ADES Report on Headteacher Recruitment

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The Recruitment of Headteachers in Scotland

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2015 Scottish Government commissioned the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) to report on the apparent reduction in the number of applicants for headteacher posts across Scotland and to outline improvements to remedy the situation.

Between September and December the review group consulted with over 80 headteachers and depute heads from 12 local authorities as well as representatives from each of the teacher associations, the Catholic Education Commission and the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL).

This report summarises the key issues raised and makes recommendations concerning:
- A national action plan
- Career pathways and preparation for headship
- Support for headteachers
- Terms, conditions and incentives
- Promoting the role of headteacher

1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

"The overall performance of a school very rarely exceeds the quality of its leadership and management."
Barber. M., Whelan. F., & Clark. M. (2010) *Capturing the leadership premium: How the world's top school systems are building leadership capacity for the future.* McKinsey and Company

The Donaldson Report "Teaching Scotland's Future" (TSF) outlined the significance of the leadership role of the headteacher in Scotland and made some important recommendations regarding preparation for headship as well as the ongoing development of experienced headteachers. As a consequence Scottish Government introduced an implementation group, The National Implementation Board for TSF, which commissioned ADES to complete and bring up to date work carried out in 2013. This report describes the outcome of that commission.

The findings in this report are based on interviews and discussions with around 80 headteachers and depute headteachers across Scotland as well as with representatives of national agencies, teacher associations and directors of education or their representatives. We are grateful for the help and support of local authority colleagues for arranging meeting with groups of staff to allow us to gather the evidence which has informed this report.

The groups of staff we met were from a selection of urban and rural councils and included a wide range of experience from across the various school sectors. We are particularly appreciative of their willingness to cooperate with this work and to give us their perspectives on the changing role of the post of headteacher and their views on the attractiveness of the role in the current circumstances.

In addition we have been greatly assisted by access to national statistics on teacher demographics and data on post vacancies provided by Scottish Government and local government colleagues.

1.1 The Headteacher Role

The post of headteacher in Scottish education is a crucial role both within the confines of the school itself, but also within the wider community it serves. International evidence points to the direct link between the quality of leadership of a school and the attainment and achievements of the young learners. For local authorities the appointment of headteachers is a critical part of their statutory obligations as the education authority, and it is acknowledged that the post carries significant leadership responsibilities, challenges and opportunities.

Traditionally the post of headteacher has been seen as the culmination of a career in schools education and typically competition for such posts in most parts of Scotland has been keen.

1.2 Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection of headteachers is the responsibility of local authorities with national resource support previously made available for the Scottish Qualification for Headship and the Flexible Routes to Headship programmes. The Scottish Parliament has recently passed an Education Bill which will require all new headteacher post holders to possess the Scottish "Into Headship" qualification from 2018/19. The newly established Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) has prepared the framework for this qualification in partnership with GTCS and Universities. The first cohort undertaking the new qualification commenced the programme in September 2015. The new legislation also contains significant provisions to raise attainment which will require skilled and motivated Headteachers for successful implementation.

1.3 Recruitment Challenges

Over the last few years concerns have been growing within the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) and headteacher associations regarding the reduction in the numbers of applicants for headteacher posts, the increased frequency of posts re-advertised often on more than one occasion, particular recruitment challenges in the denominational sector, and an increase in "cluster" headteacher posts across groupings of rural schools. In 2013 ADES published a report and associated recommendations on this matter. The 2013 report is included here as Appendix A.

In addition, there have been reports published in Scotland signalling some concerns including MacBeath *et al* on behalf of the Scottish Government, *The Recruitment and Retention of Headteachers in Scotland, 2009* and Blake Stevenson on behalf of the Scottish Government, *Evaluation of Routes to Headship, 2014*

2 STATISTICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Age Profile

Appendix B provides a broad illustration of the age of the existing headteacher workforce. While it is not unexpected that HTs are the amongst the oldest members of staff working in schools, in some parts of the country the number of headteachers

over the age of 55 appears to be high. Given that from 2018/19 all new headteachers will be required to hold the Standard for Headship before being appointed it will be important for local authorities to have a sufficient pool of teachers qualified and ready to take-up headteacher posts. This information will also be helpful in predicting the number of headteachers teacher education institutions will be required to train over the coming years. Each local authority will of course require to interpret this information for themselves.

2.2 Untapped Potential

The 2015 teacher census (Appendix C) shows that there are 411 (FTE) teachers who hold the Standard for Headship but are not currently working as headteachers. Given the pressure on headteacher recruitment and the forthcoming need to ensure newly appointed heads hold the Standard, it is at least worthy of further consideration whether some members of this group might be encouraged to apply for headteacher posts. It may also be worthwhile for the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) to provide this group with a professional learning opportunity that would give them the confidence to apply for HT posts.

2.3 Flattening Structures

The McCrone Report and subsequent TP21 (2001) reduced the number of promoted posts in schools by, for example, removing grades such as Assistant Principal Teacher. More recently many local authorities have moved to reduce the number of principal teachers in secondary schools in preference of the cross-subject faculty structure. The flattening of the career structure and the reduction in promoted posts is potentially undermining the sector's ability to develop teachers who have the skills, confidence and experience to move into senior management roles. As many teachers have never had the opportunity to make a first step in the promotion ladder (e.g. classroom to Principal Teacher), then the cohort of experienced managers is reduced. Arguably this problem is exacerbated by the removal of Chartered Teacher further to the McCormac Report where an alternate career progression route has been removed.

When looking at the number of promoted posts in primary, secondary and special schools since 2010 (Appendix D) then it is clear that the number of promoted posts has declined. The proportion of teachers in all promoted posts has declined slightly (27.3% to 24.8%). A striking statistic in that the number of promoted posts in primary schools has fallen to
19.6%. Overall the issue does not manifest itself in the census data quite in the way that has been suggested by some although a further drop in promoted posts can be expected in 2016 when existing pay conservation arrangements end. It is the case however that there are fewer promoted posts available in teaching and the lack of stepping stones to senior management may undermine the ability to recruit skilled and willing teachers to headship posts.

