

Frequently Asked Questions

School Workforce Development Professional Standards

Questions	Response
1. What are Professional Standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What industry employers agree are the skills, knowledge and behaviours an individual needs to perform best in their role. • A way for school catering staff to see how they are doing in relation to what they know can be achieved. • Designed to raise the profile and image of school caterers both within the industry and outside to the wider hospitality industry and school community.
2. How do Professional Standards relate to qualifications and apprenticeships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach focusses on the output of what someone is expected to do rather than the various qualifications and training they should achieve. This allows for a more flexible approach. • Whatever qualifications or routes into the job, the Professional Standards set the standards of what should be happening in practice.
3. Not all these roles fit the jobs I have in my kitchens, what do I do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You only need to use those that are relevant to you and your kitchen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Select the Professional Standard that is most relevant - If individual job roles encompass more than one professional standard then you can use more than one - There may be partial coverage of standards by staff only working a small number of hours and therefore focussing on a smaller set of knowledge, skills and behaviours.
4. How do I use the professional standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There isn't one defined method, it depends on what your need is and what your objectives are. The standards are there to be used by employers and employees to improve performance and outcomes for pupils/students. They could be used to raise awareness, in recruitment, selection, induction, training, development and recognition of staff. • LACA is building guidance on the website, also with examples of how others are using the standards to help

	<p>spark ideas about what would and wouldn't work in their own situation and operation. (see below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key is not to over complicate it!
5. How do I resource the training if training needs are identified?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have an existing training provider? Can you meet with them and look at the implications of the Professional Standards, bring them into the process? They may be able to help plug the gaps. • LACA is also working on identifying and promoting training and qualifications which could contribute to developing staff in line with the Professional Standards.
6. How much will it cost?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full Professional Standards can be accessed for FREE on the LACA website • LACA will continue to upload ideas for using the Professional Standards on their website and will post case studies later in the year to show their impact.
7. How much time will it take to implement the standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be a matter of reading through the standards and looking at what you are already achieving. • There is no time limit on how long this will take. • It depends on how much you use them. Time is less of a factor. The key is to use them to improve performance of those working in schools to deliver better service and show appreciation for the good work that is already being done.
8. What about the workload associated with implementing the standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This does need to be considered and a plan made, based on a time-frame that suits your organisation. • Many of the standards can be carried out through the normal working day.
9. I already train my staff, have good staff engagement and retention and great customer feedback, why do I need the Professional Standards?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Professional Standards to see if your training and engagement strategy is as good as it can be. If so great! They are a tool to help. • These standards have also been designed to bring the school meals catering service to the same high level across England.
10. What do I do with the Midday Supervisor Professional Standard as I don't have any say in their role?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midday supervisor is a crucial part of delivery to school lunches. • Within the hospitality industry they would be your front of house staff. • Working as a partnership will make the lunchtime more enjoyable for all. • Talk to head teachers about the standards and how it can bring together the midday supervisors. • Meet with your senior midday supervisor if you have one explain to them how you would like these standards to work and the benefits they could bring.
11. How do I know that others are using the standards properly? How do I know the reputation of the Professional Standards will be managed and maintained?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a next stage LACA will be consulting industry on the best way to make sure the Professional Standards are applied consistently across the industry. We didn't want to rush into this stage as there are a number of different approaches to 'Quality Assurance' of the Professional Standards. We want to make sure this is something industry want, is affordable and meaningful and not something imposed on them, so we are taking it step by step.

LACA has begun to work with schools and caterers to explore how they intend to use and implement the Professional Standards in their catering operations, and will be building on the examples below to develop guidance and spark ideas for others in the industry.

ISS Education

ISS Education are planning to use the Head of Kitchen, School Cook, Assistant Cook, and General Kitchen Assistant Professional Standards in their organisation. They also will share the Midday Supervisor Standard with their schools.

Their aim is to embrace the Professional Standards across the spectrum of the employment, engagement and development activities for employees. This includes:-

- Attracting Employees – Share the Professional Standards (PS's) on web sites, with agencies, job centres and note in adverts
- Recruitment – use in Application Forms, Interview Process and Skills tests
- On Boarding – use in induction, TUPE transfers and initial training
- Development – use in training and development programmes, use in appraisals and performance reviews, consider existing qualifications and a personal development recording system
- Empowerment & recognition – consider reward and recognition scheme, career progression and talent management, external accreditation/endorsement
- Retention – reward package on achievement of Live It Stage

They anticipate the following opportunities and benefits for their business and the schools they work with:

- A clear framework for attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining talent
- A transparent system for communication to stakeholders
- Greater engagement and empowerment for employees
- Improved employee wellbeing
- An improved service to customers
- Improved key performance indicators

To successfully implement the professional standards ISS have identified that they may need to select the nearest professional standards for some roles within their business. They have also identified that communication with employees and stakeholders is key to ensuring engagement with the standards.

The team at ISS Education are currently considering the practical implications of implementing the professional standards including how they can incorporate existing tools, training and qualifications. They perceive the challenge is to create transparent, concise and objective assessment tools that are well understood and readily implemented, including training all managers to use the standards consistently.

“Organisations will need to ‘buy’ into the standards to ensure they are adopted in an easy to understand way. The trick is not to over complicate them. Simple systems, tools and processes will help to ensure that the standards are embedded and the many benefits are realised.”

Solihull MBC

Solihull MBC has recently expanded its catering operation to a wider number of schools and undergone a re-structure, redefining all roles using the Professional Standards for the Head of Kitchen, School Cook, Assistant Cook, and General Kitchen Assistant Standards and have plans to use the Midday Supervisor Standard with their schools.

