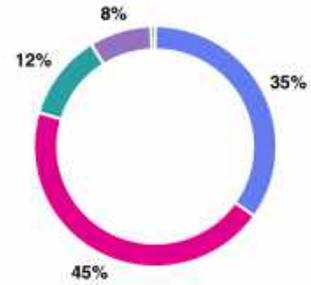


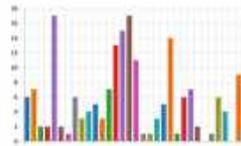
1) Generic Overview of Respondents (All SLS Members)

What is your role?

Headteacher	63
Deputy Headteacher	81
Middle Leader	21
Business Manager / Bursar	15
Other	1



Where are you located?



Aberdeen	6	Highlands	11
Aberdeenshire	7	Inverclyde	1
Angus	2	Midlothian	1
Argyll and Bute	2	Moray	3
City of Edinburgh	17	North Ayrshire	5
Clackmannanshire	2	North Lanarkshire	14
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	1	Orkney Islands	1
Dumfries and Galloway	6	Perth and Kinross	6
Dundee	3	Renfrewshire	7
East Ayrshire	4	Scottish Borders	2
East Dunbartonshire	5	Shetland Islands	0
East Lothian	3	South Ayrshire	1
East Renfrewshire	7	South Lanarkshire	6
Falkirk	13	Stirling	4
Fife	15	West Dunbartonshire	0
Glasgow	17	West Lothian	9

2) Overview of Deputy Headteacher Responses

There were **81 Deputy Headteacher respondents**, (14% of our DHT membership) working across local authority and independent schools in Scotland, and representing a wide geographical spread.

Length of service:



Respondents were asked to evaluate a range of **professional learning priorities**, rating each as:

- **“Essential”**
- **“Valuable”**
- **“Interesting”**
- **“Not a current PL priority”**

Open-text comments were also provided.

3) Overall Patterns in Professional Learning Priorities

Across the responses, there was consensus that the majority of professional learning areas presented are either **“Essential”** or **“Valuable”**.

When responses across all professional learning domains are aggregated:

- **27.4%** were rated as **“Essential”**
- **39.6%** were rated as **“Valuable”**
- **24.5%** were rated as **“Interesting”**
- Only **8.5%** were rated as **“Not a current PL priority”**

Professional Learning deemed **essential** by over 50% of DHTs:

- Curriculum Design/Reform (**61.7%**)