3 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND CAUSES OF CURRENT CHALLENGES TO RECRUITMENT

3.1Serious Recruitment Challenges across the Country

The outcome of our research confirms that there is a considerable challenge for local authorities, and while degrees of difference in the challenge can vary, overall there is a serious recruitment issue across the country which gives rise to significant concern

in a number of quarters. Whilst this can be seen more consistently in the denominational sector and also in rural areas, generally it is reported that headteacher recruitment is challenging across the country.

The previous ADES report and also a recent response to a FOI request confirm that numbers applying for these key leadership posts have in most cases been declining and, anecdotally, concerns were expressed regarding the quality and experience of some applicants being interviewed for vacancies. While no single factor alone explains the situation described above, a number do combine to lead us to a view that unless immediate action is taken, the failure to recruit headteachers will become one of the inhibitors to the progress of school improvement on a national scale and also will lead to significant operational difficulty locally.

3.2 The Increasing Complexity of the Role

The role of headteacher has become more complex in recent years with changes in legislation, curriculum and qualifications, expectations of parents and wider society. This was confirmed in our discussions with current heads and deputes. The perceived increased accountability which accompanies these growing responsibilities is a factor which should not be underestimated in the range of reasons why fewer applicants are coming forward for headteacher vacancies.

It was widely reported and acknowledged that the job had changed considerably over the last decade. Whilst the role of headteacher as the key educator and leader of learning was still perceived as important, it was no longer the predominant activity, with other leadership and operational duties taking much time and energy. Furthermore, those interviewed spoke of the very different and inconsistent perceptions of the job internally in schools and externally in school communities and beyond. There is also variation among local authorities as to how headteachers are engaged in the additional corporate priorities of the council and in the levels of support which are provided.

Headteachers are now involved in business-related decisions as part of devolved school management; in broader aspects of children and young people's welfare as part of the GIRFEC agenda; in employment and personnel issues relating to a range of staff in their schools; in health and safety matters in their role as property leads; in wider community leadership dimensions as part of their role as a senior officer of a Council; in, at times, challenging legal complexities relating to pupil and parental relationships. The cumulative effect of a very challenging and diverse role on current headteachers, who are seen by colleagues to be over-stretched with competing demands and a heavy workload, is such that for some potential headteachers, currently working at depute head level, the appeal of this leadership role has diminished.

The current reductions in local authority and school budgets across many parts of Scotland, particularly reductions of support staff, were seen to exacerbate the situation. The business support posts introduced at the time of the McCrone agreement were seen to be essential but were subject to change or even removal in some councils. There is therefore significant variation in the level of professional and administrative support provided for to the extent that it is very difficult to make like-for-like comparisons. Many headteachers report that a significant amount of their time can be diverted from 'leading learning' (which they see as their primary role) into administrative and managerial tasks such as finance, personnel, buildings and

bureaucracy. All of this is taking place in the context of reducing capacity owing to budget reductions; increasing centralisation of business support which is often seen as less efficient and less effective; and of increasing demands e.g. the need for efficient management of records relating to children and their welfare. Lack of support for headteachers is cited as a disincentive to those considering pursuing this role.

Similarly, a call for a new approach to supporting Heads with the complex GIRFEC agenda, and the new 'named person' legislation, was made by many involved in the meetings with us. There remains in many places a significant disparity between the support available to secondary headteachers and that available to those working in the primary sector, particularly very small primary schools.

There were also widely different approaches to how recently appointed headteachers were supported in their induction to the job, many talking about the value of a more experienced colleague as a mentor but this is not a consistent provision across the country.

3.3 Leadership Skills Development

There is not a consistent approach to the development of leadership skills in preparation for headship across Scotland with wide differences in practice in local authorities and also across sectors. While some well-established leadership development programmes are in operation and available in some authorities, that is not a consistent opportunity. The national programmes of SQH and Flexible Routes to Headship had not been universally popular and in some cases were the only opportunity available for aspiring headteachers.

Some excellent examples of leadership development approaches were seen across Scotland but it was apparent from our discussions that these opportunities are not universally available and a clear pathway to senior leadership for those entering the profession is not perceived.

The flattening of the management structures described in section 2.3 above has resulted in fewer opportunities for those aspiring to leadership posts in Scotland.

Interesting examples were found of temporary leadership opportunities being made available to staff who in the past might have secured promotion to posts but for whom fewer opportunities now exist. However these were internal to particular schools and not part of a coherent or planned development programme. For example, one secondary headteacher we met described how he has used his devolved staffing budget to create temporary secondment roles in his school which has provided valuable leadership experience for several members of his staff.

In best practice examples, local authorities were using the national Framework for Educational Leadership alongside the GTCS standards for leadership and management as the basis for their plans. However a consistent national approach is missing in the development of potential school leaders, ongoing mentoring and coaching opportunities, on the job training and work shadowing experiences, and more recently for entry to the new national Into Headship Qualification programme. The experience of those interviewed in relation to the impact of the Scottish College for Educational Leadership was mixed, with those in rural locations having least knowledge and experience of SCEL and its potential. Concerns were raised over the

different approaches taken by Local Authorities to the costs to candidates of completion of the Into Headship Qualification.

In listening to the stories of how senior promoted staff came to see their own potential to apply for these positions, it typically rested on opportunities for development that had occurred by chance rather than design. Good fortune in the role models encountered in schools or in the local authority were the most commonly quoted examples. The ability to imagine oneself becoming a headteacher later in one's career is considered to be an important factor in encouraging future leaders to seek development opportunities. However, it is a concern that we found little evidence that systematic review and development is not identifying or developing potential leaders.

3.4 Pay Differentials

The issue of pay differentials as part of the national Terms and Conditions agreements for teachers was raised in every meeting. In many cases we found that the pay incentive was such that depute heads were not applying for posts if, for example, their current post in a larger school was paid only slightly below that of a vacant headteacher post in a smaller school. Examples of this situation occurred in the primary and secondary sectors.

While local authorities do have local flexibility opportunities to vary salary levels as part of the national agreement, few if any seem to be using it. One pragmatic and also successful model when established well is that of the 'cluster head', or executive head as it is known in England and Wales. Traditionally this has been used by rural authorities in grouping primary schools together for leadership purposes. Increasingly it is being used in many authorities, and also considered for secondary schools. We feel that there are advantages in this model but a more consistent approach to responsibilities and remuneration is needed across all authorities. This may also have benefits in raising attainment practice and is worthy of further study.

