



Attainment Advisors: Key principles for success

The international evidence and lessons from other Challenge 'type' initiatives suggests that the role of targeted external advisors is key to success in the implementation of interventions designed to improve outcomes for young people.

These Challenge 'type' Advisors have emerged as a new catalyst for change within a number of education systems. They operate within complex and uncertain settings where there is no formula, recipe or one size fits all solution. The nature of this role requires highly skilled advisors with a diverse range of experience and high level of expertise that goes far beyond what has been expected from traditional LA 'improvement officers' or LA Inspectors providing support and challenge.

These advisors have found new ways of working and have developed a new set of relationships within system that span boundaries and hierarchies. While there is no formula, recipe to describe their work there are a key set of key principles that underpin success:

- 1. Collaboration-** Advisors work collaboratively with each other leading their own learning within the team. They also work collaboratively with a diverse range of stakeholders and professionals across the system
- 2. Use of evidence and data-** as a basis for professional dialogue and decision-making
- 3. Focus-** a relentless focus on impacting on outcomes of young people by working in classrooms, with schools and in and with local authorities and other partners.
- 4. Agility-** Advisors have the power and ability to move resources to the right place, pull in people and other resources to areas of the greatest need
- 5. Consistency-** the team of Advisors has a shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- 6. National framework-** that provides professional learning and creates coherence
- 7. Alignment / Synergy-** with other key policies and complementary to the work of other networks
- 8. Independence-** Advisors sit outside of routine reporting and managerial structures
- 9. Allocation of resources-** Advisors have their own budget and can allocate this to where it is most needed and will have the highest impact
- 10. Leverage-** direct association and support with National /Ministerial mandate/ Chief Advisor
- 11. Systemic-** from local to national, short term to long term and tactical to strategic
- 12. Diversity-** of expertise across the a mix of skills, experience and styles and expertise
- 13. Empowerment-** Freedom/autonomy in terms of activity/action WITH direct accountability for impact
- 14. Flexibility-** for future sustainability through constant review and adaptation to arrangements and ways of working

Developing a team of Attainment Advisors for the Scottish education system should be informed by the above key principles that have that have been shown to be crucial to the work of advisors undertaking similar roles in other systems.