



THE CHILDREN'S CENTRE LEADERSHIP MODEL
Bringing Children's Centre Leadership into the 21st Century



URBAN
LEADERSHIP
CENTRE LTD

Joan Fye began teaching in 1972 in a large multi-cultural school in Oldham. In 1985 she became the deputy head teacher of a junior school in the heart of Moss Side, Manchester. After six years Joan was appointed as the head teacher of Medlock Primary School, which included a 60 place Nursery.

About the Author

Joan Fye

In 1996 Joan was appointed as Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools (HMI). Initially she served in the secondary division of Ofsted where she gained valuable experience inspecting urban secondary schools and was involved in leading surveys which culminated in published reports such as *Achievement of Black Caribbean pupils: Three Successful Primary Schools*¹.

Two years later Joan moved to the primary division where in addition to evaluating the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, she led a team of HMI evaluating Excellence in Cities.

In 2003 Joan was seconded to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to contribute to its work on education. This secondment provided valuable experience and knowledge of disadvantaged communities. While at ODPM, Joan established a knowledgeable and experienced steering group with a deep commitment to urban education.

The work at ODPM led to the publication of the document, *A Model of School Leadership in Challenging Environments*² and Joan's secondment to the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) as Director of Urban School Leadership.

Joan has now set up the Urban Leadership Centre Ltd to continue developing leadership competencies in the education sector. After the success of The Urban Leadership Model, we are pleased to present The Children's Centre Leadership Model.

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The Children's Centre Leadership Model has evolved over a period of four years.

Praise for The Urban School Leadership Model

'This is an excellent model. It recognises the uniqueness of the urban leader, affirms the characteristic of the existing successful urban school leaders and increases the likelihood of finding more potential leaders with the same character qualities and abilities.'

Tim Brighouse
Chief Adviser to London Schools

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Introduction

The government has ambitious plans for those who work with children. Rightly so, as it is our children who will define the future of our country. We also have a moral imperative to provide the best education for all children and at the same time narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and others – a gap which continues to grow. Much has been achieved in developing the leadership skills of those who work with children. We support those initiatives and seek to complement and support them.

The Urban Leadership Centre (ULC) is seeking to reinforce the above objectives by developing a set of competencies which transcends agency, divides enabling greater cross-fertilisation, understanding, movement and co-operation between agencies. The importance of multi agency co-operation was highlighted by Barbara Hughes:

Mark Friedman, in his book 'Trying Hard is not Good Enough' writes about turning the curve, in children's service - an evidenced approach used in many local authorities... But in the end, doing your best is necessary but isn't always sufficient. What matters most of all is the positive impact that the activity actually has on children, on families and on communities. First, we have to ensure that practice is of a sufficiently and consistently high quality to make a difference, but we will only improve outcomes if the right relationships are in place between Children's Centres and other services. Finally, we must reach out more effectively to draw in those who have most to gain.'

Barbara Hughes speech to Sure Start Children's Centres Leaders March 2008.

*'Centre' refers to a group of settings operating as a Centre as well as a Centre operating in one building



Background

The coordination of Children's Services is undoubtedly complex and far-reaching. It comprises a huge and conglomerate entity with numerous directorate and agency boundaries within the whole. Consulting with all these agencies, ULC is working towards a co-ordinated approach to reducing the silo mentality, which clearly militates against a coordinated approach to the needs of children by developing leadership competencies applicable across the entire spectrum of Children's Services.

This document outlines The Children's Centre Leadership Model which is specifically tailored for leaders within Children's Centres, and is one of a number of leadership models designed for Children's Services. The Urban School Leadership Model for teachers has already been published and others are planned in the future. The models will have generic commonality but will also specifically reflect the needs and requirements of each specific agency. They also address the leadership skills expected at every level within the organisation. The most successful leaders empower everyone in the organisation to be a leader.

As well as direct consultation with practitioners, the following documents were referred to in developing The Children's Centre Leadership Model:

- DfES (2007) National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start Children's Centres
- DfES (2008) Being the Best for Our Children
- DfES (2006) Championing Children
- DfES (2006) Sure Start Children's Centres Practice Guidance
- DfES (2006) Every Child Matters
- DfES (2005) Working Together to Safeguard Children

As the Model developed, it was increasingly evident that there was a significant link between The Children's Centre Leadership Model and National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start's Children's Centres. Generally, the National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start's Children's Centres is much closer to The Urban School Leadership Model than previous national standards. Below are some specific examples.

The Urban School Leadership Model, 2006	National Standards for leaders of Sure Start Children's Centres 2007
Competency: Enduring Resilience	Standard: Managing the Organisation
<i>Demonstrates passion, stamina, self-sufficiency and perseverance.</i>	<i>Displays resilience and tenacity in the face of difficulties and challenge.</i>
Competency: Vision and Belief	Standard: Shaping the Present and Creating the Future
<i>Develops a shared vision of what the school will look like in 5-10 years time.</i>	<i>Creates and communicates a shared vision in a range of compelling ways.</i>
Competency: Leading Learning Innovation	Standard: Leading, Learning and Development
<i>Accurately identifies the components of good teaching and learning. Reflects an understanding of diversity in the curriculum.</i>	<i>Identify, promote and encourage effective practice. Respect diversity and respond with sensitivity to different cultures and beliefs and ensure equality of access to learning opportunities.</i>
Competency: Balancing Challenge and Empathy	Standard: Stronger Families, Stronger Communities
<i>Seeks the support of other agencies to address barriers to pupils' well being.</i>	<i>Encourages, mobilises, connects and supports people to take action to make a collective difference to the lives of children and families.</i>
Competency: Balancing Challenge and Empathy	Standard: Building and Strengthening Teams
<i>Mediates and negotiates effectively between staff, pupils parents and other parties.</i>	<i>Mediates and manages conflict.</i>

'We have to ensure that practice is of a sufficient and consistently high quality to make a difference, but we will only improve outcome if the right relationships are in place between Children's Centers and the services.'