Notwithstanding this, there was a consistent message from the meetings and conversations we held with practitioners and association representatives that salary differentials were a major, albeit not the only factor, in the declining interest in headteacher posts.

3.5 Family Mobility

There is no doubt that the issue of family mobility has become a factor in the decision to apply for a post of headteacher in Scotland. Far fewer potential applicants for a headteacher post than in previous periods are now willing to apply for a post that involves relocation, even in cases where relocation support packages are available. Predominantly this is reported to be linked to working spouses and partners and also in some cases the housing market. Incentives are used by some Local Authorities to attract applicants but it may be that this is a social phenomenon which will require us to focus on local recruitment of senior leaders by developing local talent.

3.6 Effectiveness of Advertising Vacancies

The issue of the advertising of posts was discussed. Evidence suggests that traditional forms of advertising in journals and newspapers have limited success when the only vehicle used. However the current policy of using My Job Scotland as the preferred advertising medium was also questioned particularly by existing headteachers. Both they and applicants who had used the portal complained about the processes involved, the technology, and also the successes it drew. In some

cases it was seen as a disincentive to applicants. The use of social media alongside existing advertising policies was advocated and also a national marketing campaign was seen as a requirement, particularly to attract applicants from beyond Scotland.

4 CASE STUDIES

We received lots of individual testimonies about why people were interested in becoming headteachers. Two case studies submitted by participants in our workshops are included as Appendix E to the report.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Nationally Agreed Action Plan is Required

Just as there is a variety of factors at play contributing to the current difficulties in recruiting headteachers in Scotland, so too is there a number of integrated solutions requiring local and national action if improvements are to be made. There is no silver bullet to hand to resolve this challenge and we must also recognise that other education systems are also encountering similar difficulties. However Scotland does have the advantage of size and scale in an education system known for its collaborative and consensual approaches to change and improvement. Local Authorities, National Agencies, Professional Associations and Scottish Government must coalesce round the findings of this report and treat the matter as one of urgency requiring immediate action of short term and long term timescales.

There is a need for immediate and urgent action by the Scottish education community to address the current difficulties in the recruitment of headteachers. A nationally agreed action plan should be prepared using the evidence in this and previous reports to direct priorities and resources.

5.2 Career Pathways and Preparation for Headship

There is a pressing need to bring more coherence and clarity to the provision of pathways to leadership at local and national level. The creation of a mandatory national qualification for aspiring headteachers is not in itself going to improve levels of applications for vacant posts and in the short term may have the opposite effect.

The financial climate that we are likely to face for the foreseeable future requires a far more focused and joined-up approach by employers assisted by national agencies to identify, nurture and develop potential leaders. The variation in the size, resources, priorities, and capacity of the 32 Local Authorities means that there is no guarantee of opportunity for a career pathway for those who wish to consider the role of headteacher. The Into Headship Qualification programme is not of itself sufficient preparation for headship, but rather is one of a number of steps along a career pathway. These steps might include opportunities for mentoring, job shadowing, short term secondments or job exchanges, regular professional review and an agreed programme of further development.

While Local Authorities have individual responsibility for their employees' career development needs and aspirations, there is a far greater chance of a high quality range of opportunities for those aspiring to headship if inter-authority partnerships were developed to provide the pathways and opportunities for those who aspire to be

school leaders at middle and senior positions including headship across Scotland. These inter-authority partnerships should be supported and augmented by inputs from national agencies and the broader education community across Scotland. The combined resources of these partnerships could be used to identify and develop potential and aspiring headteachers in the expectation that from this pool future leaders will emerge to fill many of the vacancies which will arise in their area. It is important that the identification of future senior leaders is not left to chance but becomes a shared responsibility for those currently leading education authorities and national agencies. The 2015 OECD Report "*Improving Schools in Scotland*" asked for *"the 32 local authorities to work in close partnership on equitable and high quality provision of professional learning that is more related to Scotland's as well as each community's priorities."* They also called for local authorities to *"develop succession strategies across local authorities and not only from within them, so that authorities develop leaders for each other".* (OECD Improving Schools in Scotland 2016 pp136, 137)

ADES Virtual Staff College has been working with a small number of local authorities in the delivery of assessment centres as part of the recruitment process for headteacher vacancies. This model has the potential also to be used as a development process for those interested in taking the step towards Headship. Other professions use similar processes so that all short-leeted candidates have arrived at a particular quality standard thereby indicating their readiness for the job. If successfully introduced, there would be a bank of candidates across the country ready for leadership roles.

The Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) has an important role to play alongside local authorities, schools, and other national agencies. Consideration of how SCEL better supports the needs of all local authorities and schools, and all those interested in accessing routes into headship is required at this, early stage in the development of the College.

Local authorities as employers should take a more strategic longer term approach to recruiting teachers, retaining teacher developing teachers and promoting leadership.

The recently formed ADES inter-authority partnerships should develop career pathways and mentoring programmes for those aspiring to be headteachers in Scotland. National agencies should support these programmes thereby ensuring that there is a concerted national approach to preparing candidates for headship. Part of this process should give consideration to establishing assessment centres for all interested in headteacher posts, the development of secondments to give real leadership experience in a variety of settings, an explicit programme of early identification training and development to harness talent, ambition and aspiration.

SCEL will have an important role to play in supporting the partnerships.

5.3 Supporting Headteachers once in Post
The nature of the role of headteacher in modern Scotland has resulted in a very heavy and demanding workload combining a wide variety of tasks and duties, to a point where some potential candidates for headship are taking a considered decision not to apply for a headteacher's post. This is something that has the potential to be

exacerbated with new children's services legislation and declining budgets to schools for support functions as well as reducing central support from local authorities.

Approaches to supporting headteachers across Scotland vary widely and many interviewed were of the opinion that this, even more than salary levels and differentials, was the greatest factor at play in the reducing numbers of applications for posts. With this in mind, but also recognising the pressure on the public sector in Scotland, we are of a view that there is a need to look at the overall staffing roles and costs involved in supporting schools discharge their functions, and thereafter to arrive at a model more appropriate for current conditions. In particular we suggest that a more appropriate and efficient system of pupil and children's services support should be established on a learning community basis, as should business support functions.

