

Responses to GTC Scotland Consultation on Draft Strategic Plan 2023 2028

The following respondents agreed that we publish the content of their response.

Response 1

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Seems a sensible, structured plan.

GTC Scotland is committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in all its work. Please tell us if you consider that any of the draft Strategic Plan will create any equality, diversity and inclusion impact(s) – positive or negative – on any individuals who may be affected by it.

No

Response 2

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I agree with the focus of the plan but believe there can be more done in some other areas. I believe that in Teacher training you should be not only given the GTCS Standards for Registration so you know what is expected of you as a teacher but also be told what is expected on the schools and staff of a higher level to support you in your job. And there should be a standard across all of Scotland of what schools, headteachers and leadership teams should be doing to support staff and and this should be published in a standard easy to read format so there's no doubt as to how far an individual teacher is expected to go against what is expected of by senior management, pastoral or heads of faculty.

The standards for registration should be made shorter, more concise and easier to read as for a lot of teachers or people entering the profession some of the details included are vague.

I also believe teachers should have a greater autonomy of what they should teach, given more personalisation within their subjects and classes to do what is best for the young people in front of them. There should be a reduction in class size and this should be clearly written and supported by GTCS that it needs to be met by schools.

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I'm hoping it will have a positive impact but I am concerned that the refresh to the fitness to teach may not be supportive enough. I have been finding a lot of senior management teams in recent years are much less supportive of their staff and actually cause more stress.

Teachers need more support to do their job to the best of their abilities and not be shot down by management or be given too much extra responsibilities in school that could be done by admin staff or the leadership teams.

Response 3

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below

Respondent did not answer this question.

GTC Scotland is committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in all its work. Please tell us if you consider that any of the draft Strategic Plan will create any equality, diversity and inclusion impact(s) – positive or negative – on any individuals who may be affected by it

Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 4

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I agree with the majority of the plan but feel there is little mention of the cumbersome nature of the PU process. Many hours of teachers time have been spent on this to find it hasn't saved. This is a workload issue, totally not acceptable for a our modern profession and as our update is signed off by our line manager, perhaps a useless tool that many are using unneccesarily?

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As will all areas of equality - some individuals will be affected more than others. There are issues which wider society cannot agree on and consequently we as teachers are not exempt from that. How do we ensure all voices are important in the 'equality and inclusion' landscape without demonising one or the other.

Response 5

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Building trust also needs to involve trusting the level of knowledge in new teachers as this is currently lacking. Consistently putting lack of experience as a reason to not hire recently qualified teachers is pushing them out of the profession in the country or completely.

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The draft does not outline further support for new teachers and supporting them getting jobs or teachers get permanent contract

Response 6

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Respondent did not answer this question.

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Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 7

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Respondent did not answer this question.

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Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 8

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly disagree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Strengthen confidence in our registration and regulation frameworks

Surely this is a binary process? Either the registration process works or it doesn't. The regulation frameworks should be promoted as aspirational because, unless it is a one off tick box exercise, teachers cannot meet those standards day after day. The poor evidence base for some aspects of regulation that are used to increase teacher workload beyond breaking point is concerning. Context is all and the withdrawal of funds, time and support mean these aspirations are depressingly out of reach yet still expected.

Speak up for high standards in teaching

The last 10 years of CFE have been horrific in workload terms and ageism. The loss of ability of the GTCS and other bodies to recognise a broken system is depressing. Vision is cheap, pragmatic steps to achieve improvement based on evidence often ignored.

Be accountable to the teaching profession and the public

I understand 'accountability' via teachers as being the regular elections. I'm not sure how accountability to the public works save as a slogan.

Be a good employer

Not really sure why this is part of a strategic plan? Surely this is something that is a given?

In general, the plan lacks rigour, targets and resources required to achieve amorphous aims. If a school or department submitted this it would be sent back for immediate review and resubmission.

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No opinion.

