

**National Into Headship Programme**

**Evaluation Report**

**Professor Alma Harris**

**20 September 2022**

# Foreword

Dr. Alma Harris, with her characteristic clarity, has constructed a comprehensive mixed methodology approach to data collection in this evaluation of Into Headship. The diverse strategies which she employs have yielded robust data that will inform leadership training and development programmes worldwide. This is particularly topical as many education systems are rethinking what their leadership programs should look like as they seek to address current challenges and concomitant opportunities.

I applaud the use of multiple sources - secondary research, documentary analysis of written, published papers from contemporary journal articles and conference papers, on-line surveys which have generated both qualitative and quantitative, and most important, primary data derived from interviews and focus groups. The methodology chosen contributes to the authenticity, validity and reliability of the findings.

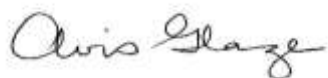
The collaborative partnership approach to the delivery of Into Headship, which is so characteristic of what is expected in educational research today is, indeed commendable. The design, delivery and evaluation standards are solid and certainly “reflect, demonstrate, support and verify” what the aspirations and expectations of participants and respondents are for their leadership development and future effectiveness.

As well, the inclusive approach Into Headship has the potential to facilitate improvements in the recruitment and retention of leadership aspirants in Scotland.

As Dr. Harris’ notes:

“Into Headship is a quality program that sets the highest expectations for participants and ensures that the standard for headship is fully met and clearly demonstrated.”

I am convinced that the findings of this evaluation will illuminate future directions for leadership development in Scotland and potentially, further afield. Into Headship provides an exemplar – indeed a blueprint – for what works in leadership preparation and what it should look like in today’s context.



Dr. Avis Glaze  
International Education Adviser and  
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# Contents

Foreword

Acknowledgements

## Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	5
<b>2.0 Executive Summary</b> .....	11
<b>2.1 Key Considerations</b> .....	15
<b>3.0 Evaluation Methodology</b> .....	19
<b>4.0 Overview of Findings</b> .....	22
<b>5.0 Intentions</b> .....	26
<b>6.0 Processes</b> .....	30
<b>7.0 Impact</b> .....	45
<b>8.0 Coda</b> .....	47

References

Appendices

## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to Education Scotland for assisting with access to key respondent groups and for sourcing important background information. Appendix A contains a list of respondents categorised by type.

Thanks also to the 155 senior leaders who completed the on-line survey and to the 60 respondents who participated in the interviews and focus groups as part of this evaluation.

The evidential base for this evaluation includes all the interview and focus group data collected from April to August 2022. It also includes the survey data, documentary analysis and consideration of relevant written work either published, as academic papers, or presented at academic conferences.

Sincere thanks to all those who responded.

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Into Headship programme, developed in 2015, is a national programme for aspirant and new headteachers aimed at building the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required of effective senior leaders. Successful completion of Into Headship leads to the award of the GTCS Standard for Headship<sup>1</sup>, a legislative requirement for all new substantive headteachers in Scotland since August 2020. At present, the Scottish Government has no plans to require those appointed to headteacher posts in independent schools to hold the GTCS Standard for Headship.

‘The Into Headship qualification is Scotland’s national professional learning programme for headship. It has been designed in consultation with universities, local authorities, Education Scotland and the General Teaching Council Scotland, and focuses on the specificity of headship and the strategic role of headteachers<sup>2</sup>.’

1.2 The GTCS Standard for Headship is mandatory and Into Headship is currently the main national route to meeting this Standard. The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS)<sup>3</sup> has an alternative pathway for those with headship qualifications outside Scotland and there is a process where equivalency must be demonstrated<sup>4</sup>.

1.3 Into Headship is one component of a specialist Qualification for Headship Masters pathway designed to prepare suitably experienced leaders in schools in Scotland for headteacher roles. Programme participants must satisfy both the requirements of the academic award and of the

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.gtcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/standard-for-headship.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/headship-qualifications/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/headship-qualifications/>

professional qualification through which the GTCS Standard for Headship can be clearly demonstrated. As a standalone programme, *Into Headship* is also one component of the comprehensive Masters qualification which comprises three stages:

- middle leadership and management
- initial preparation for headship (*Into Headship*)
- post-appointment support for new headteachers (*In Headship*).

The Into Headship programme awards 60 SCQF Level 11 credits and is fully funded by the Scottish Government. The Into Headship programme was re-accredited by the GTCS in 2021.

1.4 The first cohort of students embarked on the Into Headship programme in 2015 and it is currently delivered by seven universities in Scotland, in close partnership with local authorities, employers and Education Scotland. The GTCS, as the regulatory and registration body, awards the GTCS Standard for Headship.

1.5 A national design group oversees the Into Headship programme and meets four times a year. The national design group are central to the ongoing progress and improvement of the programme.

1.6 Into Headship is a programme with a strong focus on strategic leadership and change with the prime aim of building leadership capacity and capability within the system. The programme includes five core components:

- completion of a 360-feedback instrument related to emotional and social competences (Education Scotland)

- university taught elements including whole cohort learning days, planning, and leading a strategic change initiative based on a situational analysis and a professional verification process. (Universities)
- directed academic study including set reading, school-based tasks and reflective activities. (Universities)
- support from a headteacher mentor. (Local Authority)
- completion of 4 online modules focused on employment law, education law, health and safety and finance. (Education Scotland)

There are also two national conferences held in September and March that are integral to the Into Headship programme.

1.7 The recruitment of Into Headship participants is managed by local authorities and they also provide ongoing support and guidance. Education Scotland lead the co-ordination of the national delivery group where there are regular discussions about the Into Headship programme among the key partners.

1.8 This report outlines the key findings from an evaluation of the Into Headship programme conducted between April 2022 and August 2022. The findings are based on qualitative and quantitative data collection. Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with 60 respondents in total (Appendix A). More than 80 hours of recordings were analysed thematically. The findings also draw upon responses from 155 Into Headship participants, in different cohorts, who completed a voluntary, on-line survey (open from April to July 2022).

1.9 Given the relatively short time frame for the evaluation, the ongoing challenges of COVID and the need to maximise participation, all the interview and focus groups were conducted on-

line. The evaluation process followed the ‘BERA ethical guidelines for Educational Researchers’<sup>5</sup> and at all points conducted the data gathering in a rigorous and respectful way.

1.10 The executive summary, which follows, outlines the main findings, from the evaluation of Into Headship, based on the data collected in the time frame allocated.

1.11 Overall, the evaluative evidence highlights that ‘Into Headship’ is a quality programme that sets the highest expectations for participants and ensures that the GTCS Standard for Headship is fully met and clearly demonstrated.

1.12 The Standard for Headship, as set out by the GTCS<sup>6</sup>, highlights that leadership is the ‘ability to develop a vision for change, which leads to improvements in outcomes for learners and is based on shared values and robust evaluation of evidence of current practice and outcomes’(6). The Into Headship programme, in both its design and delivery, fully reflects and appropriately addresses the GTCS Standard for Headship.

1.13 The evaluative evidence reinforces that there is an appropriate and careful balance between the academic and practical elements of the Into Headship programme. The main aim of the programme is to ensure that the GTCS Standard for Headship is clearly demonstrated in practice, supported by the headteacher mentor, and verified by the Professional Verifier.

1.14 The collaborative, partnership, approach to the delivery of Into Headship is an outstanding feature of the programme, as is the continued commitment among all partners, through the national design group, to evaluate and improve the quality of this national provision. Education Scotland play a pivotal and important role in the co-ordination and development of this programme, including its ongoing review and development.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bera.ac.uk/resources/all-publications/resources-for-researchers>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/standard-for-headship.pdf>



1.15 The evaluation aimed to achieve a broad, informed, and critical assessment of the Into Headship programme. This report does not claim to be a definitive account of Into Headship but rather reflects findings, based on the data collected, at a particular moment in time.