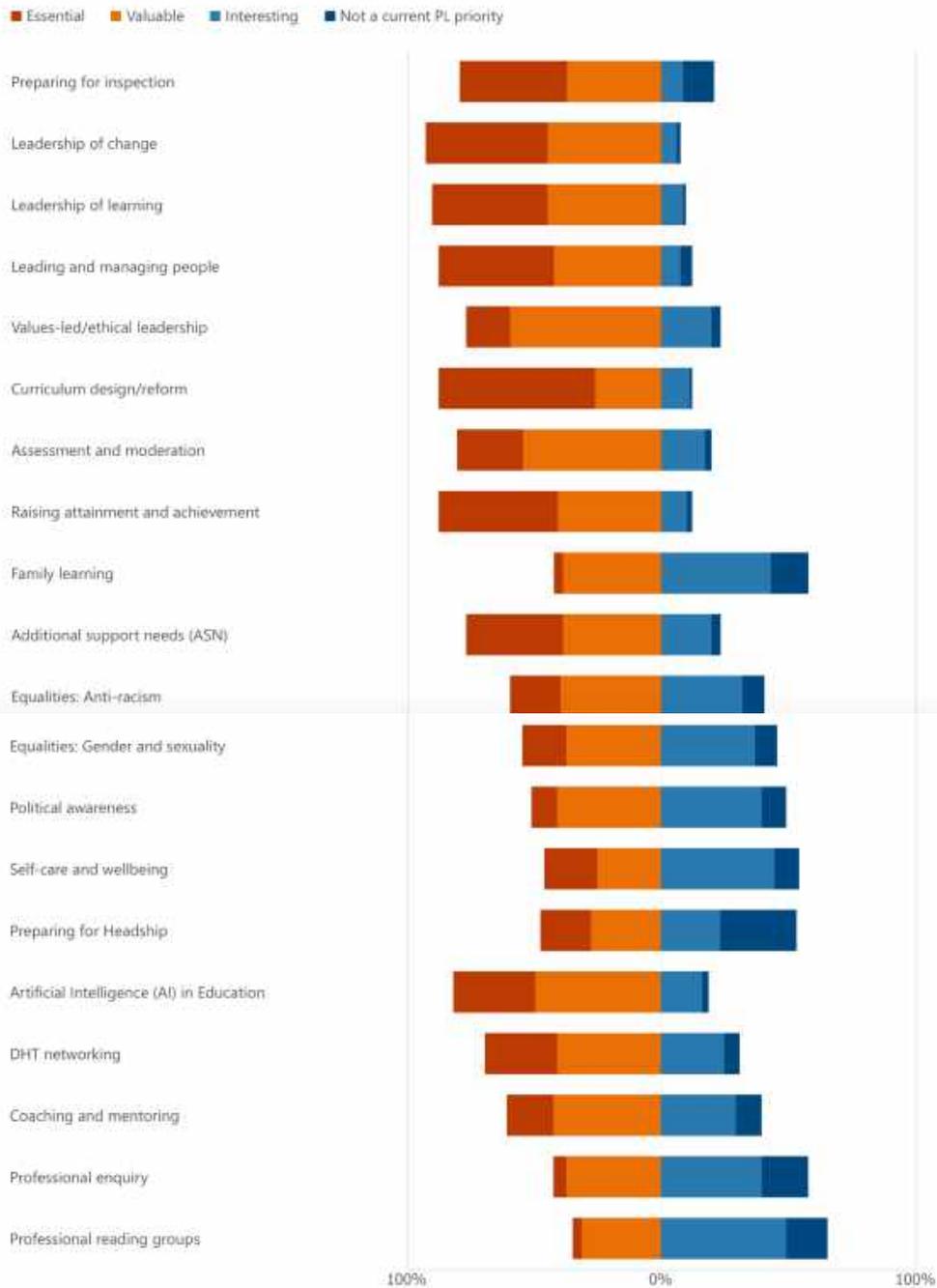
Professional Learning deemed **essential** or **valuable** by over 50% of DHTs:

- Preparing for Inspection (**42%**; **37%**)
- Leadership of Change (**48.1%**; **44.4%**)
- Leadership of Learning and Teaching (**45.7%**; **44.4%**)
- Leading and Managing People (**45.7%**; **42%**)
- Values led / ethical leadership (**17.3%**; **59.3%**)
- Assessment and Moderation (**25.9%**; **54.3%**)
- Raising Attainment and Achievement (**46.9%**; **40.7%**)
- Leading and Managing ASN (**38.3%**; **38.3%**)
- Equalities: Anti-Racism (**19.8%**; **39.5%**)
- Equalities: Gender and Sexuality (**17.3%**; **37%**)

- Political Awareness (9.9%; 40.7%)
- AI in Education (32.1%; 49.4%)
- Headteacher Networking (28.4%; 40.7%)
- Coaching and Mentoring (18.5%; 42%)

List of DHT ratings:

Please consider the current challenges and opportunities in your role and context, and indicate whether the following suggested areas of professional learning are: Essential, Valuable, Interesting, or not a current Professional Learning priority.



4) Implications for Professional Learning for DHTs

- Design PL with DHTs, drawing on their expressed needs and expertise.
- Support aspiration and pathways to Headship while recognising excellence in the DHT role as a valid and valuable PL aspiration.
- Allow DHTs to explore system leadership at a manageable pace
- Consider PL that is sustainable, contextually relevant, and explicitly designed around the unique strategic and operational responsibilities and tensions of the DHT role.
- Ensure flexibility and choice within national and local PL offers.
- How might we embed opportunities for networking and mentoring?

5) Focus Group Volunteers

Eighteen Depute Headteachers representing 11 local authorities indicated they would like to meet in focus groups to discuss the results of the questionnaire and implications for the Professional Learning programme for 2026- 2027.