Response 9

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

You are still missing a fundamental point of a professional body. You should be the first point of call for professional development in the profession and you most definitely are not. "Speak up for high standards in teaching" is not a strong enough vision. "Drive forward and provide reviewed resources to enable high standards in teaching" would be far more suitable for a professional body.

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Hard to tell - if you overly positively discriminate for certain people (as is currently required), this will need to be done in a sensitive manner that brings on board those you will therefore have to discriminate against. Until we can truly appoint staff solely on merit, it will be necessary to focus efforts on improving representation from a wider range of people. It would be nice to see clear success criteria in this area. For example if 60% of the working population is female, you should have a goal that 60% of the teaching work force is female (at all levels of school life). You need to work on the imbalance in admin roles - there is huge under-representation of male and ethnic minorities in these roles. Much clearer goals are needed, your current statement although well intentioned has no clear SMART nature and therefore is not good enough. What % of staff in schools should come from each area of our diverse population in order for you to have been successful? I couldn't find any form of clear success criteria in your vision.

Response 10

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Driving improvement in the profession is key but this needs to be planned and managed in an organised structure that teachers but into. There is a mass exodus from the profession as teachers feel undervalued and already overworked. Teachers are burning out!

I think you need a CPD program that local councils will use so that teachers across the country are accessing the same levels of support, development and training.

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Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 11

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I totally agree with your ideals but need to see how these play out. Currently it takes a ridiculously long time to deal with complaints. I don't hear GTCS ever speaking up for the high standards that the HUGE majority of teachers in Scotland employ. Who is speaking up for the fact that teacher expectations are ever increasing without money being put in the education system. The technology I use isn't reliable, the hardware doesn't function, there is no funding for jotters, glue, printing, resources or training yet I am expected to deliver high quality lessons every period. This is not addressed in your strategic plan.

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I think the high standards maintained by GTCS is great on maintaining trust, but I would still like the GTCS to speak out for teachers more. Who is our voice? The GMC etc is often on the radio advocating for Drs, where is the GTCS's advocacy in your new plan?

Response 12

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

The overriding sentiments are correct. However, teacher professional development still lies mainly in the hands of Head Teachers. Opportunities to attend high quality PRD within the school day/year are at their discretion and they control the budget. Also, PRD from other work experiences is completely ignored. I would like to propose that individual teachers receive a budget for their PRD, which means that they are in control of their professional destiny. I have heard this issue raised again and again at consultations and yet the ever-increasing qualifications required for promotion within teaching are favouring the development and promotion of younger and younger members of staff and leaving teachers victim to their Head Teacher preventing them from seeking the qualifications necessary to progress. This issue is fundamental to the development of high-quality teachers and leaders and yet it remains entirely subjective in its nature. This issue is leading to age discrimination within the profession which is also an important part of ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion. Other professions such as Medicine, Accountancy and Law value real experience over 'young and malleable'. Teaching does not. Real experience over an agreed period across a number of different settings should be part of the requirements for promotion. As well as more and more qualifications. Medicine would not allow a young inexperienced doctor with only a few years of practice to become a Senior Consultant. Education does allow to become deputies and head teachers. This demeans the profession.

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**equality, diversity and inclusion impact(s) – positive or negative – on any individuals
who may be affected by it**

Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 13

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I believe the plan captures the essence of what should be the focus for GTCS going forward, projecting ambition without unnecessary rigidity.

I wish to make one additional observation in relation to one clause in the plan, specifically:

- Undertake a programme of digital change and improvement to ensure that our digital products and systems are user-focused, efficient and add value

With particular reference to the current state of MyPL, I wish to applaud this aim, but to add that it is work that is long overdue. MyPL remains bug-ridden and hovers at the edge of usability, with key features such as File Upload essentially inoperative. There most definitely is a need for enhanced user-focus, efficiency and added value.

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I am aware the values, skills and accomplishments of Khadija Mohammed and, as a result, have full confidence that equality, diversity and inclusion impacts will receive priority focus.