1.16 The evaluation gathered data from those people who directly contribute to Into Headship and also sought the views of participants in the programme. Ideally, interviewing more respondents, of all categories, would have been desirable but inevitably pragmatic decisions had to be made in relation to time constraints and the fact that data collection occurred during the summer months. Consequently, these findings are based solely on the data collected within the time span of this evaluation but are also informed by an analysis of core documents (Appendix E) including University course material, and relevant academic publications (References)

1.17 There is no virtue in critique without evidence and there is no merit in change that is not evidence informed. Successful education systems depend on honest, reliable, evaluative feedback to guide every phase of development and to inform the next set of changes<sup>7</sup>. Such education systems are engaged in constant evaluation processes to guide further improvement.

1.18 Within successful education systems, it is both acknowledged and accepted that no part of the system is more important than the whole. Hence this evaluation of Into Headship aims to reflect, inform, and offer insights based on the data collected. It is intended to be constructive and helpful in shaping future decisions and future directions of Into Headship.

1.19 What follows in this evaluation report, therefore, are findings based on evidence about the way that Into Headship is currently viewed by providers and participants, the way it is delivered and a consideration of the ways in which it could be even stronger and more impactful. As noted earlier, the report does not claim to cover every detail of the Into Headship programme

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<sup>7</sup> <https://ncee.org/center-on-international-education-benchmarking/top-performing-countries/>

but rather it follows the contours of the data collected in relation to the evaluation questions asked.

1.20 This evaluation report presents key considerations, rather than recommendations, because the consequences and potential actions, going forward are best considered by those collectively leading it.

1.21 International evidence<sup>8</sup> repeatedly, and consistently underlines the centrality of effective leadership, at all levels in the system, to improve learning and teaching. The positive influence of effective leadership on learner outcomes is empirically, very clear. Therefore, increasing the supply of high quality headteachers within the Scottish education system remains critical for ongoing improvements to school and system performance.

1.22 The evidence from this evaluation underlines that the professionalism, commitment, and dedication of all those involved in the Into Headship programme is outstanding. Consequently, Into Headship, is a real strength of the Scottish education system and a programme worthy of national and international recognition.

1.23 The main findings from the evaluation of Into Headship are outlined in an executive summary. The executive summary is followed by key considerations.

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<sup>8</sup> Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School leadership & management*, 40 (1), 5-22.

## 2.0 Executive Summary

- Into Headship is a well-established and highly effective programme that prepares participants to meet the GTCS Standard for Headship in Scotland.
- Into Headship builds and extends the strategic leadership capabilities of those aspiring to headship, or already in acting headship roles, in Scottish schools.
- The intentions of the Into Headship programme are generally well understood by participants and providers, ensuring a clear understanding of the nature and purpose of this national qualification.
- The national design group plays a pivotally important role in ensuring the ongoing quality, continuity, and impact of the Into Headship programme.
- The academic content of the Into Headship programme is carefully prepared, to a high standard, and effectively delivered by contributors from seven universities working in close partnership.
- The collaboration between all partners, is a significant strength of the Into Headship programme. This design feature should not be underestimated, as it provides the collective infrastructure for effective delivery and ongoing quality assurance.

- A major strength of the Into Headship programme resides in the fact that it is designed to accommodate a changing policy landscape and allows participants to choose their own focus for strategic change, thus contextualising and personalising the programme.
- The Into Headship programme is demanding, in terms of the time it requires, and the workload expected of participants.
- The recruitment and retention pattern for headteachers across Scotland, as in other education systems, remains challenging and uneven. While Into Headship alone cannot solve the demand and supply issues, careful strategic planning and targeting, with other key bodies, agencies and partners remains imperative, to ensure a steady supply of able candidates onto the programme.
- University tutor support is generally appreciated and valued by participants on the Into Headship programme. The collective academic expertise is a significant strength of the programme.
- Local authority expertise is viewed by participants as being critically important because it offers essential localised, contextual input and support mechanisms that are ongoing.
- The professional verification process is fundamental to the Into Headship programme, as it assures the GTCS Standard for Headship has been met. Participants value this process and acknowledge the expertise of the professional verifiers.

- The coaching and mentoring support, including that offered by professional verifiers, is a strong feature of the Into Headship programme. Such support is viewed by participants as an essential component in their ongoing professional learning.
- During COVID, the Into Headship programme was delivered on-line which allowed participants greater flexibility of engagement but inevitably, removed the inter-personal dimensions from the teaching. Going forward, the balance between synchronous and asynchronous activities is an important consideration.
- Networking with others on the programme is highly valued by participants and the ongoing professional links forged during Into Headship often continue long after the programme is completed.
- The collective model of engagement, delivery, and review, that supports Into Headship, works exceptionally well and is credit to the professionalism of all partners who deliver and support the programme.
- Into Headship, provides parity and equity in the pathway towards the GTCS Standard for Headship in Scotland. As a national qualification, quality assurance is secured and guaranteed through the robust accreditation processes that all universities follow.
- Into Headship is viewed by participants as an important threshold qualification and is highly valued by most who complete it.

- Completion rates are good and where withdrawals or deferrals are in place, they generally reflect individual and personal circumstances rather than dissatisfaction with the Into Headship programme.
- The impact of Into Headship is reflected in various evidential sources, data sets and evaluative vantage points within the system. Consolidating, strengthening, and extending the programme's evaluative evidence base would, however, provide clearer conclusions about the impact of Into Headship.
- As a national programme, Into Headship has notable strengths: the partnership model, the national design group, the common delivery processes, the high expectations set and the professional networks established.
- Into Headship is a programme worthy of national and international recognition for the quality of its design, the effectiveness of its delivery and its modelling of powerful partnership practices across the Scottish education system.
- The GTCS Standard for Headship in Scotland sets high expectations and Into Headship enables participants to meet these expectations. In so doing, as headteachers, they contribute positively to the learning and life chances of children and young people across Scotland.

## 2.1 Key Considerations

The data collected, during the independent evaluation, highlighted certain issues or themes for further consideration. The key issues or themes that received the strongest empirical support, across all data sets, are summarised below:

- Concerns about the academic workload and the pressures placed upon busy professionals was a theme that featured heavily in the data sets. It was also noted that there were some disparities in the academic demands expected by different universities. A review of the academic workload patterns and requirements across the Into Headship programme is suggested.
- The contours of a school year do not necessarily align with an academic year; hence participants noted that weekends and holiday time are frequently used to complete assignments. Many participants felt that the duration of Into Headship could be extended to offer greater flexibility and adequate time to manage the additional workload.
- Acting headteachers highlighted the pressure of getting Into Headship completed while running a school. As Into Headship is a requirement to meet the GTCS Standard for Headship, an acting head who does not complete the programme within the timeframe specified (30 months) could encounter changes to their conditions of employment. Greater programme flexibility, therefore, is something the national design team should consider.

- The evaluative evidence underlined the need for protected or dedicated time to undertake Into Headship. It was noted that participants felt that they were continually making difficult choices between the programme and their school responsibilities, which caused them a great deal of stress. In addition, it was noted that some headteachers proved to be more accommodating and supportive of participants in terms of release time, than others. Hence the issue of time, while not surprising, is an important factor and ongoing consideration.
- The online experience of Into Headship during COVID received polarised responses in the data. Some participants really liked the on-line experience because it reduced the need for travel and allowed them the opportunity to fit sessions into busy school and family life. Other participants, felt strongly, that their experience of Into Headship was impoverished because of the lack of face-to-face contact. Going forward, therefore, the national design team needs to consider the balance between face-to-face engagement and online learning within programme delivery.
- The academic materials produced by the universities are of a high standard and on balance, are fit for purpose. Ensuring that contemporary literature is included in all reading lists, however, is important as well as ensuring that the volume of reading required is manageable for Into Headship participants.