Mark Friedman, 'Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough'

Figure 2 indicates a mapping of The Urban School Leadership and the National Standards. Shaded boxes indicate where the competencies are mapped.

Mapping of Urban School Leadership Framework with National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start Centres National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start Children's Centres						
School Leadership Competencies	Leading Learning and Development	Stronger Families, Stronger Communities	Being Accountable and Responsible	Shaping the Present and Creating the Future	Managing the Organisation	Building and strengthening Teams
<i>Vision and Belief</i>						
<i>Courage and Moral Purpose</i>						
<i>Empowered Culture</i>						
<i>Resourcing Creatively</i>						
<i>Leading Learning Innovation</i>						
<i>Situational Judgement</i>						
<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>						
<i>Balancing Challenge and Empathy</i>						
<i>School and Community Champion</i>						
<i>Stability and Consistency</i>						
<i>Vigilant Focus</i>						
<i>Enduring Resilience</i>						

‘What matters most of all is the impact that the activity actually has on children, families and communities.’

*Mark Friedman,
‘Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough’*



The Competencies Framework

The Framework in The Children's Centre Leadership Model, as with the other frameworks, comprises of 12 competencies. These are grouped into four clusters.

Enabling

Vision and Belief
Courage and Moral Purpose
Empowering Culture

Operating

Resourcing Creatively
Leading Learning Innovation
Situational Judgement

Relating

Emotional Intelligence
Balancing Challenge and Empathy
School and Community Champion

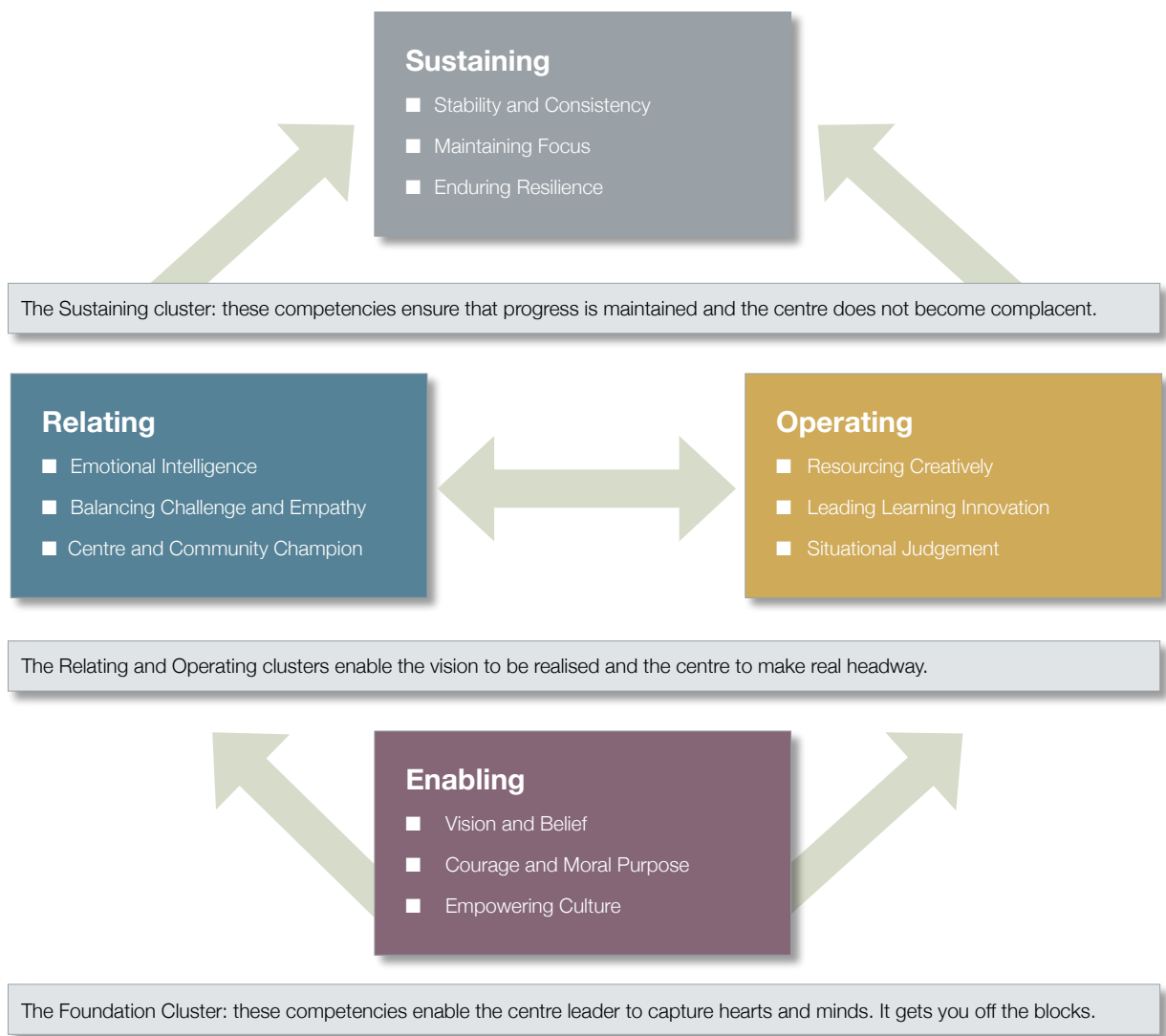
Sustaining

Stability and Consistency
Maintaining Focus
Enduring Resilience



Figure 3

The Children's Centre Leadership Framework



The Leadership Pathway

Embedded in the models is the concept that leadership is relevant to everyone in an organisation. It is only when we have organisations where individuals are clear about the leadership competencies required of them and given opportunities to develop them, can organisations truly fulfil their remit and move from 'Good to Great'.