Response 14

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I welcome the revised plan and think it is important for the standards to reflect current society. For Scotland to be the best place to learn it has to have the best teachers. We need teachers who have high standards and are constantly reflecting on their practice and seeking out opportunities for continuous learning. Building trust is an essential aspect of the teaching profession and I am glad to see that it is reflected in this plan. Communities have to be able to trust the teachers that work in their schools and know that they are providing high quality learning and nurturing environments.

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Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 15

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

While I agree with the overall objectives of the plan it lacks detail on how the digital monitoring and support of CPL will be actioned. This needs to remain flexible but needs to be clearer in the time commitment that it requires, and should perhaps be more rigid in terms of deadlines and targets. I welcome the online resources provided by the GTC and see this as an area for growth as it can better direct the overall attitudes of the teaching profession

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I am not convinced that there is anything in the draft plan that promotes diversity etc, and while I understand the push towards "the professional career" I would not like to lose the traditional vocational nature of teaching.

Response 16

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I feel it is very clearly presented, it sets out the wide range of functions undertaken by GTC Scotland and how these connect to the ideas of; becoming, being, growing and belonging. It is good to see the emphasis which has been given to the significance of the role of GTC Scotland as an independent and self regulating body.

With the increased emphasis on UNCRC should the plan not be making explicit reference to ensuring the partners GTC Scotland will be working with include Children and Young People? Are Children and Young People involved in the consultation on the plan?

Strategic Objective 1 - In the first point in Strengthening Confidence it reads as if we are working with partners to effectively quality assure the accreditation process. I would have thought GTC Scotland would want to be working with partners to quality assure the experience of those involved Initial Teacher Education ie does the experience reflect what was accredited. I suggest the wording of this objective could be improved.

Strategic Objective 1 - In the third point in Speaking up for High Standards is the word "topical" how we want to describe issues? Whilst GTC Scotland will undoubtedly facilitate conversations on "topical" issues they may also want to do so for other types of issues - sometimes seemingly mundane (eg Professional Update, Fitness to Teach) and sometimes ones which Council feel need spoken about but may not be topical (eg Ethics, system regulation, Registration rules).

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equality, diversity and inclusion impact(s) – positive or negative – on any individuals who may be affected by it.

Strategic Objective 1 - The first point in Speaking up for High Standards should have a positive impact in respect of diversity but should it be even stronger in stating our ambition?

Response 17

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

The plan reflects current priorities and fit well with the current context in Education.

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I don't believe that this plan will create any equality, diversity or inclusion impact, positive or negative.

Response 18

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

The plan appears to aim to continue to develop, ensure the maintenance of professional review and development, and safeguard the high reputation of teachers and lecturers across Scotland. It is, however, hinted in the final paragraph that the annual registration fee may need to be raised to ensure this. I am unsure, in the current financial climate and regards higher visibility of what registration specifically can be used to fund, if that would be an agreeable idea.

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The GTCS is built on a very foundation of equality, diversity and inclusion hence should be taking a stand on openly demonstrating support and tolerance for educators identifying with LGBTQ+ and Trans issues within the teaching profession and education in general.

Response 19

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I think it is essential that current teachers and lecturers keep up to date with the regulation frameworks which have changed over the past 10 years. There must be continued trust in the teaching profession especially within the political sphere. Teachers cannot be used as the tool to blame for failure of initiatives such as closing the gap. Teachers voices must be heard.

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none that I am aware of

Response 20

Please tell us who you are

Education stakeholder

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

1. I found the Welcome lucid, important and memorable. GTCS is very fortunate indeed to have Khadija Mohammed as our Council Convener, with her wide experience of education at different levels. Her words on a trusted teaching profession are clear and important, reinforced by her strong individual insights. Dr Pauline Stephen, our Chief Executive and Registrar, writes strongly on our need to uphold high standards in our profession, through GTCS's core functions of registration and regulation. Her words on trust and impact to underpin the vision of trusted teaching are well written.