- At one University there is a headteacher in residence and this was viewed very positively by the respective participants studying there. The headteacher in residence approach is potentially a model that other Universities could consider.
- All Into Headship participants fully accept the need for a high level of academic engagement, as a post-graduate course. There were some concerns raised by participants, however, that some of the teaching was too theoretical and that some lecturers set overly high academic expectations.
- Support from local authority personnel (including CPL leads) for Into Headship is viewed as ‘hugely important’ by aspiring or acting heads. It is clear, however, that some participants enjoy dedicated support, training and mentoring from their local authority colleagues while others reported little or no assistance with their work on the Into Headship programme. This variability is something the design group should consider.
- Respondents repeatedly referred to the support of other Into Headship participants as being hugely influential supporting them through the programme. The personal and professional relationships formed during Into Headship often continue long after the completion of the course. These vibrant networks are evidence of the impact of Into Headship programme and possibly, could be used in some strategic way in the future.
- The impact of Into Headship emanates from various evidential sources and empirical vantage points in the system. It would be useful, however, to consolidate and strengthen this evidence base, so that the outcomes and impact of Into Headship could be more

easily captured, calibrated, and reflected year on year. This is a key consideration for the national design group.

As highlighted earlier, these are points for consideration, they are not explicit recommendations for change but rather provide an opportunity for reflection and if deemed necessary, potential action.

## 3.0 Evaluation Methodology

3.1 This section of the report outlines the methodology that underpinned the evaluation process. A mixed method approach to data collection was used to ensure that viewpoints were captured in different ways. Secondary data originated from (desk) research, using published documents (Appendix E). Contemporary journal articles and conference papers were also considered, where Into Headship was the specific focus (References). The primary data was derived from interviews and focus groups (Appendix A).

3.2 An on-line survey was made available to all Into Headship cohorts and this generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Collecting data from multiple methods and different vantage points, afforded the testing and checking of the findings through the constant comparison of data.

3.3 The design of this evaluation was based on Stake's (2003) responsive model, which is interpretive in nature, recognising that any programme is bound by social, political, and cultural dynamics and has multiple set of influences. By focusing on the *intentions, processes, and outcomes* of Into Headship programme, therefore, the aim was to build up a consistent narrative, based on various data sources, to illuminate different aspects of the programme. The following evaluation structure was reflected in the primary data collection processes.

(a) **Intentions** – aims and expectations of the programme, how the programme is understood by different stakeholders.

(b) **Processes** – logistics, methods, and overall design of the programme. The delivery, content, and experience of Into Headship.

(c) **Outcomes** – evidence of changes to professional practice, individual thinking, and collective understanding of strategically leading school and system improvement

3.4 These three dimensions (above) remained constant throughout the short timescale of the evaluation and informed the evaluation design, the data collection methods, and the data analysis. The main intention of the evaluation was to illuminate *how* Into Headship works in practice and to consider the net results or outcomes, in the broadest sense, from engagement in the programme.

3.5 The interview and focus group questions were piloted before being used. Similarly, the survey was piloted before it went live on Google Forms. All participants received an information sheet (Appendix B) and the interview/focus group questions in advance of the data collection (see Appendix C). No issues or concerns about the questions were raised by participants prior or during the interview/focus group data collection process.

3.6 Consent forms were completed by all interviews and focus respondents (See Appendix D). The norms of confidentiality and anonymity were fully upheld in line with BERA ethical procedures<sup>9</sup>. All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and annotated. All electronic data was stored on a password protected Microsoft Teams drive, accessible only by the researcher.

3.7 An anonymous on-line survey was developed to capture the views of a range of Into Headship participants in different cohorts. This survey was disseminated through Education Scotland via an on-line link. The survey was aimed only at senior leaders who had completed or were completing the Into Headship programme. The design of the survey was aligned to the interview/focus group questions to deepen and strengthen the evidential base. The survey responses were incorporated into the overall responses from the interview and focus group data and appear in the findings section.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.bera.ac.uk/publication/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2018>

3.8 Data analysis followed an inductive, iterative process generating both descriptive and interpretative themes (Miles and Saldana, 2014). In the first instance, all transcripts were read in detail to develop provisional themes thus affording an initial process of data sorting and reduction. The emerging themes were then organised within the three dimensions of intention, process, and outcomes to assess how far they related, and were relevant, to the core evaluation questions. At this stage some themes were removed, as they were either sub-themes or they were insufficiently represented within the data.

3.9 An excel spreadsheet was produced that tested the strength of the themes against all data sets. This involved cross referencing to each individual interview or focus group and locating specific quotations that illuminated the theme. At this stage in the analysis, further themes were removed because they proved to have insufficient empirical strength within the overall data sets. A further interrogation and testing of the themes across the data, generated the emergence of the main findings that appear in this report, supported by illustrative quotes.

3.10 In any research or evaluation process, it is imperative to reflect what the data show, and to follow the contours of the data as closely as possible. Hence in the findings section of the report, selected quotations are used so that the voices of those who participated in the evidence gathering can be heard.

3.11 Overall, the evaluation findings illuminate key themes, against the three dimensions of intentions, process, and outcomes, by drawing upon the weight of evidence collected from interviews, focus groups and the on-line survey. All quotations used in this report are anonymised, but the organisation or role is included, so a range of standpoints and positions are clearly represented in this evaluation report.

## 4.0 Overview of Findings

4.1 Scotland is currently on an ambitious educational reform agenda. Both the Muir report<sup>10</sup> and the National Discussion<sup>11</sup> on the future of education in Scotland are signals that the system is willing to listen and learn. With change potentially on the horizon, it is even more imperative that school leadership remains at the epicentre of Scottish education policy. International evidence<sup>12</sup> shows how school leadership is a key driver in the ongoing pursuit of better educational outcomes for all learners.

4.2 The quality of school leadership has a positive impact on learning and teaching<sup>13</sup>. Hence, it should remain one of the main enabling objectives to support the on-going reform journey in Scotland.

4.3 In their second report<sup>14</sup> the International Council of Education Advisers (ICEA) noted that:

‘a focus on cultural change, capacity building, and structural change were key elements in securing sustained improvement in Scotland's education system. Developing *effective leadership* and a robust culture of collaborative professionalism are critical components of such an approach’ (3).

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/putting-learners-centre-towards-future-vision-scottish-education/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/national-discussion-on-education/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/education/school/Improving-school-leadership.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2020). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School leadership & management*, 40(1), 5-22.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/international-council-education-advisers-report-2018-2020/pages/3/>

This second ICEA report further suggests that the Scottish Government need to consider how its education system would ensure that the right leaders were in the right places, in the right numbers, at the right time.

4.4 Getting the right leaders, in the right places, in the right numbers, at the right time is an ongoing issue for all education systems. The challenge of headteacher recruitment and retention remain a global issue, as the impact of the pandemic and its associated pressures, continues to play out in schools<sup>15</sup>.

4.5 In Scotland, evidence suggests that many of those leading schools are worn down by daily pressures and stresses of the job and are experiencing excessively high workloads<sup>16</sup>. Reports also highlight how some teachers and school leaders are choosing to leave the profession<sup>17</sup>. In short, the demands on those leading schools right now, remain acute and very visible to all those working with them.