Support is also required for those in the early stages of their headship. Networks of headteachers and informal mentors have traditionally fulfilled this role but it would reduce the anxiety of those who are reluctant to apply for headships if this type of support was offered routinely and as part of an induction programme. The new Qualification for Headship developed by the Scottish College for Educational Leadership includes a learning programme designed to be undertake after a teacher has been appointed to their first headship post. This 'Extended Induction' programme will therefore support newly appointed headteachers with the first group starting the programme in late 2016.

These networks of support continue for many headteachers throughout their careers and the development of wider networks across inter-authority partnerships and SCEL regional networks is likely to be particularly beneficial to those who work in small local authorities.

Headteachers have a crucial role in raising standards of attainment and achievement in schools. Without adequate levels of support in the multiplicity of tasks related to the job, this crucial role is not likely to be fully realised. A review of the nature of support required for schools is needed alongside a radical rethink of how current resources are targeted, this to include the pupil support and business support functions.

More consistent and effective induction programmes require to be developed across Scotland to support newly appointed headteachers.

5.4 Terms, Conditions and Incentives

The salary scales attached to the national Terms and Conditions agreement are for many potential applicants for headteacher posts in Scotland a disincentive for furthering career aspirations. Many examples were cited in our meetings and conversations with current and potential Heads which outline an issue requiring solutions nationally and locally. In too many cases the differential between the salaries of depute headteachers and the posts of headteachers in smaller schools were such that either a drop in salary or only a very modest increase would occur if a DHT from a large school were to be successful in an application. Statistics from ADES confirm that it is the smaller schools in both secondary and primary sectors that can be hardest to fill. It is therefore surprising that Local Authorities seldom utilise the local flexibility afforded them in the national agreement when considering the salary placements of posts of headteacher.

One possible solution to this is to review the national job sizing toolkit but it is felt that, on balance, this is not the most effective way to address this matter, as the likely length of time to arrive at a national agreement might be years away in implementation. Therefore we feel that a review of headteacher salary scales is required to ensure that, in the vast majority of cases, clear differentials are apparent between DHT and HT posts.

Attention should also be given to the current policies on advertising vacancies to ensure effective coverage and efficient application procedures.

Salary differential is a major factor in whether to apply for a headteacher post. There is a need to address this through a review of salary scales of headteachers and depute headteachers.

Local incentives and opportunities to attract and prepare potential applicants require to be considered alongside fit-for-purpose advertising and recruitment policies.

5.5 Promoting Headship

The role of headteacher is unique in public service. It is an exciting, challenging and very rewarding role to fulfil for those who dedicate their lives to the education of children and young people in Scotland. In our conversations the vast majority of existing headteachers outlined the unique opportunities associated with the job, albeit they were frustrated with some of the issues mentioned in this report. It remains a job which provides immense professional satisfaction. It does therefore seem that a communications and marketing plan is required to explain and better promote the role and its contribution to public service in Scotland.

There is also an important role for existing headteachers to encourage and support members of their staff who demonstrate an interest in and aptitude for leadership.

A promotional campaign outlining the opportunities and rewards of the role of the headteacher in Scotland is required.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Action is Required Now

The reducing number of applicants for headteacher posts, considered alongside the age profile of the current post holders, means that it is essential that work is carried out now to address the issues outlined in this report. If our national ambitions for education are to be realised then leadership of the highest quality is required for our schools.

6.2 The Potential Leaders Exist

There is no shortage of talent or ability amongst the teaching force in Scotland but there is a pressing need to identify, encourage, develop and support those who are interested in taking on the senior leadership role of headteacher.

6.3 Lack of Coherence Results in Potential Leaders being missed

Many of the actions recommended in this report exist already or partially in some parts of the country but lack of coherence and consistency in terms of opportunity to progress means that many potential leaders are missed or overlooked.

An ADES Paper on the Recruitment of Head Teachers in Scotland.
October 2013

1 Introduction

1.1

As part of the ongoing partnership between Scottish Government and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES) on the implementation of Teaching Scotland's Future, it was agreed that it would be mutually beneficial for the association to prepare a paper on the various issues surrounding the recruitment of Head teachers in Scotland. There continues to be anecdotal evidence suggesting recruitment difficulties in the system and Scottish Government was keen for ADES to develop thinking in this area, particularly with the introduction of the Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) on the horizon.

1.2

This is by no means an exhaustive research paper: the evidence collected being largely from Local Authorities via the ADES Personnel Network. However, the paper with its associated recommendations, is a true reflection of the current status of Head teacher recruitment and informal discussions with the two main Scottish head teacher associations, confirm the overall outcomes of our findings. In addition to the focused discussions with Local Authorities, and associated data collection, we have had discussions with Scottish Government officials, members of the SCEL team, the Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service, and we have also studied the initial draft of the research being carried out currently by Blake Stevenson into the Flexible Routes to Headship. The Times Educational Supplement in Scotland also made itself available for interview via its Managing Editor.

1.3

From the information available to us, it seems clear that there are significant ongoing difficulties for Local Authorities in Scotland in attracting candidates to the post of Head teacher. While these may vary from area to area, post to post, sector to sector, there are underlying challenges that lead us to a view that serious consideration is required, across the system, of the need for a package of measures which will bring improvement, continuity and sustainability of leadership in schools and communities. Some Local Authorities also expressed concerns over retention issues and while some of the measures outlined later in the report are aimed at addressing this matter also, it has not been our main focus.

1.4
This paper does not consider the specific issues surrounding appointments for Headship of Gaelic and Gaelic Medium Schools. These have been more recently addressed elsewhere in a piece of research commissioned by Bord na Gaidhlig.

2 Background and Context

2.1
There are 2064 Primary schools, 365 Secondary schools, and 155 Special schools in Scotland, the majority having a post of Head teacher dedicated to them. Management structures vary in the 2548 Pre-school provisions nationally.