With The Leadership Pathway, we have identified the leadership competencies required at every stage for those working in Children's Centres.

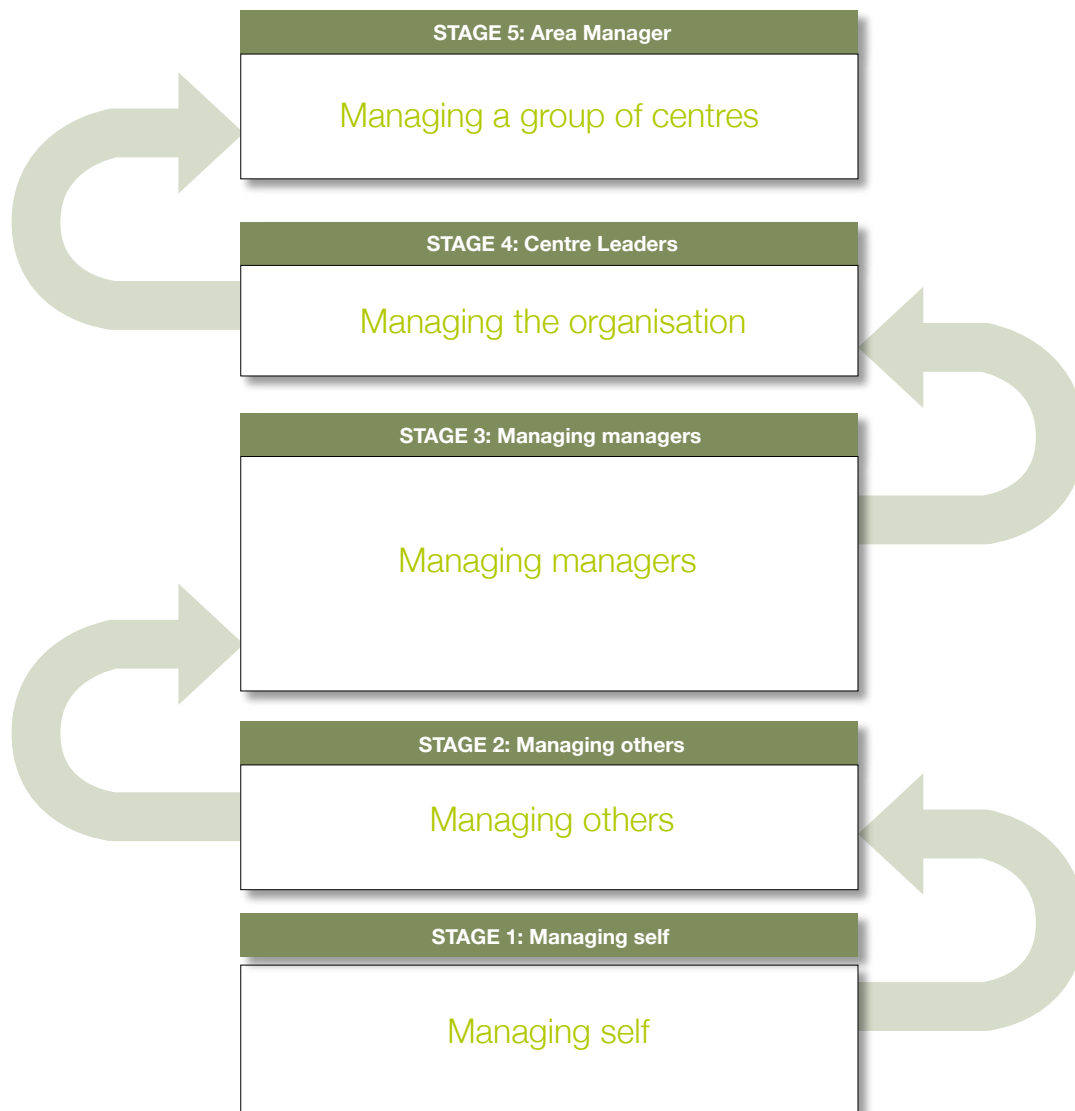
The Leadership Pathway is a format for developing leadership skills and professional standards for those who work in Children's Centres. The standards contained in this brochure are those for Children's Centre Managers; the online Pathway sets out the competencies for all those that work in Children's Centres.



The new competency framework sets out the competencies expected at all levels in the organisation. The five Leadership Stages are set out below:

The Urban Leadership Pathway and its leadership stages

Figure 1



** The stages relate to leadership roles. There is wide variation in how leadership roles are structured in different local authorities, therefore it is for local authorities and individual institutions to place people in the most appropriate category.*

Where does it lead?

The Pathway takes the person on a journey that reviews their performance, behaviours and experience. This can be used by the individual to develop their leadership behaviours or it can be used as part of the organisation's performance review process.

The Spike

Extensive research by YSC has produced the concept of a Spike - a Spike is a significant ability or signature strength that identifies successful professionals.

Mirroring the work of Goleman, YSC Australian Principal Angela David says, "Social, emotional and practical

intelligence is not assessed in IQ tests, but can often lie behind the achievements of successful people."

Angela David goes on to say that the best executives are typically unusual characters. They are not necessarily well-rounded but have distinctive and crucial strengths. They are bright, but not necessarily the most intelligent. Nor are they driven by money, status or job security. For them, she says, it's about making a difference.