4.6 Yet, effective school leaders are needed more than ever to re-calibrate the effects of the pandemic and to support high quality learning and teaching. The preparation for headship, therefore, has never been so important or so vital to the ongoing improvement of the Scottish education system. Consequently, this evaluation of Into Headship is important because it remains imperative that those embarking on headship have the best preparation possible to ensure they meet the GTCS Standard for Headship.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/school-leader-headteacher-vacancies-rise-above-pre-pandemic-covid-levels>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ahds.org.uk/about-us/head-to-head/ahds-workload-survey-report>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/headteacher-recruitment-and-retention-working-group-minutes-march-2022/>

4.7 This evaluation of Into Headship signals a real willingness, from all partners, to listen to the views of different stakeholders and to receive honest and open feedback from participants. It shows a genuine desire to improve the Into Headship programme, based on evidence, in ways that will benefit school leaders, their schools and the education system in Scotland more broadly.

4.8 As already highlighted, the evaluation design followed a three-fold model - intentions, processes, and outcomes. Consequently, the evaluation findings will be organised under these headings, in three separate sections. The findings will incorporate some data from the survey but will draw largely on the qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups.

4.9 Before sharing the findings in the three sections that follow, it is important to provide some contextual details about the survey. The survey was open to all participants, in all cohorts, within the Into Headship programme. The survey results came back to the evaluator only and there was the opportunity for participants to email a request for an interview, which a significant number did and were duly interviewed.

4.10 The 155 respondents, who completed the on-line survey, consisted of mainly depute heads (44%) heads (31%) and acting heads (11, 6%). Most of these respondents had taken up post between 2018 and 2020. Over 60% of those who responded joined Into Headship in 2020 or 2021. The remainder of respondents fell into a broad timescale from 2015 until 2022 with 20% of respondents being part of the 2018 and 2019 cohorts. Of those responding to the survey, 40% were aiming to complete Into Headship in 2022 hence the survey data largely emanates from two recent Into Headship cohorts (2021 and 2022).



4.11 It is important to note that the online survey was always intended to be an additional data set, rather than the primary source of evidence. The aim of this survey was to gain the views of as many Into Headship participants as possible on key issues to supplement, the main qualitative data sets. The survey data offers some useful insights, which are shared in this report. The next three sections of this report look at the intentions, processes, and outcomes of Into Headship respectively.

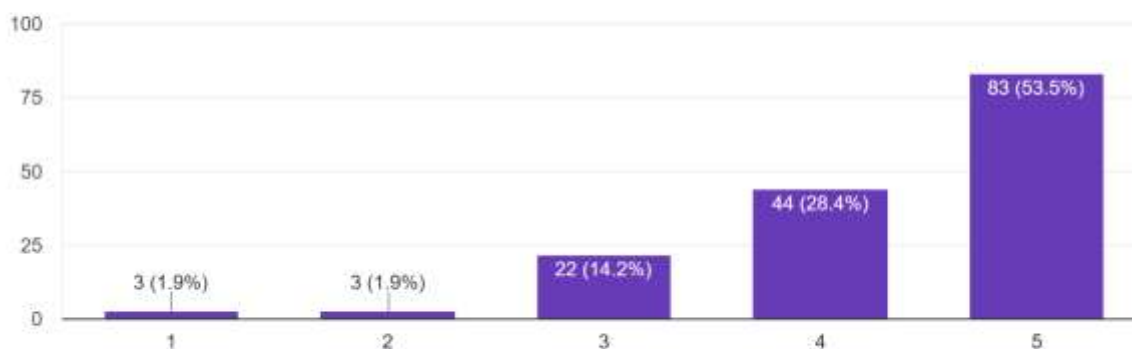
## 5.0 Intentions

5.1 This section of the report considers how well the intentions of Into Headship are understood by participants and stakeholders. As a national programme, clarity of intentions is particularly important, so how well these are understood became a key line of enquiry in the evaluation. This section commences by considering the survey findings, it then outlines the evidence from the interview and focus group data.

5.2 The data in the survey highlight that the intentions of the Into Headship programme are clear and fully understood by respondents. The survey data reflects the extent to which participants agree with the question about the clarity of intentions (Unclear 1 -Very Clear 5). Most respondents agree that the intentions of Into Headship are clear.

Are the intentions of 'Into Headship' clear to you?

155 responses



5.2 The strength of agreement is illustrated by selected statements from the survey that reinforce how well the purpose and intentions of Into Headship are understood.

The intentions are very clear as completion of the course is compulsory in order to hold the position of HT in Scotland for a sustained period of time.

To ensure knowledge, skills, expectations for headship post

Information from university and Education Scotland explains the intentions well.

I'm clear that the intention is to ensure that I meet the Standard for headship

Through professional, academic study prepare candidates to take on the role of Head - to lead and manage a school successfully. Undertake a Strategic Change Initiative following self-evaluation of the needs of the school. Through self-evaluation candidates examine leadership styles and their role as a leader within education.

5.3 The interview and focus group data also demonstrated that the intentions of the Into Headship are on balance, very clearly understood by participants and stakeholders.

‘The intention of the programme is to build strong, resistant, robust, and effective leaders in Scotland, in Scottish Schools. So, I think the intentions are quite clear in that it is about building professional capability and personal strength to be a leader in Scottish schools’ (<sup>18</sup>Participant).

‘You make sure that people know what they are signing up to, the intentions. You make sure they really know what the programme is all about because it is not easy. It is hard.’ (Participant).

‘It is readiness for Headship, its purpose is to prepare for the role of headship’ (Education Scotland)

‘I think the intentions are clear and that the system buys into the intentions. I think it is important that we have people who are equipped with the skills required for leading educational establishments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’ (Local Authority Director).

‘The explicit intentions, as set forward by the course and the course outlines were excellent. So, you knew what you were signing up for beforehand.’ (Participant)

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<sup>18</sup> All quotes are anonymised, but the category of respondent is highlighted, so that the data can be represented clearly from different viewpoints. Participants include those who are currently on the programme and who have completed it.

‘The intention is to build strong, resilient, robust and effective leaders in Scotland who meet the GTCS Standard for Headship.’ (Professional Verifier)

5.4 The data show, however, that while the intentions of the Into Headship programme are generally well understood, the actual expectations of the programme in the shape of the prospective workload, are not always fully appreciated by some candidates.

‘I have just gone through a round of applications and one of my concerns was the lack of understanding of what they are applying for, as in, the expectations of the programme’ (LA Director)

‘It is important that participants do not see Into Headship as a one-year dash into the job. You know some people just want to get in post as soon as possible but I am in the game of getting the right people in post who will be the best headteacher possible’ (University Tutor)

‘Some people just think, oh I should be doing that (Into Headship) now, I’ve done x years of being a deputy so I should be doing that now’. (LA Director)

‘Signing up is easy but some do it without a clear sense of the weight of expectations or workload upon them in practice’ (CPD Lead)

‘We could be turning future heads away because of the workload.’ (Union Representative)

5.5 Some concerns were also expressed that prospective candidates did not always fully appreciate the academic requirements of Into Headship.