The appointment of a Head teacher is rightly seen as being a crucial event for a school and also the community it serves. Such is the significance of the post, that legislation surrounds its appointment processes with Local Authorities deploying a range of procedures aimed at identifying suitable candidates and ensuring that the processes are as inclusive as possible of the parental and community interests. In short, this is a key post in Scottish Education.

2.2
The job of Head teacher has changed drastically over the years, moving from a leader of learning to a far greater range of senior executive duties depending on the employing authority and also the nature and size of the school. Operating within the national framework of conditions of service, Local Authorities have developed their own job specifications, local responsibilities, and also preparation as well as on going CPD for such post holders. More recently, rural authorities in the main, have developed an approach for the leadership of a group, or cluster of schools, by introducing the post of "cluster head teacher". Denominational schools in Scotland have their own appointments procedures reflecting the needs of the Roman Catholic Church, with the Scottish Catholic Education Commission playing a role in the preparation and appointment of denominational Head teachers.

2.3
Expectations on Head teachers have grown over the years to include now a more significant set of responsibilities for children's services within and out with the school, closer working with parents and carers, and often wider, corporate responsibilities including full participation in the community planning process. Devolved School Management is a function of the role of the Head teacher that sits alongside other related duties regarding people and resource management. Many Local Authorities have reflected these changes in the senior leadership teams and support staffing in and across schools.

2.4
Preparation for headship has developed to include a variety of training and leadership development opportunities, despite the financial climate. Councils often operate their own leadership development programmes and are involved in SQH and Flexible Routes to Headship opportunities. Not all aspiring Head teachers follow such paths into headship. The work of the National Implementation Board for Teaching Scotland's Future has given much thought to the need to focus its work on leadership development and the associated leadership framework now held in Education Scotland will support this. The commitment by Scottish Government to establish SCEL is seen as a very significant milestone in this area of work.

2.5

Public Sector agencies in Scotland are facing very significant budgetary challenges which are likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Despite this, Councils have maintained their posts of Head teachers and have continued to try to fill posts as they become available. One aspect of the process of recruitment that has changed due to the financial circumstances is that of advertising in newspapers and journals. There has been a very significant reduction in such advertising, with a consequential increase in the use of the COSLA managed My Job Scotland portal.

2.6

It was against this background, that the number of applications for the post of Head teacher in
Scotland seemed to be reducing and led to the agreement between Scottish Government and ADES that a paper was needed which could outline some data and prepare advice for all interested parties on a way forward.

3 Findings

3.1

The ADES Personnel Network conducted, on our behalf, a survey of Local Authorities in respect of their vacancies for posts of Head teacher between January 2011 and April 2013.

22 Local Authorities responded to this survey. The headline figures from this survey were:

- Overall there were 436 HT vacancies across the 22 Authorities during this period;
- 103 of these posts had to be re advertised during this period;
- During the period concerned, there were 122 posts where no appointment was made;
- Only 12 Primary HT vacancies attracted 10+ applicants;
- No denominational Primary HT posts attracted 10+ applicants;
- 75 denominational Primary HT posts came vacant of which 28 went unfilled;
- 45 Secondary HT posts were vacant and only 17 attracted 10+ applicants.

While there is no benchmarking data to make valid comparisons, experience from within ADES confirms that, overall, there are concerns regarding the numbers of applicants to posts and, in a number of cases, over the quality, hence the numbers of posts subject to re advertisement. A few secondary posts, mainly in the Forth - Clyde area, attracted healthy numbers (15+) of applicants, but others remained in single figures. The situation in the Primary sector is very worrying given the declining numbers of applicants, and the fact that approximately 25% of posts had to be re advertised. The view of all but one Authority is that there is a crisis in recruiting to Denominational posts and that even in West Central Scotland, serious concerns prevail.

3.2

One other relevant piece of statistical evidence comes from the annual census figures gathered by
Scottish Government. The 2012 figures confirm that there were 1050 Primary Head teachers in the 50+ age bracket and 263 in Secondary of a similar age profile. In terms of forward planning, this suggests that we are likely to see a continuation of relatively large turnover of posts in the years ahead.

3.3

The discussions that took place with the individuals and organisations outlined in section 1.2 above tried to identify some of the main causes for this apparent decrease and worrying trends in applications for Head teacher posts across Scotland. These can be summarised below:

3.3.1 **Salaries and Conditions of Service**

Evidence suggested that there were some potential applicants, currently at Depute Head teacher level in schools, who were unwilling to apply for HT posts due to the impact of salary differentials caused in some cases by associated job sizing issues. Typically a DHT in a school with a relatively high job sized salary being unwilling to make the jump to HT post for a salary differential of 1015% higher. We did not investigate the detail of the job sizing toolkit and cannot comment as to whether this is simply a salary differential issue or whether the existing toolkit requires a review. However, it certainly is one cause of the decrease in applications.

As well as differentials, it was reported that the increased responsibilities that go with the job of HT also were mitigating against some potential applicants fulfilling their original career aspirations. A real "is this worth the candle?" set of self-assessment questions being asked, with impact on the family, workload, increased parental expectations, possible litigation, as well as the leadership challenges outlined in para 2.3 above. Some of those involved with this study also indicated that serving Head teachers do not always outline the real positives of the job and negative perceptions can influence some potential candidates for posts. Local Authorities, currently, tend to appoint a HT to a specific school and find it very difficult to permanently transfer personnel to other schools in the Authority.

3.3.2 **Identifying and Recruiting School Leaders**

There is a mixed approach across Scotland to the preparation for leadership at the various promotional levels that exist. The traditional SQH courses and the more recent Flexible Routes are used by many Authorities, but not all successful applicants for Headship have these qualifications. Councils operate a mixture of in house and outsourced approaches to leadership development, some with a clear pathway, others with more sporadic approaches.

As indicated in para 2.5 above, approaches to the advertising and promotion of posts have changed very significantly in recent years. Some Authorities have focused on internal advertising only, most if not all use MJS, and some use external national and international advertising campaigns.

The actual process of appointment to such posts varies according to Council policies. In some cases a formal assessment centre is used, others have a long leet / short leet approach, while some use one relatively short interview. All Councils we are aware of meet their legislative requirements in this area of work.

Generally, there was no national succession planning policy that could be seen to be operating across the 32 Local Authorities which might have supported the local as well as the national challenges in recruitment.