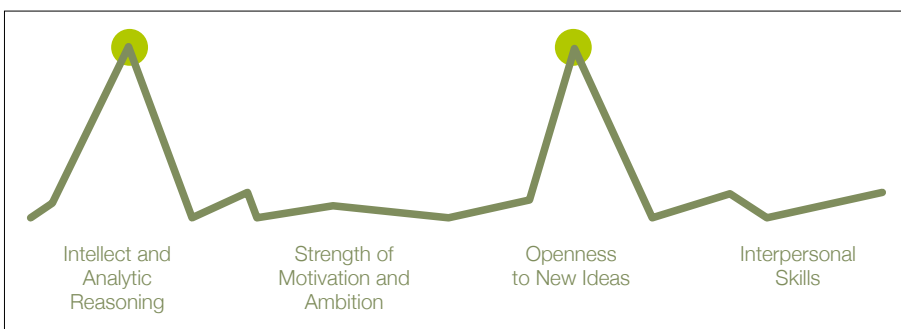
These concepts reflect the principles which underpin The Children's Centre Leadership Model. The most successful Centre Managers want to make a difference to the lives of children's families and communities.

Your spike could be part of your leadership style:



The Spike

Or it could be part of your Personal Make-up:



Intrigued?

The Leadership Pathway will help you identify and develop your Spike, in addition to areas identified for development.

The Competencies

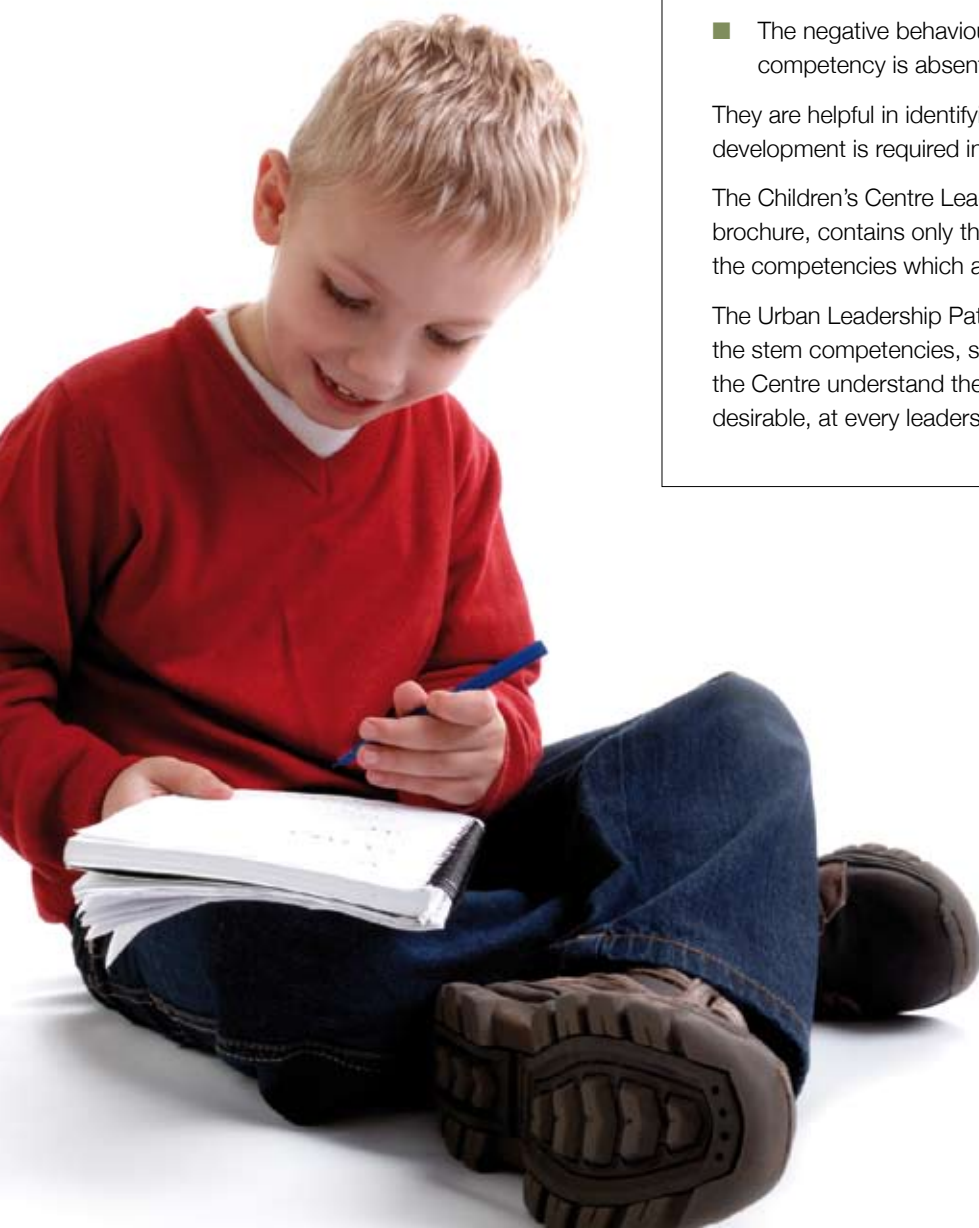
In the Model, the core of each competency is defined as it relates to Children's Centre. The competencies are structured to include a set of positive and negative behaviours.

- The positive behaviours will help to identify whether a competency is present.
- The negative behaviours help to identify whether a competency is absent.

They are helpful in identifying when corrective action or development is required in a specific area.

The Children's Centre Leadership Model, as set out in this brochure, contains only the stem competencies, that is, the competencies which apply to Centre Managers.

The Urban Leadership Pathway contains an adaptation of the stem competencies, so that it helps everyone working in the Centre understand the leadership behaviours which are desirable, at every leadership stage in the Centre.