‘Some of those coming onto the programme experience a deep shock on their first day when the academic expectations are really spelled out, yet these are totally clear in all the documentation and made explicit in the selection process. It is as if they just see the end goal and not the process’. (University Tutor)

‘Essentially, it (into Headship) is very hard, and some people just cannot grasp the level of academic commitment. They look at the job and think, I’d like to do that without fully understanding what level of commitment it really requires’ (LA Director)

‘It is easy to see the outline of the programme and understand it, it is a totally different matter to do the academic work that Into Headship requires’ (Participant)

‘You are asking people to take on a really challenging job, so Into Headship has to be really challenging.’ (University Tutor)

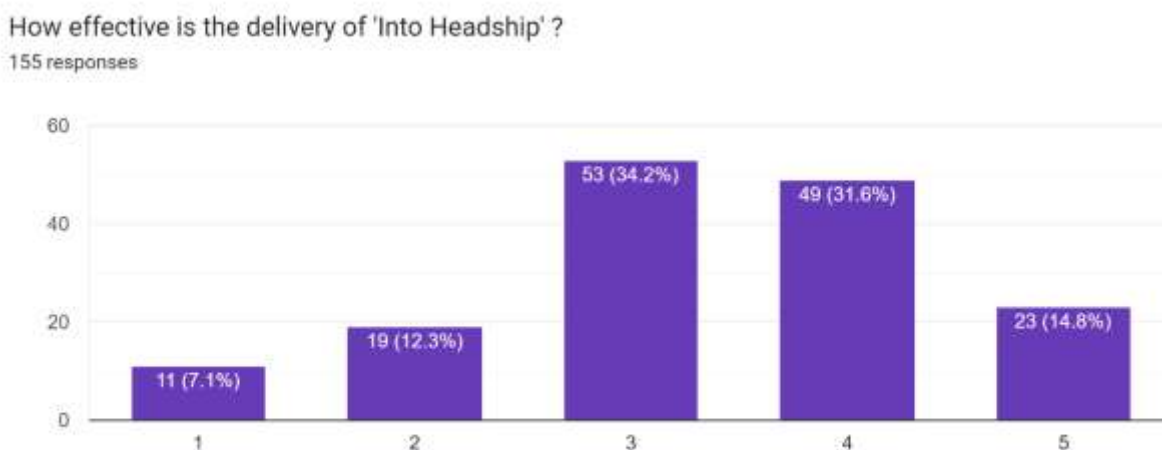
‘Sometimes candidates feel overwhelmed by the workload involved and this comes as a surprise’ (Mentor)

5.6 Overall, the data show that the intentions of the Into Headship programme are generally well understood by participants and providers thus ensuring a clearly shared understanding of the nature and content of this national qualification. The evidence also highlights that the extent of the academic expectations and the workload associated with the programme, are not always fully appreciated by some participants.

5.7 The issue of workload was found to be a consistent theme throughout the data. Some participants felt that that the academic demands associated with Into Headship were not made clear while others noted that the programme documentation ensured that all expectations were covered. The issue of workload will be revisited in the next section that focuses on the processes that contribute to Into Headship.

## 6.0 Processes

6.1 This section of the evaluation report considers the processes that underpin the Into Headship programme and it comments on the nature and quality of its delivery. Looking at the survey data initially, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the delivery of Into Headship was effective. (1-Ineffective -5 Highly Effective).



6.3 The comments in the survey reinforce how the academic input and support was valued by participants and how it was used.

Really benefitted from online tutorials.

Learned a lot through the course - reading, tutorials and through the network.

University course is well-structured and really expands thinking about leadership

The taught days are very intense but beneficial

University and local authority worked well to support participants and the aims of the course.

The course most definitely opened my eyes to the policy landscape and helped me to understand how things filter down from global to national to local to school level. The ESCI was a very emotional and self-reflective process which really helped me to understand myself, not only as a professional, but also as a person

Face to face university sessions almost monthly gave headspace to focus and an opportunity to work with other professionals at your level.

The engagement with research to shape criticality is something that I don't think that I would have achieved had an experiential model been adopted

Excellent way to merge theory and practice.

Lot of reading - which is useful. Perhaps more practical examples. Found the conferences good for this though

I have engaged with literature and professional development which I am able to use practically. Being able to engage with a strategic project from beginning to end has built confidence and skills in whole school improvement.

Have a much deeper knowledge of the Standards for Headship. Encourages professional reading to be incorporated into daily life which has been of great benefit.

Was great to get back to literature and research but less effective at supporting relationships and people skills necessary to lead a school

6.4 The interview and focus group responses highlighted that the academic content of the Into Headship programme is carefully prepared and well delivered by the universities working in partnership.

‘The content of the programme is very high quality, there is no doubt about that’ (LA Director)

‘The blending of academic and practical content is expertly done; it is a very good programme that does exactly what it says on the tin’ (Participant)

Just to say that when I am talking to my colleagues in schools, I hear nothing but good things about their experience of the Into Headship programmes that are run.’ (LA Director)

‘I have pushed people to think differently, to use the language of interrupting and challenging their thinking, and I think that is really good because it develops a political literacy which is important.’ (University Tutor)

‘The academic content is well prepared and delivered, that is what I hear from participants’ (Coach)

6.5 The collaboration between Education Scotland, seven universities<sup>19</sup>, local authorities and employers is a significant strength of the Into Headship programme, as is the high-quality academic input and the range of support on offer to participants. The data show that this partnership model of engagement and delivery is highly effective and is a credit to the various bodies that work in close partnership to deliver the programme

‘The programme has been designed in partnership with all stakeholders. I think that is why it works so well. It offers a common understanding and vision of what we want our Headteachers to be in Scotland.’ (University Tutor)

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<sup>19</sup> Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Highland & Islands, Stirling and Strathclyde



‘We are all in this together, this isn’t just an individual programme from one University- it is a collective programme from seven universities with other partners and stakeholders, the collaboration is extensive and inclusive.’ (LA Director)

‘It is so clear that all the parts work as a whole -that is down to trust and mutual collaboration across Universities.’ (Participant)

‘It is clear that the programme integrates theory and practice well -this is demonstrated at the PV point’ (Professional Verifier)

‘The Universities are of a different size and scale, but they are all equally valued in what they bring to the table. Like all partners, the sum is greater than the parts (LA CPL)

6.6 Within the survey data, there were very different opinions about on-line delivery. As noted earlier, most respondents, in the survey, undertook Into Headship during the height of the pandemic when adjustments to course delivery had to be made. While some participants really valued the flexibility that on-line learning brought, others found the lack of face to face contact a considerable drawback. Comments included the following:

It was all virtual and took place throughout the most stressful, difficult and emotional years of my working life.

Online is never ideal but could not be helped for COVID reasons. This has meant that the delivery is not as effective.

All of our course was online because of COVID. This did affect our experience but I feel the Uni provided the best service that they could considering the online limitations.

Online -would be better with some in person and study days

Liked it being online and not having to travel. If I had to travel there's no way I would have been able to participate

6.7 The issue of on-line provision was also raised by respondents in the interviews and the focus groups. This data revealed the same degree of polarisation about on-line learning versus face to face. Some participants felt that the whole experience of Into Headship had been compromised through the need to move the teaching online and they articulated that valuable, opportunities for engaging with others were lost or significantly reduced. Conversely, other participants stated a preference for on-line teaching largely because it reduced the travel time to sessions and allowed them to fit it other commitments.

‘How can I possibly ask these really, busy stressed people to come to the University from, you know, potentially miles away? How can I make it worth their while to be in front of me and to be with each other? Them sitting for an hour listening to me go on is not ok as far as I am concerned. But we cannot have someone sitting endlessly at a computer screen, so we have to change how we work’ (University Tutor)

‘Everything was on-line. So, I was doing the work at my kitchen table, usually with a child in tow. That was ok but I did wonder if I was missing out by not having the face-to-face contact. But everyone felt that not just me.’ (Participant)

‘I really loved the freedom that on-line learning gave me, I have no idea how I would have coped without the ability to schedule dedicated time without travelling. It gave me so much flexibility to manage my other work and home commitments’ (Participant)

6.8 As noted in the last section, a common thread emerging from all data sets was the issue of workload. It was generally accepted and acknowledged by participants in, and providers of, Into Headship that it is demanding, in terms of the time required, the academic tasks that need to be undertaken, and the competing priorities that participants face. The survey data highlighted that the workload associated with Into Headship was an issue for busy professionals who were juggling other work -home priorities.