3.3.3 **Societal Changes**

One interesting and influential societal change that seems to have impacted on the numbers of applications for HT posts relates to the mobility of potential applicants. Fewer are able or willing to apply for posts that require relocation, almost certainly due to changing family work patterns, and more recently housing market conditions have added pressure in this respect.

3.3.4 **Denominational Schools**

The analysis of the statistics on applications for RC headship confirms the seriousness of the crisis outlined in section 3.1 above. Local Authorities are committed to supporting denominational education and are extremely concerned for future planning. The various issues outlined above are all just as relevant for denominational schools but accentuated by the fact that there are fewer well qualified potential applicants working in RC schools, some who are now working in nondenominational provision, and others who feel, rightly or wrongly, that they may not meet the requirements for Church approval. The views expressed by ADES personnel network members suggest that there is not a common approach being taken across Scotland on this matter, something that was raised in a very productive meeting with the Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service.

While we cannot confirm, through the limitations of this study, that the factors above are purely Scottish in nature, and some anecdotal evidence suggests they are not, we do feel they are central to the current problems of attracting applicants to posts.

4 Solutions and Recommendations

It is evident from the information gathered that no one solution will bring a quick fix to this complex set of factors currently prevalent in Scotland. However, bearing in mind the significance of the post of Head teacher in Scottish Education, we advocate a series of planned measures, some of a longer term nature than others, to arrive at a sustainable approach to assuring we have the highest calibre of leaders in our schools.

4.1 **Leadership Pathways**

We must ensure that there are clear leadership pathways through the profession, locally and nationally, which are understood and recognised by those with aspirations for leadership roles in schools and communities. These must relate to the recently established Leadership Framework, hosted by Education Scotland, and be a priority for the newly established Scottish College for Educational Leadership, and be recognised as high quality professional learning opportunities.

Local Authorities should work collaboratively with national agencies and SCEL to ensure that they have sustainable policies in place that attract the quality and quantity of applicants for HT posts required for the next decade. Bearing in mind the current financial climate, the advantages of inter authority collaboration, for such succession planning approaches, should be seriously considered. Proactive measures such as talent spotting, fast tracking of high quality personnel, availability of coaching and mentoring schemes and job shadowing, all designed to allow swift but appropriate progression to leadership roles, are among the measures which should be followed on a planned and resourced basis.

Following the publication of the Evaluation of the Flexible Routes to Headship, a short term working group should be established by Scottish Government, via SCEL, to identify measures aimed at implementing the range of qualifications based approaches best suited to prepare leaders for Scottish schools.

4.2 **Promoting the Job**

Bearing in mind the significance of the post of Head teacher at school, community, and national level, and the educational research linking the role of Head teacher to successful educational outcomes for children, there is a need for a campaign to promote the job, its benefits personally but also for public service, and for Scotland's future prosperity. Ideally this should be led by existing Head teachers who are outstanding role models locally and nationally.

4.3 **Recruitment Policies**

The responsibility for recruiting Head teachers lies with the employing Local Authority. There are variations of approach across the 32 Councils that seem, at times, to be too diverse even with the need to ensure that local priorities, budgets and corporate policies are followed. More innovative and planned recruitment strategies should be deployed and there is a need to recognise that top jobs in a Council, which HT vacancies are, require a profile that befits their importance for a community. While the My Job Scotland portal has been widely used by Councils, evidence would suggest that it alone, is not sufficient in attracting the quality and quantity of applicants that is required locally and nationally. In addition, there is apparent variation within and across Councils in the use of incentives and relocation packages to attract applicants.

The ADES Personnel Network is well placed to look at this matter so that a best practice model can be prepared and followed. This should include the complete recruitment process including advertising, selection processes, and ongoing support for newly appointed HTs.

4.4 **Structures and Conditions of Service**

There is little doubt that the job of Head teacher has become more complex than ever before, mirroring changes in society and communities. These factors are outlined earlier in the report. There are some options which might be considered in addressing matters.

There could be a review of the approach being followed by Authorities in assessing what duties should be included in a HT job description, removing as far as possible some of the non educational management responsibilities, and focusing on leadership priorities. While this has been done to a varying degree in Local Authorities, it is a complex matter and will require associated redeployment of tasks, with financial implications. On its own it is not likely to be a successful solution.

There is a strong case for questioning the current historic approach of appointing a Head teacher for each school in an Education Authority. While some initiatives have been made to move to more collegiate models, or cluster HT approaches, they tend to have been on a pragmatic basis and lack consistency within and across many Authorities. The options would seem to focus on either grouping Primary schools strategically under a leadership team with a senior HT leader in place, or focus on the 3-18 Local Learning Community, with an appropriately balanced leadership team. The advantages of scale should allow for the balance of leadership and management responsibilities, a focus on learning, and ensure, if appropriately structured, that there is no loss of local parental confidence.

There is a strong feeling in ADES that Head teacher contracts should be more flexible, allowing HTs to be redeployed, for the very best of reasons, to schools elsewhere in the Education Authority. This would seem to have advantages for the Authority but also for the HTs who would be able to have professional and career development opportunities at appropriate times.

These measures are understandably complex, controversial in some quarters, and point to a very different leadership approach in many Scottish schools. However, we strongly feel that the status quo is untenable and will lead to a systemic failure in time. As a consequence, a representative group should initially be tasked with "road testing" proposals and advising if there is merit in taking any further steps. The National Parent Forum should be part of any group alongside those associations with direct member interest. ADES via the VSCS will also examine practice elsewhere to ascertain if there are opportunities to introduce successful solutions from beyond Scotland.

4.5 **Job Sizing and Salary Differentials**
As indicated above, we have not investigated whether there is any direct link between the job sizing toolkit and salary differentials. We are very aware that a formal review of the toolkit would be a long and difficult task with possibly winners and losers as a consequence. SNCT will decide when, if at all, this is required, undoubtedly, however, salary differential is one factor in the decision of some potential applicants not to apply for a HT post.