2. The section Who we are and what we do is vital and clear, even though I cannot help thinking of 'ongoing learning' as 'Continuing Professional Development'. Actually I prefer the latter phrase as it includes practical development of skills and character, as well as simply learning about education.

I noted in particular the sentence 'We also investigate senior concerns about teachers and college lecturers.'

' This is so central to the purpose of GTCS. In the light of present concerns about child abuse, would it be important to say more about it?

It is very important for our profession that GTCS does 'advise the education system'. I think it would be good to add more here. Is GTCS truly represented at the heart of Scottish Government policy development? What about its influence on University Schools of Education? There is still a good deal of academic drivel about, though not, I am delighted to say, in this document or GTCS works generally.

3. I approve strongly of the section on 'Mission and Vision'.

4. In describing 'How we work', especially with reference to 'our partners in education', I wondered whether the independent sector, in many cases so much more open to partnership, is included fully? It would be good too to hear about international partners and the difficulties which can emerge here: for instance, in relation to schools and universities in China.

5. I strongly support GTCS/s Key Priorities for the next 5 years, especially working with our partners to refine requirements for career-long professional learning, looking further into Fitness to Teach rules, looking at topical issues. I believe in research-informed publications too - though without academic drive!! Great to see the desire to develop and improve digital changes, and to support GTCS employees by embedding a framework of professional and personal development. Personal development is mentioned here, as it good be elsewhere.

Overall, a most stimulating document. Thank you.

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* The Welcome which begins the draft Strategic Plan from our Convener Khadija Mohammed is a wonderful start to the commitment to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in all its work. Her words could be enhanced by a picture, and there could be a picture of Pauline Stephen too. We need to recognise the importance of our leaders.

Response 21

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Overall the plan points the way ahead for the majority of teaching professionals. However my concerns are with retired teachers taking on supply work.

As a retired supply teacher, when I have had sufficient and suitable supply work, I have had no problems in keeping up to date with local and national developments and working on various aspects of CPD. This has allowed me to update my PU annually without any particular problems. When work in this area is sparse it is much more difficult with regards to CPD and PU.

I am fortunate to spend most of my supply work in one school in which I have my line manager. However when looking to the local authority or further afield for assistance I find there appears to be no official contact. The GTC does not appear to recognise that the support required for retired supply staff is not the same as that for full time staff or young supply teachers who have yet to find a permanent post. In order to retain GTC registration retired supply staff need a point of contact within the GTC and more targeted support to aid with CPD.

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Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 22

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I think some of the recent publications from GTCS have been helpful in supporting various areas - such as inclusive practice in education establishments. I also think the round table papers and discussion approach needs to be expanded. Could GTCS not play a more direct role in ensuring teachers are embedding practice to meet the professional standards - or more clearly showcasing what the practice might look like in practice?

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I think GTCS should have a specific target to support and encourage unrepresented groups into different roles across education. Whilst the showcase of work done in Glasgow to encourage minority ethnic candidates to apply for pupil support assistant roles is a positive start - it will need lead to increased diversity in leadership roles within education. Could a specific target help with this?

Response 23

Please tell us who you are

Education stakeholder

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

Well laid out, accessible, clear and succinct.

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Respondent did not answer this question.

Response 24

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I largely support the aims and ambitions set out in the Strategy Plan. However, the recent consultation on proposed changes to registration procedures indicated a number of potential adverse impacts to some sectors of teaching in Scotland. I agree wholeheartedly that public trust and professional standards are essential, but note that Strategic Objective #2 is hard to achieve when there is no clear job security for those teachers who have "Named School Only" registration, due to their vocational route into the profession or their possession of an unrecognised sector-specific teaching qualification. (This vocational route into the profession is 'set out in law' in the Instrument establishing the body.)

Registration changes into categories of Primary and Secondary teacher do not support Prep style teaching and may therefore also have an impact, particularly on the Independent Sector.