Time - although to be expected - I still feel it demands a lot of your time.  
Time and intensive nature of work squeezed into 1 year. I do not understand why it has been squashed together.  
Too much university assessment - too little practical application  
A lot to read and complete in a year whilst working, over 18 months would be better  
Time commitment on top of the current workload  
The amount of personal time it has taken away from me, when it is already at a minimum due to the constraints of the job presently.  
Time commitments  
Time. It's very challenging to fit everything in when working fulltime with an already heavy workload in place.  
Time commitment  
It was a huge time investment.  
The time required for successful completion of the course. It is incredibly demanding and this is hard on top of a FT job and trying to retain some kind of family life.  
It has been a massive time commitment which is to be expected, but at times it has been difficult to balance that with family and work.  
Time. I began Into Headship when I was an HT. a demanding position made even more so during the pandemic.

6.9 The issue of workload was also a strong theme within the interview and focus group data. Even when participants stated clearly that they valued the programme and acknowledged its positive contribution to their professional growth, the issue of workload was raised.

‘Now I have completed it and taken a deep breath, I am glad I did it, I can see the benefit but it was a lot of work.’ (Participant)

‘We demand a hell of a lot from them, but we get their feedback, and they say it is really valuable learning’ (University Tutor)

‘My fear is that we are piling on too much pressure and maybe you have never been a depute, so the workload is hard to scale.’ (LA Director)

‘The academic reading, you know, encouraged me to engage and this is a fundamental part of my remit as a Head. I did enjoy the challenge of the reading and unless you are forced by a deadline you can easily lose track of that amongst the day-to-day stuff.’ (Participant)

‘The complexity of the demands of the job, and sometimes the impossibility of the job is overwhelming for school leaders. What they are being asked to do is simply too much. We cannot prepare them for this role if the pressures are so great. Something has to give’ (University Tutor)

‘Participants confide in me that they are overwhelmed by the work expected and struggle’ (Coach)

‘It is just the fear of the workload that comes with it now but there are some cracking headteachers out there, they just need to give it a chance.’ (Professional Verifier)

‘You hear from participants that it is very academic and does not prepare people for the realities and practicalities of headship.’ (Union Representative)

6.10 Given the current pressures upon Scottish school leaders and the additional workload they face in the day job, the amount of work required by Into Headship is a sensitive issue. A recent survey by AHDS<sup>20</sup> noted:

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ahds.org.uk/about-us/head-to-head/ahds-workload-survey-report>

‘The (Into Headship) programme was well received by most of those who had undertaken it. Many reported that it was worthwhile and that it prepared them well for the role.

The only negative point highlighted by many was the challenging additional workload to be undertaken alongside the heavy workload of their day jobs (although those who had completed the programme were more positive about the workload than those who were currently undertaking it).

Ideally, AHDS would like to see a position where time is made to give candidates dedicated study time while they are on the programme. However, this would need to be achieved by applying additional resource or removing tasks from school leadership teams as the results of the full survey clearly indicate that this capacity does not exist in schools at present’.

6.10 The evaluation data similarly highlight that the Into Headship programme was generally well regarded by participants and seen as an important preparation for headship but that it placed a heavy workload on very busy professionals. The issue of protected time to undertake the programme also was raised in the evaluation data and this is an issue that needs serious consideration.

‘At my school, we were able to protect time, so when I knew what the strategic change was going to be, I was able to have this factored into my working time, as part of our recovery plan. I wasn’t fighting for time, but I know others on the course have experienced this issue’  
(Participant)

‘I was juggling too many priorities, I don’t think this was helpful and it caused me a great deal of stress.’ (Participant)

‘Some participants were given time to complete the programme, others were not, that seems unfair to me’ (Mentor)

6.11 Many interview respondents highlighted how the demands for headteachers is currently outpacing supply in many parts of Scotland. There is a possibility that the extra workload associated with Into Headship may deter some people from applying.

6.12 The data show that respondents are generally very positive about Into Headship and all that it has given them professionally. There are genuine concerns, however, about the additional stress and pressure from the workload required. While there are no easy answers to this issue greater flexibility in the pace and content of the programme is an important consideration.

‘We have a number of schools where our headteachers are teaching, sometimes up to three and a half days out of five. So, I do have concerns about the workload on individuals, so greater flexibility would be welcome.’ (LA Director)

‘We weren’t getting good applicants for a good while, but we were faced with an influx of resignations, so some flexibility in the programme is essential’ (LA Director).

‘I am concerned that as we move forward with this course, it is very much geared towards those who are able to do the course rather than those who perhaps find the need for some flexibility. It would be much better to offer flexibility that let them drop out.’ (LA Director)

‘There is a particular difficulty for those who are acting heads, they have to do the course but are running a school. There needs to be more flexibility.’ (Participant)

‘There needs to be much more flexibility in terms of deadlines and time frames for submission.’  
(LA CPL)

‘I mean how stressful is it to be in a position where you cannot defer because you have to get through as an acting head, or your job is on the line. More flexibility is needed’ (LA CPL)

‘One of the things I wondered about is the second semester 7000 word piece between January and April/May which is just the worst time for schools for so many different reasons.’  
(Participant)

6.13 The recruitment and retention pattern for headteachers across Scotland remains challenging and uneven. While Into Headship alone cannot solve the demand and supply issues, careful strategic planning and targeting with other key bodies and agencies is imperative, as well as some consideration by the national delivery group about the intensity of the workload issues that respondents have raised in this evaluation.

6.14 The evaluation data clearly show that Into Headship is a highly valued route to the GTCS Standard for Headship but that the weight of expectations and the academic requirements are proving to be challenging for busy professionals.

6.15 Those who complete the Into Headship programme but do not all apply for a headteacher post, do so for a variety of personal and professional reasons.

‘I think (not getting moving into a headship role) may actually be a really positive thing because it weeds out people who have come on the programme because they weren’t quite sure if the role was for them. Maybe they don’t know. So through Into Headship, they actually discover, that I don’t want to be a Head, they say it helps them decide whether I want to be an excellent depute head teacher or an excellent principal teacher.’ (University Tutor)

6.16 In terms of the support for participants on the programme, the evidence underlines how local authority support is critically important, as it provides much needed contextual advice and knowledge. Many participants on the Into Headship programme were very complimentary about the programme support they received from local authority personnel but in some cases, it was noted that the extent of local authority support ranged from variable to negligible. This variability across local authorities is an issue that requires further consideration.

6.17 While previously, there had been dedicated support from local authority personnel for Into Headship, in those working within local authorities now have many other duties and pressures on their time. The data show that some University tutors are very active in terms of their relationships with local authorities, and this clearly helps with support for participants.

‘Our local authority checked in with you all the time. We had small groups as a local authority and that was a real strength. I do appreciate that this support may not be consistent across the course’ (Participant)

‘I think there is possibly a lack of consistency and that it not to criticise my local authority but others on the programme seemed to have more support’. (Headteacher)



‘I play a more proactive role than perhaps what would be expected with local authorities, I meet with them at least twice a year and have very strong relationships with the local authorities I work with.’ (University Tutor)

‘The feedback I have heard is that there is an inconsistency across local authorities in terms of the level of support that people get.’ (LA Director)

6.16 The coaching and mentoring support provided for participants on the Into Headship programme was considered, by most of the respondents, to be an important contributor to their progress and an essential component in their ongoing professional learning. Their appreciation for this form of support was such that many wanted more time with coaches and mentors, as this was deemed to be so valuable.

