

# Leading In The Specialism

## The WHAT

### LIS1 - We develop skills and knowledge to further our expertise in our specialist areas

CLF leaders take responsibility for ongoing professional development; we critically engage with research and evidence and maintain professional networks that positively affect our thinking and decision-making.

#### When leaders are successful in this area:

- They are seen as experts in their field
- They are well connected with other experts in their field
- They proactively drive their own professional development
- Their thinking and decision-making is clearly evidence based

### LIS2 - We lead through others.

CLF leaders recognise colleagues' domain-specific knowledge and expertise; we proactively build capacity in others to excel and share their skills and experience (with support), valuing diversity in our teams.

#### When leaders are successful in this area:

- They create opportunities for others to lead
- Team members feel trusted to work independently
- Team members feel safe to share ideas, concerns and questions
- Team members feel that their contributions matter

### LIS3 - We consistently deliver successful outcomes.

CLF leaders develop and implement effective systems and processes, frameworks, and habits, which provide clear models of effective practice for others, to increase consistency and secure strong performance.

#### When leaders are successful in this area:

- There are explicit systems in place for key processes
- They and others use habits to automate key behaviours
- Staff have a clear understanding of excellence
- Success has been sustained over time

## The WHY

**1. Why Self-development and External Engagement Matters:** In a rapidly changing educational landscape, a leader's **commitment to their own continuous learning and professional development** is vital because it ensures they remain adaptive and effective. This commitment is amplified by a critical engagement with **research and evidence** which enables leaders to ground decisions in robust evidence and implement strategies that reliably yield impactful outcomes for children. Maintaining and contributing to **professional networks** is crucial because it provides the external vantage point necessary to access diverse perspectives, fresh ideas, and best practice, ensuring the leader's approach remains relevant and at the forefront of the sector.

**2. Why Leveraging Collective Expertise and Diversity Matters:** Organisational strength lies in its people. Leaders must **genuinely recognise and value colleagues' expertise** because this acknowledgement empowers individuals and leads to balance perspectives and superior decision-making. Beyond recognition, it is vital to **build capacity in others and value diversity** to avoid siloing expertise. Diverse teams, rich in varied backgrounds and perspectives, are demonstrably more innovative and resilient in solving complex and ambiguous problems.

**3. Why System and Process Design Matters:** Sustainable high performance relies on **robust underlying systems and structures**. Leaders act as architects of these systems, processes, frameworks, and habits which in turn eliminate ambiguity, prevent duplicated effort, and establish a clear model of practice. This deliberate design is essential to **increase consistency** and supports efficiency, fairness, and predictability. By embedding positive habits and well-executed processes, strong performance is transformed from a chance occurrence into the **natural, repeatable outcome** of a reliable system, empowering all colleagues to operate at their best.

## The HOW - Key Leadership Behaviours & Actions

**Own Your Learning Journey and Apply Evidence to Practice:** Proactively identify your own development needs, set personal learning goals, and seek out opportunities for growth. Treat your own professional development as a non-negotiable part of your role. Actively seek out and critically analyse relevant research and evidence-based practices, consciously using these insights to inform your strategic thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving.

**Identify, Map, and Seek Expert Input Across the Trust:** Take the time to understand the unique skills, knowledge areas, and expertise that exist within your team and across the wider trust. Regularly consult colleagues with domain-specific knowledge before making decisions or developing strategies related to their area, making it clear their expertise is valued and influences outcomes.

**Champion Diverse Perspectives and Build External Networks:** Actively seek out and encourage different viewpoints, especially from those who may traditionally be less vocal. Challenge "groupthink" and foster an environment where constructive challenge is welcomed. Actively cultivate relationships with other leaders, experts, and professionals both within and outside the CLF to gain diverse perspectives and new ideas.

**Proactively Design and Implement User-Friendly Systems:** Proactively identify areas within your team where a lack of clear systems, processes, or habits leads to inconsistency or inefficiency. Develop or adapt practical, clear, and efficient systems, processes, and guiding frameworks that are intuitive and easy for colleagues to understand and follow.

**Create Opportunities for Knowledge Transfer and Build Capacity:** Design forums, projects, or mentorship opportunities where colleagues can formally and informally share their skills and experience with others. Provide targeted professional development, challenging assignments, and opportunities for colleagues to deepen their expertise and take on greater responsibility in their specialist areas.

**Pilot, Iterate, and Monitor System Effectiveness:** Test new systems or processes on a small scale, gather feedback, and be willing to iterate and refine them based on real-world application. Regularly review the implementation and impact of established systems and processes, using data and feedback to assess whether they are achieving desired levels of consistency and performance.

**Cultivate Positive Habits and Champion System Adherence:** Consciously model and encourage the adoption of effective individual and team habits that support consistent high performance (e.g., proactive planning, structured meetings, reflective practice). Reinforce the importance of adhering to established systems and hold colleagues (and yourself) accountable for following them consistently.

**Model Lifelong Learning, Reflect, and Share Knowledge:** Demonstrate your own commitment to continuous professional development, sharing your learning experiences and actively seeking opportunities to grow your own knowledge and skills. Use new knowledge from research and insights from your network to regularly challenge your own assumptions and established ways of thinking. Disseminate relevant research, insights, and lessons learned with your team and colleagues, fostering a culture of continuous learning.

## Further Study

- [\*Turn the Ship Around!: A True Story of Turning Followers into Leaders - David Marquet\*](#)
- *Multipliers: How the Best Leaders Make Everyone Smarter - Liz Wiseman*
- *Atomic Habits - James Clear*