ENABLING

Vision and Belief	Courage and Moral Purpose	Empowering Culture
<p>Possesses a passionate belief that all children can succeed, embedding this in the Centre's vision and principles.</p> <p>Believes in and trusts the expertise of all staff and the potential of all children.</p> <p>Recognises that parents are children's first educators and works to achieve this goal.</p>	<p>Conveys their passion to make a difference to the children and families the Centre serves by forging inclusive practices.</p> <p>Prepared to put head above the parapet.</p> <p>Takes personal risks for what they believe in.</p>	<p>Establishes a team based culture that involves all stakeholders in the Centre and the community. Develops caring professional relationships and embeds accountability.</p> <p>Delegates responsibility for decision-making demonstrating trust in senior management team.</p>

OPERATING

Resourcing Creatively	Leading Learning Innovation	Situational Judgement
<p>Ensures creative use of resources (staff, buildings, funding) to gain maximum value for children.</p> <p>Works in partnership with other agencies to generate resources and support for children and their families in successful multi-agency working.</p>	<p>Understands the themes of EYFS and be able to express important principles underpinning effective practice in care, development and learning of young children. Have the coaching skills to transmit this to others, including parents.</p> <p>Evaluates the benefits of new learning initiatives – enthusiastically adopting those that add value to the learning environment.</p>	<p>Draws on and applies breadth of experience in responding to new situations.</p> <p>Effectively evaluates possible outcomes and potential impact of different courses of action.</p>

RELATING

Emotional Intelligence	Balancing Challenge and Empathy	Childrens Centre and Community Champion
<p>Understands the benefits of different leadership styles. Seeks to gain own impact as a leader.</p> <p>Shapes own approach according to the particular needs of the situation.</p>	<p>Invests time in getting to know children, staff, parents and the wider community.</p> <p>Combines a genuine interest, listening skills and a desire to empathise with an underlying ability to remain firm when challenged.</p>	<p>Actively champions the Centre to achieve desired outcomes in dealings with local authorities, partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Understands diversity and the variety of cultures in the Centre and community.</p> <p>Exploits opportunities to reflect diversity within the Centre.</p>

SUSTAINING

Stability and Consistency	Vigilant Focus	Enduring Resilience
<p>Creates a stable learning environment with a consistent approach to learning and teaching, health and well being.</p>	<p>Determines overall priorities for the centre and maintains focus on these.</p> <p>'Sees the wood for the trees'.</p> <p>Demonstrates disciplined self-management when prioritising own activity and time.</p>	<p>Continually exudes optimism and a 'can-do' attitude.</p> <p>Maintains personal drive through challenging times by drawing on inner reserves of commitment and self belief.</p>

ENABLING

VISION AND BELIEF

Competence description

Leaders of Children's Centres need to define a clear and ambitious vision for their centre which has at its heart ensuring happiness, health, safety and challenging learning opportunities for every child and their families. The vision has to include a commitment to working with their local community and partner agencies to ensure that life chances for children and families improve.

Effective behaviours

- Possesses a passionate belief that all children can learn, flourish and succeed.
- Embeds beliefs in the Centre's values, principles and vision.
- Has the potential to transform the ways families can benefit from local services.
- Develops a shared vision of what the centre will look like for the next five to ten years.
- Translates vision into a strategic plan and identifies steps to achievement with clear milestones and targets, supported by a robust monitoring and review process.
- Works with the governing body/advisory panel/management committee to take responsibility for what needs to change in the Centre's ethos and culture.
- Demonstrates infectious pride in being a member of the Centre's community.
- Takes personal responsibility for the integrity of the Centre's principles and values.
- Explains clearly and convincingly what is being done and why. Focuses on the benefits of proposals to gain support.
- Breaks down the strategic vision for the Centre into practical and achievable plans and actions.
- Encourages critical reflection and practitioner research.
- Encourages both vertical and horizontal feedback mechanisms.

Ineffective behaviours

- Imposes a vision based on previous experience without gaining a real understanding of the specific needs of the Centre and its context.
- Vision remains abstract and difficult for others to understand in practice.
- Vision is not proactively 'sold' to children, parents, staff and other agencies.
- Vision lacks aspiration, integration, challenge and plans for action.
- Focuses on identifying what needs to change in the Centre without defining how to bring about change.
- Vision focuses on one or two areas rather than on holistic outcomes.
- Limited involvement of governing bodies/advisory panel in developing the shared vision.
- Fails to share values and principles with the local community.

ENABLING

COURAGE AND MORAL PURPOSE

Competence description

Leaders of Children's Centres face significant challenges both within and beyond the entrance to the Centre. The most successful are fuelled by a sense of moral purpose conveying their passion to make a difference to the futures of children from all backgrounds – closing the gap between the least advantaged families and the rest of society. This often means taking a pioneering approach, taking personal risk and putting their head above the parapet for what they believe in.

Effective behaviours

- Challenges the status quo to bring about improvements and lead its implementation.
- Identifies and addresses barriers to the achievement of different groups with confidence and conviction.
- Takes accountability for outcomes.
- Recognises that the buck stops with them.
- Conveys a sense of moral purpose and integrity.
- Has a clear and passionate view of what the Centre's values and standards are.
- Deals with underperformance of staff in a confident and timely manner. Follows agreed practice in managing performance.
- In difficult situations does the right thing rather than taking easy short term options.
- Is highly visible day-to-day both within the centre, with parents, with partner agencies and external stakeholders.
- Identifies opportunities for working with other agencies to support the well-being of their children and families.

Ineffective behaviours

- Asks others to do things they are not prepared to do themselves.
- Tolerates performance and behaviour that is below standard.
- Feels threatened by criticism. Defensive in the light of feedback.
- Avoids taking risks.
- Takes a short-term perspective in making decisions.
- Loses sight of the work-life balance. Fails to recognise and deal effectively with pressures and stress.
- When deciding on a course of action, does the easy thing rather than the right thing.

