



Improving school performance through Learning Sets

With current developments in education, the need to strengthen leadership in schools is ever more pressing.

Top priorities include:

- improving attainment
- embedding Curriculum for Excellence
- leading change
- managing teachers, support staff and resources

SOLACE Enterprises has successfully helped authorities across a variety of services including Education; Social Work; Children's Services and Best Value. Now we can offer a new service in Scotland that will help Head Teachers and Deputies lead their school communities and improve school performance. Further it will establish a sustainable network for continuing professional development.

What's the challenge?

Curriculum for Excellence clearly outlines the aspiration that all young people should be enabled to become confident individuals, responsible citizens, effective contributors and successful learners.

There is an assumption that the people leading this initiative – senior management teams and teachers – are themselves proficient and skilled in these areas and able to deliver the necessary curriculum changes.

How we can help:

SOLACE Enterprises will facilitate leadership Learning Set meetings that provide opportunities for participants to find ways to deal with the specific issues and dilemmas they face in their role, to learn from other participants who know and understand the challenges and to share best practice in school leadership and delivering Curriculum for Excellence.

Often described as 'learning to learn by doing' Learning Sets are a powerful way of achieving professional development.

The detail - what is a Learning Set?

A Learning Set is a group of eight people meeting regularly to reflect critically on how and what they are doing. Set members are all at the same level of seniority. The learning focuses on real work problems, not educational theory, and involves taking action as well as analysing. Choices for action are based on thinking and talking through options, with advice and guidance from the group and shared learning from hearing how group members have tackled finding solutions to problems.

Each person is invited in turn to present his/her most important challenges to the other set members. The set works with each participant to ensure they have strategies for meeting their challenges and dealing with dilemmas. Importantly, knowing the group will want to hear about progress at the next meeting is a powerful driver for taking action. As trust and rapport develops

between group members, so a support network develops often leading to bilateral exchange visits and discussions.

Each Learning Set is facilitated. Facilitators are not technical experts in the subject under discussion, but will have a good understanding of the issues and are experts in facilitating this specialised approach to learning.

Is it confidential?

Absolutely! Learning Sets agree ground rules for working together and there are rules and techniques to ensure each individual gets maximum benefit from the set.

How much time is involved?

Normally each Learning Set meeting runs from 10am to 4pm, but this can be customised to suit Learning Set membership.

There are usually five or six meetings over a nine month period. Participants must commit to attending the full programme.

Our experienced consultant:

Jo Cousland will facilitate the Learning Sets. Jo has had great success working with many groups of Primary and Secondary Head Teachers and Deputy Head Teachers in Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Stirling Councils and has facilitated Learning Sets with senior officers in Heritage and Leisure Services in Perth & Kinross and Falkirk Council. The evaluations from participants have been excellent.

Using the tried-and-tested process for action learning, Jo ensures confidentiality is maintained, trust is established and a supportive yet challenging learning environment is provided for all Learning Set members.

As an Associate of SOLACE Enterprises, Jo provides coaching, mentoring and career transition advice. She works with a range of organisations to offer leadership and personal development and has experience of working in many areas of public service, including Councils, the NHS and in Higher Education. Jo also has a number of contracts in the private sector, particularly in financial services and the creative industries.

Jo has exceptional listening and communication skills. She is articulate and professional, offering a flexible and pragmatic approach to clients.

And the cost?

£950/day plus VAT and travel expenses.

For further information please contact the Resource Centre.

You can either phone on **0845 601 0649** or email **resource.centre@solaceenterprises.com**

To find out more about SOLACE Enterprises and our full range of consultancy services see **www.solaceenterprises.com**