‘My mentor was brilliant, supportive, helpful and the source of practical know how- I would not have got through Into Headship without him’ (Participant)

‘The coaching and mentoring support was brilliant, I just wanted more of it’ (Participant\_

6.17 Many participants highlighted how they felt that the coaching and mentoring support should continue after the completion of Into Headship, helping with applications for jobs and preparation for interviews. It was also clear that a careful matching of tutors to students was important.

‘My mentor was really supportive and the support I received from my school, really helped, I just wanted it to continue’ (Participant)

‘I try and match students carefully to the tutors, so that they have the tutor I feel should give them the best support, like feedback on their coaching sessions which is vitally important.’  
(University Tutor)

‘We need to ensure that there is ongoing support for coaches and mentors beyond Into Headship. They may have passed the course but as a Head, they are not the finished article.’  
(LA Director)

6.17 The Education Scotland modules that are part of the Into Headship programme were generally very well received by participants. On balance, they were viewed as offering important procedural, financial and legal knowledge that was essential for headship.

‘The Education Scotland modules were absolutely pivotal but were also the most terrifying part as that was where the rubber hit the road for me now, I am in post’ (Participant)

‘The Education Scotland modules showed me what I don’t know -they have given me a flavour of human resource management, financial and legal knowledge that is so important as a Head’  
(Participant)

6.18 Networking with others on the programme was seen as one of the main benefits of Into Headship and was viewed very positively by participants. It was noted that the professional links established on the programme often continued long after Into Headship was completed.

For some individuals, however, the experience of networking was less positive as they tended to be in a group where they already knew individuals, so the added value of networking did not always materialise.

‘If I am honest with you, from speaking to other participants, the thing they value most is the networking.’ The real benefit of learning with and from each other.’ (Participants)

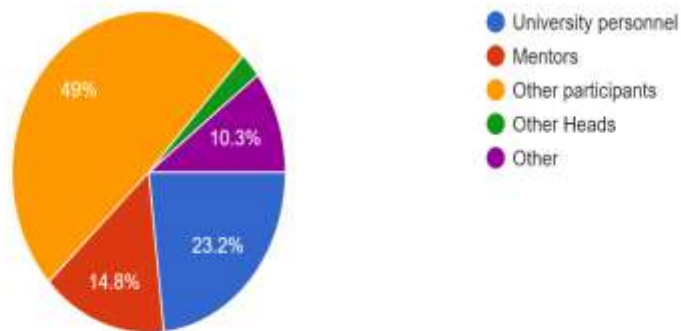
‘In assessment times or when we were getting feedback from the University tutors, our WhatsApp group was reassuring, so those informal networks were so useful and they have lasted beyond the course as well.’ (Participant)

‘You see a strength in having different local authorities represented on the group. I happened to be the only member of a different authority in my group, so I found it hard to penetrate an existing group of people who knew one another. I think I really missed out on a wider network beyond my tutor group’ (Participant).

6.19 The survey data show the strength of the views about the support of other participants on the programme. It is also noticeable that university personnel are highlighted frequently as an important source of support.

What has been the singular MOST important support you have received during 'Into Headship'?

155 responses



6.20 Open responses in the survey highlight the strength of feeling about other participants and networking.

I feel like colleagues on the course with me have been the most supportive as they are experiencing the exact same in terms of working as a full-time senior leader as well as undertaking the programme so they fully understand what that feels like.

I continue to seek support from this network today.

Meeting others in the same position is always helpful.

The group-chat we have as a study group has been an invaluable support

I found this a great opportunity to engage with other aspiring HT's

6.21 Overall, the evidence underlines that Into Headship is a well-established and highly effective programme that equips participants to meet the GTCS Standard for Headship. Many participants highlighted the way that the programme had positively contributed to their strategic leadership capabilities and had prepared them to meet the challenges of headship.

## 7.0 Impact

7.1 The evidence about the impact of Into Headship largely emanated from the participants on the programme who shared their views about its personal and professional value. The survey data offered a wide range of responses about the personal and professional benefits of Into Headship.

It was good preparation in the sense that it helped me see that you could be an individual and run your school your way rather than simply being a policy enactor

Informing my critical thinking.

Widening my knowledge and understanding of leadership and practically engaging with school improvement.

Increase in confidence; new knowledge that supports me in supporting others

Building confidence in own abilities in becoming a Head Teacher.

Empowered me to help take my leadership forward and also helped me support others in developing their leadership.

Allowed me to take the next step in my career

Greater confidence

It's has helped me to develop as a leader and has been a confidence boost getting such lovely feedback from staff.

Developing a true understanding of myself as a person and as a leader. As a result of the reflection, I took part in, I became comfortable in my own skin and confident to be true to me and my moral compass in all that I do.

It has encouraged me to be critically reflective, to look at events and incidents through different lenses and to not take policy at face value.

Ironically realising I don't want to be a Headteacher and I am happiest in the classroom

Seeing the bigger picture, being more realistic about expectations and helping shape the next part of my career journey.

Inspired me to create my own vision of leading a school a school community in the future and has given me real direction based on sound literature.

I have a far greater appreciation and awareness of the demands associated to the role of HT.

7.2 The interviews with participants similarly highlighted that Into Headship had positively influenced them personally and professionally.

‘It was a profound learning experience that has shaped my thinking and leadership actions’

(Participant)

‘I feel more confident in my leadership and personally more secure as a headteacher. Into Headship had an incredibly positive impact on me and continues to influence my leadership,’

‘Into Headship was an incredibly powerful experience for me, as it really did pull me out of my comfort zone but in a good way. I am a better leader because of it. (Participant)

7.3 Many of the respondents mentioned the ESCI process as being particularly impactful upon them, personally. The 360-degree reflection allowed individuals the chance to gain feedback on their leadership in an authentic and powerful way.

‘I found the 360-degree feedback illuminating and reassuring, it was a great way to start the next phase of my leadership journey.’ (Participant)

‘There was so much that was good about Into Headship but the ESCI process was particularly rewarding and helpful.’ (Participant)

‘The feedback on my leadership at the start of Into Headship was very valuable to me, personally’ (Participant)

7.4 In terms of the wider system impact of Into Headship, this is reflected currently in various evidential sources, data sets and evaluative vantage points. The numbers year on year entering headship offer one clear indication of impact and the data collected in this evaluation would suggest that quality of Into Headship is such, that its contribution to capacity building within the system is significant.

7.5 The data show that Into Headship consistently provides high-quality learning experiences for participants. As Headteachers, these participants contribute to the learning and life chances of children and young people across Scotland.

7.6 Going forward, however, more external indicators or measures of the impact of Into Headship would be helpful. Consolidating, strengthening, and extending the programme's routine evaluative evidence base is therefore suggested.

## 8.0 Coda

8.1 As a self-improving system, Scotland needs school leaders who have moved from passive engagement to dynamic empowerment through being more self-reflective, more critical, more strategic and more research informed. There are unquestionably, many positives in the current leadership provision in Scotland, particularly so in the case of Into Headship.

8.2 There are a wide range of leadership programmes in Scotland that stand out in terms of their quality and impact. While this evaluation can only comment on the contribution of Into Headship programme, the interview data underlined that the leadership terrain in Scotland is rich in professional learning for leaders, at all levels, in the system.