ENABLING EMPOWERED CULTURE

Competence description

Children's Centres have a pivotal role in our communities. They have a unique relationship with children, their families and partner agencies and the opportunity to really influence and improve their lives. To seize and realise these opportunities demand high levels of commitment. To lead such a Centre successfully leaders need to maintain a balance between individual accountability and shared responsibility. They need to be energy givers. They need to delegate appropriately, create a culture of shared leadership and decision-making. They need to do this to ensure that the Centre does not become overly dependent on them.

Effective behaviours

- Astute judge of people's capabilities, strengths and weaknesses; takes risks with putting people into stretching roles and grows people in an incremental manner.
- Balances individual accountability with shared expectations of success. Gives clear accountabilities aligned with organisational objectives.
- Encourages a winning mentality – 'we are going to be the best centre in the country!'
- Engenders an ethos of responsibility for achieving the Centre's stated outcomes.
- Ensures the staff understand the Centre's philosophy and the framework within which they work.
- Has an open and approachable manner with children, staff, parents and partner agencies.
- Ensures the right individuals are in the right roles, and that an appropriate management structure is in place.
- Inspires and motivates children, staff and parents, displaying personal presence.
- Encourages staff to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- Sees clearly the interdependencies between the centre and its partner agencies and the centrality of this in delivering the vision.

Ineffective behaviours

- Blames others when things go wrong.
- Allows a blame culture to develop.
- Fails to find an appropriate balance between remaining hands on in dealing with issues and sharing responsibility.
- Abdicates own responsibilities.
- Allows the centre to become overly dependent on the head.
- Definition of responsibilities lacks clarity.
- Centre management structure is inefficient.
- Communication with staff lacks discretion.
- Is unaware of own impact on others.
- Fails to praise and reinforce good performance.
- Focuses exclusively on what doesn't go well.
- Allows the culture to evolve without direction or control.
- Uses praise indiscriminately (an excessive use of unwarranted praise devalues justified praise).

OPERATING

RESOURCING CREATIVELY

Competence description

Leading a successful Children's Centre demands a strong and effective team. Creating such a team may prove challenging due to the difficulties attracting and retaining excellent staff. Leaders need to develop creative solutions to both long and short-term resourcing needs (including use of staff, state of buildings, availability of facilities and access to funding) in order to gain maximum educational benefits.

Effective behaviours

- Forges strong working relationships with Centre staff, partner agencies and the local community to tap and develop potential human resources.
- Collect and make use of all available data to gain a better understanding of the nature of the local community.
- Show initiative in applying for external funding to meet resource requirements.
- Is creative in finding solutions to funding and resourcing issues to create an enabling environment for children.
- Recognises value of investing in the fabric, facilities and equipment of the centre.
- Energetically proactive in maintaining focus on recruiting, training and retaining staff with potential.
- Focuses on results and desired outcomes when deploying resources and when considering conflicting resource requirements.
- Makes resourcing decisions that deliver clear value. Actively controls costs.
- Educates others on the effective use of resources via local networking.

Ineffective behaviours

- Feels constrained by physical surroundings, budgets, and existing staff deployment.
- Allows resources (space, books, toys other facilities) to remain unused. Allows useful space to be taken up by redundant material.
- Makes decisions in response to short-term resource needs without considering longer-term financial or resourcing implications.
- As appropriate, comes up with solutions themselves without seeking external advice and ideas.
- Allows Centre to be in a state of disrepair through lack of maintenance.
- Limited consideration of capability and suitability when assigning responsibilities leading to poor deployment of staff resource.
- Does not explore external funding possibilities when planning resource replacement.

OPERATING

LEADING LEARNING INNOVATION

Competence description

The leader of a Children's Centre has the responsibility for ensuring that learning, development and care are of the highest standard in a safe environment. In order to achieve this they need to have serious professional knowledge, understanding how children learn and what constitutes good quality care and learning and develop a learning culture that enables parents to make a difference to their children's learning at home.

Effective behaviours

- Recognises that enabling children and families to achieve their full potential is at the heart of the Centre Manager's role.
- Has understanding of the content, implementation and monitoring of the EYFS framework.
- Accurately identifies the components of good learning and development that ensures children and families become enthusiastic life-long learners.
- Correctly identifies and communicates to children, practitioners, and parents how children learn and what they need to do next.
- Helps parents overcome barriers to learning and support them in their development towards work and parenting.
- Uses assessment data robustly to pinpoint areas for focus and chart the individual child's and Centre's progress.
- Demonstrates an understanding of diversity and recognises the variety of cultures in the local community.
- Seeks own mentors, coaches and input from within and beyond education, through formal and informal networks.
- In establishing a culture of learning, actively seeks partnership with other Centres and agencies to provide training for staff.
- Grows the organisation's internal knowledge by modelling good practice.

Ineffective behaviours

- Commits to new initiatives without having basic systems and processes in place. Fails to consider the broader implications of new initiatives for the Centre.
- Gets involved in broader issues which do not contribute to improving learning for children.
- Too focused on what is going on inside the Centre - misses the opportunity to look externally to identify new approaches and import best practice.
- Implements radical ideas without first piloting them or seeking supporting evidence.
- Fails to monitor and evaluate the impact of different initiatives. Allows less effective initiatives to use up resources.
- Engages external experts to advise staff without promoting/ensuring skills transfer to maximise learning opportunities.

OPERATING

SITUATIONAL JUDGEMENT

Competence description

A Centre Leader is often faced with new and challenging situations which call for insightful and decisive responses. To be effective they need to draw on and go beyond previous experience, quickly identifying the potential consequences and implications of different courses of action in order to be able to choose the one likely to achieve the best result.

