

Report to ADCS Council **February 5 2009**

Attached to this report is a summary of the key VSC activity since the last meeting. I believe that this demonstrates to Council members strong progress against the intended direction of travel which I have previously outlined:

- Increasingly bespoke programmes geared to the needs of regions or individual authorities
- Broadening the scope of CPD activity to the whole range of Children's Trust activity
- Being involved strategically in workforce development planning in order to be able to anticipate and plan for CPD needs
- Creating key linkages with partners in CPD delivery eg NCSL, C4EO.

The Chief Executive continues to travel extensively and deliver, as well as design, quality assure and oversee, a range of programmes. The Board has approved additional administrative support, and will be seeking a Deputy Chief Executive to support him in this work, at least for a temporary period. The Board has considered the financial implications of this and we are confident that suitable assurance is in place.

Of major current importance is the Ministerial decision to ask NCSL to lead on a DCS and aspiring DCS development programme. NCSL are doing this in partnership with ADCS and CWDC, and it is planned that the VSC Chief Executive will act as the Principal Advisor to the programme.

VSC sees part of its role as supporting ADCS in ensuring as thorough involvement of DCSs and ADCSs in the design and content of the programme as possible and this will clearly be a feature of its work programme in the coming months. Additionally, we will be looking to ensure that the experience gained in delivering Action Learning Sets for DCSs, The Leadership Academy Programme and the regional five day Management Development Programmes informs the design and delivery of the new leadership initiative.

At its meeting on December 19th the VSC Board members discussed an early draft proposal from NCSL and unanimously supported the proposed leadership development in partnership with ADCS, CWDC and NCSL. Additionally, the following suggestions emerged from the discussion and are offered as initial thinking for consideration by the guiding coalition:

- The programme should be about developing visible leadership
- It should be about the development of experiences, values and knowledge and NOT a set course
- It should include an element of self-audit and/or peer audit
- It should be a personalised approach and not one size fits all
- It should build upon the experiences of developing NPQH
- It should be a reflective process
- It should be about developing self and others
- It should offer optional accreditation from the start
- It should provide a series of experiential themes or work streams such as;
Partnership working
Understanding the dynamics of poverty

The corporate dimension
Understanding schools
Safeguarding
Working with Health agencies
Developing effective partnership working
Commissioning
Developing effective Children's Trusts arrangements

(These are just examples. The final listing might be developed as a result of consultation with ADCS and others)

We are clearly already into the preliminary phase and are in discussion with NCSL/CWDC about ongoing actions and requirements. This will need to form the focus of ongoing feedback to Council.

The VSC will continue to act as the CPD voice of ADCS at this crucial and seminal time.

Eleni Ioannides

Chair

Virtual Staff College.

1 - Individual programmes

1.1 Integrated Youth Support Service Leadership Programme

The VSC is a member of a consortium to deliver management development training of 5,450 Integrated Youth Support Service Managers over the next three years. The lead partner is FPM and the training is funded by the CWDC. The VSC will take a lead on the Leadership Enhancement Programme in the North East, Yorkshire and Humber and the North West. Attached are the programme flyer and the dates for the various programmes throughout the country. Additionally, we are also working with the regional youth work units in these regions.

1.2 Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships

In the NW we are working with the NWADCS forum, GONW, CSIP and the SHA and a proposal has been submitted (circa £200,000) to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Board. This is a wide ranging CPD programme for Leaders and Managers in Children's Services. A decision is due towards the end of January 2009.

1.3 Management Development Programme

We currently have three management development programmes in progress. We have reached day 3 of the in-house MDP for the Stockport Borough Council Services to Young People Management Team, the North East course was completed on January 23rd and the programme for the NW Collaboration for Children has recently completed day 1.

1.4 Commissioning Programme

The second joint commissioning programme in the North West has now completed its third day. There are 28 participants from four Children's Trusts. This programme includes formal input, action learning sets and "share and tell" sessions. This programme was commissioned by CSIP, SHA and GONW. We are currently in discussion to deliver a third programme commencing in May 2009.

The DCSF has let a contract for commissioning support to Children's Trusts, to a consortium with whom we are working to explore possible collaborative initiatives.

1.5 Outcomes Based Accountability Programme

We continue to run a number of OBA programmes including, most recently, one for the Nottingham Teenage Pregnancy Board. Additionally, the Wirral Teenage Pregnancy Board has asked for two days in March and a further two in November this year.

We are currently looking at establishing OBA programmes around weight management.

1.6 You're Welcome Pilot Project

The Department of Health recently commissioned the VSC to facilitate two meetings with their project coordinators around the country to complete the work on the new standards. We are meeting the DoH in February to discuss further support.

2. Associates Network

Our Associate team continues to grow and amongst other new members we have recently recruited another recently retired former DCS to assist with our leadership programmes.