The team at Solihull MBC are using the Professional Standards to review job descriptions and person specifications, amending them to better define the roles. The standards are also helping to inform the questions used during interviews to ensure better links and contextualisation for the different roles e.g. questions are asked in relation to demonstrating the knowledge and behaviours within the standards. They have also linked the professional standards to induction, specifically developing links to their code of conduct, the behaviours expected and expectations of the role.

Solihull MBC already have Personal Development Records with generic behaviours which they can now link directly to the customised behaviours and requirements of the specific roles as set out in the Professional Standard. They will help to conduct training needs analysis through practical examples of their output, and identify training needs. Solihull MBC retain staff through incremental pay increases linked to performance.

Solihull MBC will, as a second phase of implementing the professional standards, map their existing training to the standards, identify training needs and the gaps to be filled. They have already engaged their training provider SMART training in the process and will work together to fill any gaps identified. Some of the gaps may not be filled with current qualifications such as NVQs and may have to be specifically sourced or developed.

The team at Solihull MBC are also considering how they link the professional standards to awards and recognition e.g. the person that's come of the longest journey/ may have achieved less but against greater odds; recognising them with an award; valuing members of the team and recognising their skills. Back in 2004 Carrieanne said in her book *A recipe for change* (Carrieanne Hurley 2004)

"Staff should be valued, trained, supported, recognised..."

She now sees using the Professional Standards as a vehicle and tool to achieve this!

"We know that not every member of staff is where we want them to be – this gives them something to aspire to."

The team at Solihull MBC see the knowledge and behaviours are transferable, with skills applied in different contexts which means that staff can work across the business, and they also know that if they are taking someone from another organisation which uses the professional standards what skills, knowledge and behaviours to expect from them.

They want people to feel valued and important and to recognise the skills of the workforce. Improved staff motivation - making staff feel valued - means they are less likely to go off sick, more likely to get meal numbers up, engage with children, customer service goes up and ensures the viability of the service; improves staff retention and loyalty.

As a service investing in using these standards they are giving out a message about how important the work of the staff is, 'we're doing this because it's the right thing to do' - doing a good job can make or break the service. The staff are the face of the job and the most important link in the chain, they are the customer face and voice of the business. It is essential they are positive and motivated and signed up to the vision.

"We feel that it is important to promote that those involved in delivering school food not only have to provide a healthy nutritious meal, but still have to do all the other things they have to do, irrelevant what uniform they wear or who they work for."

"The professional standards are adding value but not cost. I feel they will add value to our current performance development systems with how tangible they are; having a role for the Midday Supervisor is vital for the links to the whole school approach and enhances the experience for the children every day."

Carrieanne Bishop, Head of Service

Harrison Catering

Since its founding in 1994, Harrison Catering Services has always been about quality fresh food prepared on-site and served by skilled professionals who love what they do. Over 100 clients across the UK enjoy a Harrison foodservice, with more than 100,000 meals being served each day by approximately 2,000 staff across more than 270 locations.

An independent, family-owned company, Harrison has achieved consistent growth by keeping the core values upon which it was founded—family, respect, honesty, pride and exceptional performance, together known as the Harrison Five Fundamentals—at the heart of its business.

An extensive training programme is embedded within the Harrison induction programme to ensure that each employee has the required skills. These are tested through an examination process during their initial three months in role. Additionally, each employee completes a number of workbooks within the programme, with a certificated process for each module.

To find out how its training benchmarks against the new professional standards, Harrison mapped its current training programmes to all of the standards (except Midday Supervisor, as it does not employ people in this role) to identify any gaps.

What was the result? - The current training programme maps completely across all four roles with no gaps identified. This demonstrates a comprehensive training programme delivered at the right pace, which all new employees complete, to ensure their skills meet both the requirements of Harrison and that of the client on the site where they work.

Further, the staff have an annual review of their performance, which looks at both their competence in the role and their behaviours linked to the Five Fundamentals, enabling Harrison to ensure that staff are 'living' the company's values.

What is the benefit? - Harrison has staff turnover which is less than half the industry average and below average absence rates demonstrating high levels of staff retention and customer satisfaction.

Wyken Croft Primary School (Independent), Coventry

Wyken Croft primary School are using all five standards to:

- set targets and measure behaviours at annual appraisals
- update job descriptions, person specifications and interview questions
- set standards with staff and identify training needs

They have identified a number of opportunities and benefits the school workforce professionals standards will bring to their school:

- Standardise job descriptions and person specifications and the service to our customers across both of the schools in the Phoenix Federation
- Help employees to understand their role and how their knowledge, skills and behaviours influence the success of the catering service
- Our customers will benefit from having a service supplied by a team who understand what to do, how to do it and why it is important.
- Identify any training needs within in our teams

“Including the midday supervisor within the catering team is a great idea as this will hopefully encourage more joined up working between catering teams and supervisory staff.”

Eagle Solutions Services Ltd

Eagle Solutions Services, “In House Catering” Specialists and School Food Consultants, are planning to use the professional standards for all five roles in the following areas:

- For recruitment
- For catering staff and stakeholders training
- For the development and updating of resources for professional development
- As a benchmark for upgrading the skills and existing staff
- As a tool for Performance management

They anticipate the Professional Standards will bring the following opportunities and benefits to their business and the schools they work with:

- Raise the knowledge and awareness of school Leadership teams and other colleagues to enable the catering team to be viewed and valued as highly skilled professionals
- Facilitate benchmark setting for staff performance management and therefore make union negotiations in this area much easier
- Assist with setting performance standards for new and existing staff
- Empower the catering staff and provide a basis for them to request training on equal level and rigour as the rest of school staff
- Provide a national standard for Midday supervisors for the first time.