Effective behaviours

- Draws on benefits of and applies experience from previous roles in dealing with new situations and issues.
- Well-developed organisational 'antennae', regularly sounding out potential issues and situations with those involved.
- Able to identify the real issues.
- Always develops a fall-back position. Have contingencies for every likely event.
- Demonstrates foresight in predicting others reactions to different outcomes.
- Confident and timely in decision-making even when faced with difficult choices.

Ineffective behaviours

- Applies the same decision making approach to all situations.
- Becomes indecisive, or fails to make necessary decisions when the pressure is on.
- Makes unwarranted assumptions about the causes of a situation. Takes action before checking out the different perspectives of those involved.
- Moves on to the next issue without considering need for contingency plans.
- Lacks judgement when reading situations. Fails to take the time to understand the needs and motivations of key stakeholders.
- Decisions and actions fail to take account of implications and possible consequences.

RELATING

CENTRE AND COMMUNITY CHAMPION

Competence description

Children's Centres have a pivotal role in their communities, helping children and families to access agencies and services which can support them and improve opportunities. It is vital that leaders of Centres have a good knowledge of the support services available and can promote their Centre effectively to achieve desired outcomes in dealings with LAs, multi-professional agencies and the press. They also need to build up a strong local profile, which requires real understanding of diversity and variety of sub-cultures within the Centre, parents and local community

Effective behaviours

- Actively champions the Centre using the press and other channels to gain support.
- Builds up a positive public profile for the Centre.
- Identifies and engages community groups.
- Confidently engages with the community to address barriers to learning and development of the most vulnerable children and families.
- Comes across as professional and credible with all stakeholders.
- Celebrates Centre strengths in local community and further afield.
- Develops the skills and understanding of the governing body/management group/advisory group.
- Makes use of opportunities to develop contacts and networks with other Children's Centres.
- Actively facilitates working with multidisciplinary agencies.
- Possess the ability to communicate the Centre's needs to a broad range of interest groups.

Ineffective behaviours

- Gets so involved with the community and with consultation groups that loses sight of what is happening within the Centre.
- Sees self as victim of circumstances within their community and as a result of LA actions and decisions fails to demonstrate personal agency.
- So immersed in day-to-day internal Centre issues that does not make time to represent and promote the Centre within and beyond the local community.
- Use of press and other external communication channels lacks creativity and interest leading to repetitive messages which fail to inspire.
- Unprepared for difficult multi-agency meetings reducing professional credibility.
- Little recognition of different perspectives and levels of understanding of different stakeholders.

RELATING

RELATING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Competence description

Leaders of Children Centres spend a lot of time with interacting with stakeholders (children, parents, the community, LA and Ofsted). Often the subjects for discussion are challenging. To be successful requires a high degree of self awareness in relation to their personal impact and an exceptional ability to flex their leadership and communication styles.

Effective behaviours

- Aware of others' perception and reaction to them.
- Justifiably has a high level of confidence in their own ability and uses this to engage and bolster colleagues.
- Actively listens to verbal feedback and picks up on non-verbal cues.
- Interpersonally flexible and adaptable when dealing with different groups - adapting approach to enhance their impact.
- Takes criticism and challenge calmly, demonstrating emotional self-control.
- Demonstrates fairness and integrity in actions.
- Moves fluently along the continuum from firm to light when interacting with children, parents and staff.
- Makes effective use of formal and informal settings to convey messages effectively.
- Is approachable around the Centre.
- Uses humour effectively.
- Is positive and supportive.

Ineffective behaviours

- Overreacts in interpersonally intense situations
- Becomes overwhelmed with negative feelings when things are not going well
- Becomes personally too close to members of staff, leading to perceptions of favouritism
- Comes across as overly formal, exacerbating interpersonally difficult situations
- Limited flexibility of interpersonal approach
- Unresponsive to non-verbal cues and verbal feedback
- Demonstrates limited awareness of own motivations, communication style and impact when dealing with others
- Lacks confidence in standing by own views when challenged

RELATING

BALANCING CHALLENGE AND EMPATHY

Competence description

The particular social issues and problems in Children Centre locations require centre leaders to demonstrate a very high degree of empathy and understanding of individual backgrounds and needs. Successful leaders combine a genuine interest in listening and getting to know children, families and staff with a commitment to remaining robust and challenging on performance issues.

Effective behaviours

- Walks the Centre regularly to seek and listen to others' views.
- Is able to put self in position of others and see things from their perspective but balance this with appropriate challenge.
- Is timely in knowing when the level of challenge can be appropriately increased.
- Understands the difficulties faced by children and families as individuals and groups.
- Seeks the support of other agencies to address barriers to pupils' well being and progress.
- Communicates respect for others – is fair minded whilst demonstrating empathy.
- Communicates clear expectations of others, establishing clear ground rules for potentially difficult interactions.
- Tailors communication to enhance the understanding of different stakeholders.

Ineffective behaviours

- Spends more time dealing with paperwork than talking with and getting to know people around the centre
- Comes across as aloof, impersonal and disinterested in others' perspectives
- Puts own views forward without listening to those of others
- Communication lacks clarity and impact
- Fails to understand the impact of the centre's environment and barriers to attainment

SUSTAINING

STABILITY AND CONSISTENCY

Competence description

The most vulnerable children live in environments which lack stability and consistency. This makes it important for their Centre to provide this. The Centre Leader's role is to create a stable learning environment in which activities are based on first-hand experiences and skills and knowledge are taught in the context of practical activities with a consistent approach to promoting all areas of learning, but in particular the personal, social and emotional development of young children so that children are supported in their personal and emotional well-being.