8.3 Going forward the challenge for those designing and delivering any programmes for leaders in schools is to take full account of the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and well-being of those with significant leadership responsibilities. The international evidence points to serious issues of recruitment and retention, within education systems worldwide including Scotland (Torrance et al, 2021). This is reversible but only if the right support, intervention, and a balanced workload is put firmly in place. Education systems cannot improve if leaders are running on empty or teachers are close to burn out<sup>21</sup>.

8.4 All school leaders are a critical system resource, whether established, experienced, or emerging. The international evidence<sup>22</sup> shows clearly that the best school leaders create the

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<sup>21</sup> Jerrim, J., & Sims, S. (2022). School accountability and teacher stress: international evidence from the OECD TALIS study. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 34(1), 5-32.

<sup>22</sup> Pont, B. (2020). A literature review of school leadership policy reforms. *European Journal of Education*, 55(2), 154-168.

conditions where learners and teachers can thrive and succeed. This evaluation concludes that the Into Headship programme continues to produce cohorts of very able, talented, and effective headteachers who create are capable of creating conditions for success, in the schools they lead.

8.5 It is a huge credit to the Into Headship team, its partners, and participants, that building leadership capacity is at the heart of the Scottish education system. In too many education systems, leadership programmes come and go with the latest fad or fashion. In Scotland this is not the case, there is a stable and ongoing national programme that prepares headteachers to meet the Standard for Headship, consistently.

8.6 With the future structural changes on the horizon for Scottish Education and the inevitable shake up and turmoil this will bring, it will be imperative to resist the urge to throw out the old and bring in the new, simply because change is in the air and expected. Again and again, system change, in many countries, has meant that the ‘right things’ in education are replaced with the latest things. Yet, in some of the most effective education systems continuity is both valued and important.

8.7 In his work, Professor Pak Tee<sup>23</sup>, from Singapore, highlights the paradox of change and continuity. In essence, he suggests that for systems to improve, change is critically important but there also must be some continuity or protection of the ‘right things’, be they values, beliefs, programmes, or ways of working. Such continuity ensures that the best of the system is retained and built upon, as it moves forward.

8.8 If education systems took a policy learning approach to change and reform, the central question would be ‘what works well in our system and what do we need to do to sustain and extend it?’

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<sup>23</sup> Ng, P.T. (2017) Learning from Singapore- The Power of Paradoxes, London, Routledge.



8.9 This evaluation concludes that Into Headship currently works well and produces accomplished, thoughtful, and strategic leaders who contribute to school and system improvement in Scotland. This is achieved through a model of collaboration and partnership that is extensive, inclusive, and impactful.

8.9 This is not to side-step the issues for consideration, as clearly outlined in this evaluation report, nor to overly romanticise the Into Headship programme. There is always more work to do and all programmes, even the strongest programmes, can improve. Rather it is to note that while many education systems extoll the virtues of collaboration and partnership, yet they rarely demonstrate it in the way that Into Headship exemplifies.

8.10 The evidence collected in this evaluation concludes that Into Headship remains a powerful lever for positive change and improvement within the Scottish Education system. As a national programme, the data underlines that it has considerable leverage, strength, and credibility.

8.11 In conclusion, the data collected within this evaluation would suggest that Into Headship remains the ‘right thing to do’ to ensure the supply of high-quality, talented, and exceptionally effective senior leaders in Scotland. Every day, those leaders who have participated in the Into Headship programme work tirelessly to transform the lives and life chances of children and young people throughout the Scottish education system. There can be no better endorsement nor a stronger rationale for the continuation of Into Headship.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Organisation/Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents
Education Scotland	3
Universities	8
LA Directors	7
Unions	1
LA CPL Leads	11
Mentors	2
Into Headship Participants (Current and completed)	21
PVs	3
GTCS	3
ESCI Coach	1
Total	60

### Appendix B Information Sheet

## **Evaluation of *Into Headship***

### ***What is purpose of the study?***

This is an evaluation, led by Professor Dr. Alma Harris (ICEA member) that will gather evidence about the ‘Into Headship’ Programme

The data collection will include documentary analysis, a survey, interviews and focus groups with key respondents. The aim of the evaluation is to provide insights that will help inform the future development of the ‘Into Headship’ programme.

### ***What will participation in the study involve?***

Participation in the study will involve:

- a. completion of an on-line survey (Into Headship participants only)
- b. a semi-structured interview (45 minutes approx.) OR
- c. a focus group discussion (one-hour approx.)

### ***In participation voluntary?***

Yes, participation in this study is entirely voluntary so if you do not want to take part you don’t have to. Even if you do decide to take part you can withdraw from the study at any point and you do not need to provide a reason for withdrawing. Any data will then be destroyed, and you will be removed from the project.

### ***What will happen to the interviews and focus group recordings?***

Interviews and focus group discussions will be digitally recorded (with your explicit permission) and partially transcribed adhering to the norms of confidentiality and anonymity. All electronic data will be stored on a password-protected shared drive and only accessed by the research lead.

Unless you withdraw, your data will be stored for 5 years. Your data will only be viewed by the researcher and only used for the explicit purposes of the project.

### ***Will the data be anonymised?***

All individual data is anonymised and confidential. Any names mentioned during the interviews or focus groups (for example, names of colleagues, pupils) will be anonymised.

Your consent will always be respected and adhered to.

***What will the information be used for?***

The information provided in the interviews and focus groups will be used to compile a report for Education Scotland.

***Who can I contact for more information about the evaluation?***

If you would like more information, please email [almaharriswag@gmail.com](mailto:almaharriswag@gmail.com)

## **Appendix C**

### **INTO HEADSHIP**

#### **Interview /Focus Group Questions**

##### **Intentions**

1. How do you understand the intentions of the 'Into Headship Programme' -What in your view is its main purpose?
2. What specific role(s) do different agencies play in the Into Headship Programme'? In your view, are these fully understood and how far are they complimentary?
3. What types of support and advice is on offer via the Into Headship Programme'? How helpful/effective is this in practice?

##### **Process?**

4. How practically useful is the 'Into Headship Programme' for those entering headship/or already in that role? What are the main benefits (and drawbacks) of the Into Headship Programme', in your experience? Can you offer some examples?
5. Can you talk about how the 'Into Headship Programme' is assisting with the quality of candidates entering headship /with the recruitment pipeline?
6. What parts of the 'Into Headship Programme' work best and why?

##### **Outcomes**

7. In your view what are the outcomes/impact of the 'Into Headship Programme' Can you offer some examples?
8. Could the 'Into Headship Programme' be extended or improved in any way?

##### **Any other comments**

## Appendix D

### *Into Headship- Evaluation Consent form*

**This form gives your consent to participate in the study.**

**If you agree, please tick the statements below and add your signature.**

	<b>Please tick</b>
1. I confirm that I have understood the information sheet for the above study.	
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reasons.	
3. I am happy for my data to be used (anonymously) in the final report, academic papers and conferences as part of the data capture process	
4. I am willing for the interview/focus group to be audio recorded.	
5. I agree to take part in this study.	
6. I agree to the researchers processing my personal data in accordance with the aims of the study described in the Participant Information Sheet.	

**Professional Role:**

**Signature : Date :**

## **Appendix E Documents**

- a. Headteacher Recruitment and Succession Planning 2022
- b. Into Headship 2015-17
- c. Into Headship Evaluation 2017
- d. Into Headship Survey Results
- e. AHDS Workload Survey Report 2022
- f. GTCS Submission Overview
- g. Links to GTCS Standards
- h. Literature Review of Headship
- i. Into Headship 2015-2020 -a synthesis
- j. Submission overview to GTCS