Appendix: Comments from Deputy Headteachers

HGIOS

- Specifically, CLPL around QI's 2.3 and 3.2
- The format of previous sessions for Key QIs with schools sharing best practice was helpful. Opportunities to collaborate with others in these areas would be beneficial.
- Preparing for inspection

ASN

- Leading & Managing People - staff within the ASN sector are feeling burnout and turnover is high. Supporting and managing them at this time is challenging. Ideas around wellbeing, real, practical strategies to support staff and sharing of successful approaches would be welcome
- ASN & Curriculum Design - there is not enough support available nationally for complex ASN curriculum design. Even the National Complex Needs Network sessions are often aimed at less complex ASN settings/learners, rather than our most complex ones.
- Given the growth with ASN, the pressure on staff and resources to support pupils is becoming unmanageable.

Culture of PL

- An interest in strategic approaches to leading Professional Learning for all staff. Not necessarily delivering seminars to staff but how to build a culture of effective PL in the staff community.
- How to effectively evaluate Professional Learning.
- It could be interesting to look at the 'Impact of Professional Learning'

AI

- AI: we need to get ahead of the edtech sector and understand value/risk to young people and their leaning

Raising Attainment

- RA and Leading LTA have the biggest impact on our young people so more opportunities to consider strategic approaches would be valued.

Learning and Teaching

- We'd be interested in evidence-based L&T like that delivered by Bruce Robertson.
- Leading improvements within learning teaching and assessment

Equalities

- I believe we should be looking at the whole equalities agenda. Our HT is fully committed to this but it needs everyone to be able to tackle some of the challenges we are facing. I'm sure it's not just in my context.
- I found the Progressive Masculinity input this year to be very useful and would be interested in more opportunities to engage with discussion around masculinity and misogyny.

Curriculum

- I think engagement with CIC is essential - I am on a core team but from collaboration groups yesterday some staff are not feeling SLT are aware of what is happening in all schools and not keen to release staff to engage.
- Curriculum reform, curriculum structure
- Sharing knowledge and understanding of the CICs is essential. There will be members sitting on a range of groups who can provide insight into the thinking behind the work. There is also a wide range of reading linked to the CICs and potentially setting up an overview of the reading may help to provide further context.
- Important around curriculum changes
- Providing alternative curriculum for disengaged learners

Preparing for Headship

- An SLS led opportunity for aspiring headteachers would be excellent and very valuable.
- One of the things I'd find most valuable is the opportunity to experience coaching in the interview/selection process from experienced HTs. Preparing for headship professional learning is vital because so much "strategic" work and learning/collaboration work is directed at HTs and it is variable how much of their learning is passed on to DHTs.
- Leading staff - particularly tricky staff! (although appreciate that could be touched on through different areas above)

Networking

- DHT networking is huge for me and I am yet to see it done well. I am a part of the DHT SLS network which has just been established but this remains in its early days.
- DHT networking is something that has started to become more recognised within our authority which is great. Face to face meetings allow for this much more than on-line communities. It is so important to carve out time to see other DHTs with similar remits, and I feel very supported by my own head teacher to do so.

Wellbeing

- Core offer needs to focus on health and wellbeing needs of all senior leaders
- Listening, Counselling and conflict management skills
- Leading staff - particularly tricky staff! (although appreciate that could be touched on through different areas above)
- This may be more specific than you are looking for but three areas of pupil wellbeing we have on our current SIP are:
 - developing emotional literacy
 - progressive masculinity
 - the teaching of Purpose in schools (might be more linked to Values / Ethics above)

Systems

- WTA / LNCT issues
- Utilising SEEMis, particularly for timetabling and census.

Further comments

- There are a number of areas that I would have placed higher but haven't. This is because of past PL provided by SLS which I feel has addressed a lot of my PL needs within these areas.
- Independent Sector: In the independent sector all elements identified are essential as we adjust to the present situation, while also ensuring that the offering of the school is exceptional against national standards.
- Effective collaboration between schools
- Effectively developing middle leadership and middle leaders