Effective behaviours

- Creates an effective and stable learning environment through monitoring the quality and consistency of teaching and learning throughout the Centre.
- Allocates key workers to groups of children.
- Promotes high expectations for the behaviour of children, parents and staff.
- Communicates these widely to ensure a shared understanding. Ensures these are upheld.
- Reinforces success so that children, families and staff can see the link between what the Centre is doing and individual achievement.
- Recognises the importance of staff retention. Identifies ways to retain the staff who support the Centre's vision and philosophy.
- Ensures systems are in place to monitor performance of staff and progress of children.
- Makes clear defined triggers for particular actions. Follows agreed procedures (e.g. disciplinary, grievance)
- Introduces and maintains regular, purposeful staff meetings.

Ineffective behaviours

- Becomes complacent with improved performance, not recognising the need to raise the bar further.
- Is inconsistent in the care of children, giving rise to perceptions of inconsistency in application of the rules.
- Says and doesn't do.
- Designs and implements complex procedures and systems which others find hard to understand and use.
- Fails to seek feedback on procedures and systems.
- Fails to have in place procedures and systems for managing and monitoring behaviour and performance.
- Fails to monitor and manage staff performance.

SUSTAINING

VIGILANT FOCUS

Competence description

Centres can operate in demanding environments, in which unpredictable events and issues arise, requiring the focus of the Centre Leader. To be successful they need to decide on the overall priorities for the Centre and determinedly maintain focus on these. They need to demonstrate disciplined self-management when prioritising own activity and time.

Effective behaviours

- Identifies the right long term priorities for the Centre, ensuring these continue to inform both the Centre development plan and day-to day operations.
- Regularly steps back to monitor progress against vision through both formal and informal feedback.
- Develops, implements, monitors and audits all policies to ensure they comply with legislation, regulation and guidance.
- Successfully multi-tasks, dealing effectively with multiple demands from children, staff, parents, governors, other agencies and broader LA and government initiatives.
- Maintaining strategic focus under pressure from day-to-day issues
- Able to deal with unanticipated events in a flexible manner.
- Vigilant in identifying emerging issues quickly, demonstrating an ability to deal with these before they escalate.

Ineffective behaviours

- Allows other agencies and initiatives to intervene and hinder the Centre from achieving its core goals.
- Rarely takes a step back from the day-to-day to review longer term goals and monitor performance against these.
- Gets so involved in unplanned events and issues that these are allowed to dominate. Other activities and plans are put to one side for longer than necessary.
- Gets side-tracked from dealing with the real priorities as a result of failing to put robust systems in place.
- Fails to introduce mechanisms to check statutory regulations and legislation.
- Finds it hard to switch between tasks and focus on more than one thing at a time.
- Time management lacks discipline and focus.

SUSTAINING

ENDURING RESILIENCE

Competence description

The role of a Centre Leader is unusually demanding, with multiple and at times conflicting pressures. Successful Centre Leaders need to demonstrate a 'can do' attitude combined with high levels of self-sufficiency, realistic optimism and personal stamina. In order to sustain their performance over time they also need to appreciate their inner resource levels, finding ways to replenish these when under pressure.

Effective behaviours

- Effectively monitors own emotions and stress levels, taking prompt action to channel emotion effectively and restore equilibrium and energy.
- Whilst working very hard, paces self, being positive yet realistic about what they can achieve.
- Demonstrates passion, stamina, self-sufficiency and perseverance.
- Remains calm under pressure-identifying own pressure valve and ensuring appropriate channels to release frustration/tension.
- Builds up reservoir of internal strength to draw on in difficult times.
- Demonstrates awareness of personal work-life balance and actively seeks to maintain this.
- Monitors work life balance of the team.
- Sees opportunities for improvements in structural change and process flow across organisational boundaries; shrewd eye for opportunities to improve efficiency.
- Achieves considerable success in collaborating with other services and the whole community.

Ineffective behaviours

- Easily deflated when dealing with conflict or difficult issues.
- Finds it hard to cope with the demands of a high profile role.
- Fails to gain personal support from within or outside the Centre.
- Takes externally imposed targets at face value, without evaluating them in light of realities of the Centre.
- Does not recognise danger of burnout and continually takes on too much.
- Under high levels of pressure becomes overly reactive or withdraws from role.
- Little prioritisation of work-life balance. Becomes overly consumed by events within the Centre.

HEAD OFFICE

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FRANCHISEES

NATIONWIDE

DIAL Consultants Ltd

Urban Leadership Centre, Yorkshire and Humber

DIAL Consultants Ltd is the new and exciting company created to develop the growing business of the Urban Leadership Centre Ltd., in the Yorkshire and the Humber Region. The Company's motto "Connecting with Tomorrow's Leaders" indicates its determination to develop, recruit and sustain effective senior leadership teams across Children's Services.

DIAL consultants are hand picked and are recruited from the most successful practising leaders.

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THE FIVEWAYS TRUST

Urban Leadership Centre, North West

The North West franchise is run by the Fiveways Trust which is the first collaborative Secondary School Trust in Liverpool, and one of only a few in the country. The key purpose of purchasing this franchise is to improve leadership across Children's Services and ultimately to improve the life chances of all children, an objective which we are all passionate about.

The Fiveways Trust

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Bourne Leaders Ltd
Support for School Leaders

Urban Leadership Centre, East Midlands

'Bourne Leaders Ltd is a company which is dedicated to the development of effective leaders and leadership teams in the East Midlands region. The consultants at Bourne Leaders Ltd are all experienced practitioners in Children's Services.

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SOUTHERN
EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP
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Urban Leadership Centre, London, South East & South West

The Southern Educational Leadership Trust (SELT) has developed seamlessly from its parent organisation, Education Management South East (EMSE), which was formed in 1996.

The work of SELT is overseen by a Board of Trustees, which consists of representatives from partner organisations and independent consultants.

The Urban Leadership Products will be managed by the newly formed commercial arm of SELT, SELT Enterprises Limited.

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Other regional offices are due to open in the coming year. To find out more please visit:

www.urbanleadershipcentre.com