As a consequence, we feel that two options are available to Authorities and their partners in SNCT to address a "here and now" issue of some significance. One would be for Authorities to use the local flexibility that exists and place Head teacher salary levels which locally seem appropriate, while recognising what the national implications might be of such a course of action. The other option is for there to be a review of Head teacher salaries which addresses differentials but also which looks at associated responsibilities. This should not assume increases in the overall salary bill for Head teachers, requires to be self-financing, and relate to some of the proposals in section 4.4 above. It would mean fewer posts at Head teacher level, but those in post being paid more.

4.6 **Denominational Schools**
The vast majority of the issues and solutions outlined above are just as relevant for the Denominational Schools in Scotland but, notwithstanding this, further and very immediate action is required to address the apparent growing crisis in this sector.

An urgent meeting should take place with Scottish Government, ADES, and SCES aimed at a mixture of short term and longer term solutions. The ADES Personnel Network will collaborate as far as possible with SCES so as to try to guarantee provision in RC schools.

Leadership pathways need to be proactively pursued and promoted for Denominational Schools commencing at Early Phase level, and also targeting those qualified applicants currently in nondenominational schools.

The Director of SCES should ensure that there is active and consistent implementation of the policy of Church approval across all the Diocese in Scotland.

Conclusions

ADES is extremely grateful for the support it received from a range of individuals and organisations in the preparation of this paper. Although by our own admission it is limited in its scope, there is enough evidence contained in the paper to confirm that action is needed as a matter of some urgency and priority to address some of the very significant challenges facing Scotland in the recruitment of Head teachers. Some actions can be initiated now but a strategic, comprehensive and national approach is required to address the structural issues that characterise this crucial area of leadership in Scottish Education.

Bruce Robertson
John Christie
John Stodter
October 2013

Headteachers over the age of 50 by local authority 2015 - FTE

Authority	Total Number of HTs	Number of HTs 55 or over	Percentage of LA HT workforce 55 or over	Number of HTs 50 or over	Percentage of LA HT workforce 50 or over
Aberdeen City	55	21	38%	28	50%
Aberdeenshire	157	47	30%	74	47%
Angus	49	13	27%	23	47%
Argyll & Bute	69	21	30%	39	56%
Clackmannanshire	24	5	21%	6	25%
Dumfries & Galloway	80	12	14%	36	45%
Dundee City	39	12	31%	23	60%
East Ayrshire	52	11	21%	22	42%
East Dunbartonshire	41	14	35%	26	63%
East Lothian	37	9	24%	20	54%
East Renfrewshire	29	11	37%	14	47%
Edinburgh City	112	34	30%	58	51%
Eilean Siar	19	6	29%	8	40%
Falkirk	49	16	33%	32	65%
Fife	146	48	33%	72	49%
Glasgow City	183	67	36%	98	54%
Highland	153	42	28%	74	49%
Inverclyde	27	7	25%	16	57%
Midlothian	36	11	31%	21	58%
Moray	49	19	39%	26	53%
North Ayrshire	52	13	25%	27	52%
North Lanarkshire	161	42	26%	75	47%
Orkney Islands	15	5	34%	8	52%
Perth & Kinross	74	14	19%	29	39%
Renfrewshire	61	16	26%	27	44%
Scottish Borders	50	11	22%	23	46%
Shetland Islands	27	3	11%	10	37%
South Ayrshire	45	7	16%	12	27%
South Lanarkshire	142	51	36%	82	58%
Stirling	42	9	21%	21	50%
West Dunbartonshire	39	10	26%	20	51%
West Lothian	80	22	28%	37	47%
Grant Aided	7	3	44%	6	85%
Total	2,201	631	Average 29%	1,090	Average 50%

Source: Summary statistics for schools in Scotland - No. 6: 2015 Edition, Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Standard for Headship (national) – FTE - 2015

Authority	Total Number of HTs	HTs achieved Standard for Headship	Percentage of HTs achieved Standard for Headship	Other teachers achieved Standard for Headship
Aberdeen City	55	21	38%	6
Aberdeenshire	157	28	18%	15
Angus	49	35	71%	13
Argyll & Bute	69	29	42%	14
Clackmannanshire	24	7	29%	5
Dumfries & Galloway	80	34	42%	17
Dundee City	39	15	38%	8
East Ayrshire	52	25	48%	14
East Dunbartonshire	41	14	35%	10
East Lothian	37	15	41%	7
East Renfrewshire	29	16	57%	11
Edinburgh City	112	49	43%	30
Eilean Siar	19	2	9%	2
Falkirk	49	23	47%	11
Fife	146	80	55%	43
Glasgow City	183	65	36%	41
Highland	153	50	33%	10
Inverclyde	27	17	61%	7
Midlothian	36	11	31%	9
Moray	49	12	24%	7
North Ayrshire	52	20	38%	14
North Lanarkshire	161	71	44%	22
Orkney Islands	15	2	11%	1
Perth & Kinross	74	19	26%	10
Renfrewshire	61	14	23%	12
Scottish Borders	50	29	58%	12
Shetland Islands	27	3	11%	1
South Ayrshire	45	18	41%	9
South Lanarkshire	142	47	33%	22
Stirling	42	14	33%	8
West Dunbartonshire	39	19	48%	8
West Lothian	80	36	45%	11
Grant Aided	7	1	15%	1
Total	**2,201**	**840**	**38%**	**411**

Source: Summary statistics for schools in Scotland - No. 6: 2015 Edition, Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Promoted posts includes head teachers, depute head teachers and principal teachers

FTE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of promoted posts	13,608	13,050	12,703	12,543	12,252	12,016
Total Teachers	49,785	48,783	48,691	48,620	48,442	48,335
Proportion of total teachers in promoted posts	27.3%	26.8%	26.1%	25.8%	25.3%	24.8%

*Excludes centrally employed which is not published at this level

PRIMARY - Promoted posts includes head teachers, depute head teachers and principal teachers