I wholeheartedly support the collaborative approach enshrined in the document and hope that Independent Schools will be in a position to work constructively with the GTCS to ensure that their Strategy aims can match the needs of this sector of Scottish Education.

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Considering diversity of education provision, the Strategic Plan does not address some of the ongoing concerns of the Independent sector of Scottish Education resulting from proposed changes to registration.

Response 25

Please tell us who you are

Education stakeholder

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Respondent did not answer this question.

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

The NASUWT broadly welcomes the strategic themes of trust and impact, but is concerned that insufficient actions have been cited in order to embed impact within the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) organisational ethos. Implicit within 'impact' is research, reflection and audit: processes which will be familiar to many registrants currently maintaining their registration with the GTCS via Professional Update, and Professional Review and Development. The objectives under the strategic themes fall short of modelling that reflective practice to the profession. The Union would wish to see greater specificity around engagement and impact assessment, and indeed, as part of that process of collaboration, trade union voices explicitly embedded within the GTCS' engagement and consultation protocols.

The Union warmly welcomes a commitment to focus on core functions, a prerequisite to maintain trust and confidence from the profession. We would, however, welcome further details around the objective to 'provide improved access to resources designed to encourage learning and wellbeing' as, depending on how this is framed in reality, there may be an unhappy crossover between the role of Education Scotland, and its replacement, and the role of the GTCS. Certainly, the NASUWT has previously expressed concerns where guidance on the GTCS website is badged 'GTCS' yet has been drafted by Education Scotland: collaboration cannot mean wholesale adoption of guidance produced entirely by a third party.

What is missing from the draft strategic plan, following on from the statement that the GTCS is self-regulating, is an explicit acknowledgement that to be self-regulating the GTCS must

ensure it reflects the profession. The GTCS must seek to engage teachers and registrants from under-represented groups directly and give them a platform to inform policy. The voices of those under-represented groups must be amplified in order to meet the stated shared set of values, namely 'trust and respect, social justice and integrity'. It is insufficient for the GTCS to commit to 'lead and support initiatives to improve diversity in teaching and promote teaching as a positive professional career' where that reflective lens has not been turned on its own internal structures and staffing.

The NASUWT has repeatedly stressed to the GTCS that more must be done than reference equalities; indeed, within the draft strategic plan there is insufficient reference to actions which will embed equalities. The GTCS is specifically referred to in Part 3 of Schedule 19 of the 2010 Equality Act, and is therefore subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Consequently, the GTCS must, inter alia, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard for the need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. For example, applicants who have a protected characteristic and are considering entering the teaching profession should feel encouraged to do so and feel that the profession is welcoming of diversity, rather than simply meeting minimum statutory requirements.

It is noteworthy that when the draft strategic plan sets out that the GTCS 'role is to register and regulate' and 'what this looks like for teachers and college lecturers changes throughout their career and context', it fails to acknowledge the non-linear journey many teachers experience in their career. For example, teachers returning from a career break as a result of family-caring responsibilities, such as childrearing, will not see themselves or their journey reflected within the GTCS' narrative, yet the organisation's role in facilitating their return to teaching is critical.

Finally, it is set out in the plan that 'our principles are our values in action...these are: we care, we add value, we learn, we communicate and we collaborate'. The NASUWT would wish to see transparency and accountability featured more strongly within the GTCS principles.

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See response to [previous question].

Response 26

Please tell us who you are

Teacher or college lecturer

To what extent do you agree with the content of the proposed draft Strategic Plan 2023-2028?

Strongly agree

What are your views on the plan? Please submit your comments below.

I agree that we need trust in the teaching profession. I feel that by professional update and by a renewed commitment to lifelong learning we can achieve this.

GTC Scotland is committed to ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in all its work. Please tell us if you consider that any of the draft Strategic Plan will create any equality, diversity and inclusion impact(s) – positive or negative – on any individuals who may be affected by it.

I am not aware of this.