for development and professional development needs. The process can be enhanced further by a 360 degree approach involving peers within the team and service, colleagues from other service areas and clients in schools.

7. Professional Development

A professional development strategy is essential to keep staff up-to-date, prepare them for changing roles or promotion within the “education improvement” sector or to support them for other chosen career paths.

Use of the Standards will enable a professional development strategy to be put in place for the whole service, teams and individuals and will ensure that the strategy is based on rigorous skills/needs analysis derived from reflective self-assessment and performance management.

Their use for individuals and teams will enable leaders to recognise and celebrate strengths within the service which can be utilised for the development of others within the team through coaching, mentoring and shadowing or leading professional development sessions.

8. Induction

Understanding the Standards should be an element within induction processes

The Standards recognise the existing knowledge and understanding that a newly appointed EIP brings with them and enable identification of initial training needs, thus providing a focus for activity within the workplace induction programme.

9. Career development planning, succession and recruitment processes

The Standards meet the needs of newly appointed, established and experienced EIPs and those leading and managing others' development.

Rigorous use of the Standards provides a progression route for them and supports the development of high quality 'school improvement service' leaders for the future.

Use of the Standards in job descriptions and person specifications adds rigour to the recruitment process. It ensures a focus on the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding for the post and provides for applicants clarity of job role, expected standards and outcomes.

The performance management process is also enhanced by the consistency of use of the professional language of the Standards in job descriptions, person specifications and self- evaluation profiles.



Implementation of the National Standards Processes Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Service	Senior Managers/ Team Leaders	Education Improvement Professionals
Implementation strategy		
How the standards will be introduced and used.	Plan and implement activities to introduce the standards.	Engage in the activities planned to introduce and familiarise EIPs with the standards.
Ensure time is made available for staff to participate.	Agree which standards apply to which roles in the service and provide EIPs with an individualised or team self- evaluation profile.	
Performance management		
Review service systems to incorporate the use of the standards.	<p>Implement the revised Performance Management Policy.</p> <p>Agree individual strengths and areas for development.</p> <p>Collate and analyse the outcomes of individual EIP reviews.</p> <p>Identify CPD needs for individuals, teams and the whole service.</p> <p>Identify colleagues' strengths which can be utilised to support/ develop others.</p>	<p>Carry out self-evaluation using the self-evaluation profile.</p> <p>Identify strengths and areas for development.</p> <p>Identify CPD needs and discuss these with the line manager/team leader.</p>



Head of Service	Senior Managers/ Team Leaders	Education Improvement Professionals
Training and development strategy		
Oversee the development of the professional development framework.	Develop and implement the training and development plan.	Participate in the training and development sessions. Use identified strengths to contribute to the CPD programme. Maintain a record of training and development.
Induction		
Review the induction policy to incorporate the use of the standards	Develop and implement the revised induction policy.	
Recruitment and retention		
Review the recruitment and retention strategy to incorporate the standards.	Implement the revised recruitment and retention policy.	