FTE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of promoted posts	4,897	4,784	4,768	4,714	4,691	4,585
Head Teacher	1,914	1,889	1,867	1,833	1,770	1,741
Depute Head Teacher	1,267	1,196	1,224	1,235	1,243	1,229
Principal Teacher	1,717	1,698	1,677	1,646	1,678	1,615
Total Teachers	23,095	22,694	22,685	22,905	22,960	23,425
Proportion of total teachers in promoted posts	21.2%	21.1%	21.0%	20.6%	20.4%	19.6%
Proportion of total teachers that are head teachers	8.3%	8.3%	8.2%	8.0%	7.7%	7.4%
Proportion of total teachers that are depute head teachers	5.5%	5.3%	5.4%	5.4%	5.4%	5.2%
Proportion of total teachers that are principal teachers	7.4%	7.5%	7.4%	7.2%	7.3%	6.9%

SECONDARY - Promoted posts includes head teachers, depute head teachers and principal teachers

FTE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of promoted posts	8,216	7,783	7,452	7,364	7,102	6,980
Head Teacher	357	355	356	354	350	351
Depute Head Teacher	1,242	1,194	1,164	1,153	1,126	1,118
Principal Teacher	6,617	6,234	5,933	5,857	5,626	5,511
Total Teachers	24,776	24,120	23,980	23,695	23,401	23,059
Proportion of total teachers in promoted posts	33.2%	32.3%	31.1%	31.1%	30.3%	30.3%
Proportion of total teachers that are head teachers	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
Proportion of total teachers that are depute head teachers	5.0%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.8%	4.8%
Proportion of total teachers that are principal teachers	26.7%	25.8%	24.7%	24.7%	24.0%	23.9%

SPECIAL - Promoted posts includes head teachers, depute head teachers and principal teachers

FTE	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Number of promoted posts	495	484	483	466	460	449
Head Teacher	120	117	115	114	110	108

Depute Head Teacher	160	146	148	143	144	141
Principal Teacher	215	222	220	210	206	200
Total Teachers	1,913	1,969	2,026	2,020	1,974	1,911
Proportion of total teachers in promoted posts	25.8%	24.6%	23.8%	23.1%	23.3%	23.4%
Proportion of total teachers that are head teachers	6.3%	5.9%	5.7%	5.6%	5.5%	5.7%
Proportion of total teachers that are depute head teachers	8.4%	7.4%	7.3%	7.1%	7.3%	7.4%
Proportion of total teachers that are principal teachers	11.2%	11.3%	10.8%	10.4%	10.4%	10.5%

Source: Summary statistics for schools in Scotland - No. 6: 2015 Edition, Wednesday, December 9, 2015

CASE STUDY 1

GRADE OF PRESENT POST
Depute Headteacher point 6

YEARS IN PRESENT POST
19 months

YEARS IN SERVICE
14.5

TYPE OF PRESENT SCHOOL
Urban non-denominational secondary

GENDER
Female

DO YOU HOLD, OR ARE YOU WORKING TOWARDS A HEADTEACHER QUALIFICATION, IF SO, WHICH?
Working towards new headship qualification

DO YOUR FUTURE CAREER PLANS INCLUDE APPLICATION FOR A HT POST?
Potentially! I am undertaking this course to allow me the option to apply for HT post in future. I certainly want career progression beyond DHT, whether this is to HT or into authority level post eg QIO .I am not yet sure. Certainly the course will allow me to have a deep understanding of what the post involves which will be vital whichever route I take**.**

WHAT WOULD YOU ADVISE THAT WE DO TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A HEADTEACHER IN SCOTLAND?
The new qualification in my view is too demanding on time. To expect participants who are working full time, with families etc to do it all in their own time is unrealistic and I would hesitate to recommend this to anyone. No other profession would expect this of people. More needs to be done to release people, 1 day per week, even half a day per week, and allow completion of this.

With this becoming compulsory there is a real risk of there not being enough qualified HTs in Scotland very soon, I can guarantee that of the participants who began this year not all will complete.

More again needs to be done to look at the remit of HT, e.g. in terms of the admin management side, allowing the individual to remain focused on the reason they entered the profession.

Serious consideration needs also to be given to salary scales to make it an attractive move from DHT to HT. It would need to be financially worthwhile for me to move to a headteacher post with the additional responsibility and time commitment required.

CASE STUDY 2

GRADE OF PRESENT POST
Depute head teacher

YEARS IN PRESENT POST
Two years – with approximately five months acting head on two different occasions

YEARS IN SERVICE
21 years

TYPE OF PRESENT SCHOOL
Urban, non-denominational primary school with a role of 222 primary and 57 nursery pupils

GENDER
Female

DO YOU HOLD, OR ARE YOU WORKING TOWARDS, A HEADTEACHER QUALIFICATION, IF SO, WHICH?
I do not hold a headteacher qualification and am not currently working towards one. However, as someone who very much likes to keep options open I am dipping my toe into the waters of further study and qualification by undertaking a masters level module with the potential for this to lead to further modules and qualification if I find that i can manage this and my daily remit.

I am currently non-teaching but will revert to being a teaching depute in august and believe that balancing class contact and associated commitments with management responsibilities would not be conducive to managing further study.

I feel that, because the local authority I work within has a management structure of teaching deputes in their schools, I am (as well as my fellow DHT colleagues) at a disadvantage in comparison to colleagues in local authorities where deputes are non-teaching in terms of workload and the opportunity to take on further qualification and study.

DO YOUR FUTURE CAREER PLANS INCLUDE APPLICATION FOR A HT POST?
Having had the opportunity recently to experience the role of HT in an acting capacity i feel that i am less likely to take on the role of head teacher in the future for the following reasons:

1. The impact the role has on your time, health and personal life (and I speak as someone with no dependants and an exceedingly supportive husband who happily takes up the slack at home when necessary but feel this is not sustainable long term)
2. The role is less about the development of teaching and learning within your school and more about managing staff; dealing with very difficult situations with families and children with a decreasing amount of support available from further up the management structure or local authority provision; dealing with finance and budget
3. The constant strain of managing staff absence and cover

WHAT WOULD YOU ADVISE THAT WE DO TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A HEADTEACHER IN SCOTLAND?
1. A level playing field across Scotland in terms of provision of a business manager type role and also management structure (teaching deputes!)

2. Learning on the job with a peer teaching/mentoring approach (having a qualification does not equip everyone with the skills required to be a HT)
3. Pay scales – my salary as a depute head is very good; why would I take on a more stressful position for the same or less?
4. A higher priority placed on staff wellbeing across the education sector.