The annual Associates planning day took place in December and provided an opportunity for the current associates to meet, network and assist in the planning of the forward programme. We are anticipating a significant expansion in our programmes in 2009, due to the planned work with NCSL, FPM and the RIEPs and will therefore continue to extend the associates membership.

3. Other work

The VSC organised a conference on ECM for Deputy Headteachers from Halton Children's Trust in November 2008. As a result of the positive evaluations the participants have requested that they have further training opportunities with the VSC in 2009.

4. New developments

Discussions are currently taking place with two organisations about working in partnership with them. The VSC was approached by the Southern Educational Leadership trust to explore how we could work together for mutual benefit. Additionally, the Director of CPD is due to meet with senior staff from the East Midlands Leadership Centre to look at opportunities of working collaboratively. I will of course report future progress in due course.

We have been invited to support three one day programmes on Every Child Matters by the NCSL. These are due to take place in Darlington, London and Nottingham in March 2009 and are a sign of the growing relationship between both organisations.

5. Regional support

Council members will recall that following a successful tendering process, the VSC was commissioned by the DCSF to organise five regional seminars on "Value for Money for Schools". These took place during October 2008 and were oversubscribed. Consequently, the Department commissioned a further seminar in London. The evaluations were very positive and, as a result, I anticipate that the Department will be looking to commission the VSC to provide another series of seminars in the autumn of 2009.

6. Individual council support

In the North West we are currently running a management development programme for Stockport Borough Council Services to Young People Management Team.

During the past few months the Chief Executive has been in discussion with colleagues in Oxfordshire, Walsall, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire LAs regarding the provision of leadership and management capacity building. It is now likely that programmes of support will be agreed during the early part of 2009.

VSC Scotland

The Chief Executive has maintained his support to the development of the VSC in Scotland by regularly contributing to the design and delivery of the MDP module 1 "Knowing the Business" and module 2 "Becoming a Reflective Manager".

He is also currently completing commissions for "in-house" management development initiatives in Dumfries and Galloway, Aberdeenshire and East Dunbartonshire Councils and is due to contribute to a new programme for senior managers in The City of Edinburgh Council during the spring of 2009.

VSC Wales

The College continues to grow in its impact within Wales and, to date, we are completing two MDP: Children's Services courses for the South East and the Western regions respectively.

We have also successfully delivered the commission from the Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW) to design and publish its new website. This is now "live" and can be accessed through www.adew.org.uk.

Linkages

CWN

The Chief Executive of the VSC continues to attend the CWN Leadership and Management Policy Group through which we are able to contribute to the continuing dialogue regarding the development of a more co-ordinated national approach to the CPD of senior children's services practitioners.

VSC/NCSL Partnership working

As previously reported, the VSC and NCSL have agreed a partnership programme aimed at providing a series of strategic seminars for ADs and Headteachers on engaging schools in ECM. The first seminar entitled "Local authorities, Children's Trusts and schools: working together to deliver ECM outcomes" took place in Nottingham on September 15/16 and December 12 2008. The outcomes of both seminars are due to be published in March 2009.

Participant evaluations have been very positive and, as a result, plans are now advanced for further seminars in 2009 which will be offered as part of the VSC/ADCS Leadership Academy programme.

National leadership programme for current and aspiring DCSs

Council members will be aware of the recent extension of the remit of NCSL “to set up a new development programme which will offer structured training and support to every Director of Children’s Services and to those close to stepping up to that role”, in partnership with ADCS and CWDC. The new remit also requires NCSL “to chair a group of partners to develop proposals for a more coherent offer of support for senior and middle managers throughout the workforce. This work will need to consider the needs and potential of all leaders and managers in the children and young people’s workforce, including the voluntary and community sector and the private sector. It will build on *leading and managing children’s services in England: a national professional development framework* which was published in April 2008 to provide a basis for nationally and locally delivered training and development for managers and leaders.”

These are important developments which sit at the heart of the work which the VSC has developed since its inception in 1999. Furthermore, since the VSC was instrumental in the design of the CPD Framework on behalf of ADCS we believe that we now have the real possibility of achieving a coherent, purposeful and effective national programme. This should finally provide the necessary opportunities for current and future DCSs to learn and grow through extended experience and reflective practice.

I am pleased to confirm that the VSC has been, and will remain, centrally involved in the planning and delivery of the new initiative and it is particularly pleasing that the DCSF has elected to come to our community to design and manage the programme as opposed to tendering it out to the private sector.

This development is not only welcome but also highly challenging for ADCS in general and the VSC in particular, and will inevitably mean a review of capacity and focus in the near future.

International links

Since my last report the Chief Executive has successfully facilitated a masterclass workshop at the North of England Education Conference and three breakfast seminars and a symposium at the International Congress for School Effectiveness and Improvement also held in early January 2009.

As a result of the latter commitment, the VSC will again be hosting an international management seminar in Scotland which will take place in late July 2009.