



Learning Reps News

Edinburgh Local Association

Can retirement kill you? [Can retirement kill you? - BBC Worklife](#)

No doubt we have all returned to the new term having send dear friends and colleagues off to retirement at the end of last term. We are all pretty familiar with the script for this type of event. A long serving, much respected colleague seeks to avoid being the centre of attention at a staff break whilst senior management and/or colleagues take turns imparting reflections and gratitudes, after which a whip round envelope and a bunch of flowers are presented. Apologies if at this point I appear to sound churlish but often we are talking about colleagues who have given 40 years of themselves to a school community. And to dispel any misunderstanding, I am not referring to the need for some kind of 'golden handshake', but rather the need to think about how we as a union, together with our employer, might best support colleagues onto the next phase of their life. Perhaps this is not something you have considered but my relief at seeing the above title as a question rather than as an assertion (where the first 2 words are swapped around) was a little short lived when I read the BBC article it relates to. According to a 2013 report published by the Institute of Economic Affairs, retirement increased the chance of depression by 40% and the probability of being diagnosed with at least one physical condition by approx. 60%. Clearly there are many reasons for this but leaving the workplace, which for most people is the place they are most sociable and physically active is seen as a major factor. For teachers this is especially true.

To delve a little into this issue I recently met and interviewed a member who retired at the end of 2023 after teaching for over 40 years. They described some difficulties in coping with the

lack of routine and the loss of social links, and how best to fill a 'big hole in the day'. They then began to talk about how surprised they felt by the loss of their status as a teacher and how this made them feel less important than previously. This knock to their pride and self-esteem resulted in them hanging onto things e.g. continuing to write 'teacher' on forms, and how they still liked to take an interest through existing connections. Almost a year into retirement, despite continuing to lead a life full of interests and passions, they were still reflecting upon the change of pace and the lack of pressure to achieve every day. Such fleeting thoughts aside, transition to retirement has been good and in large part down to prior changes in role and work commitments rather than taking a cliff edge or 'cold turkey' approach to stopping work. The member was however at pains to convey that we are all different and what works for one may not be the best approach for another. Regardless of this, leaving work is in one way or another an emotional rollercoaster, and as 'ageScotland' studies show, no different to bereavement (just let that sink in!). How then do we prevent ourselves becoming one of the 40% or 60% mentioned above?



Of course financial planning is central to any planned retirement but I was slightly taken aback in my discussion with Jonathan Park of ageScotland to hear how 'You should not leave work even if you are financially able to do so'. This idea of course chimes with the commonly held view amongst researchers working in the field who advocate transitioning into retirement, which is to say considering how to reduce hours and/or changing roles. When it is acknowledged that the average time spent in retirement from age 67 is 14 years (ageScotland) there is perhaps some latitude to consider working on a bit beyond the old scheme retirement age of 60. My feeling is that due to the intensity of teaching this would undoubtedly require some adaptations to the working week for most people. Younger members in the CARE scheme clearly need to consider how working beyond 60 to a potential retirement age of 67 might look for them. But for all of us this is essentially about how we can be empowered and enabled to make the right decisions. I would suggest this moves beyond an understanding of important financial considerations and into the practicalities of how our employer can support our health and well-being, together with established pathways that allow transition towards retirement. This is clearly a 2-way street where the benefits of extending the service of our most experienced colleagues is of great benefit, particularly at a time when recruitment and retention is highly problematic.

ageScotland studies have determined that the optimum time to gather information for most people is 2-5 years prior to the intended retirement date. This means that potentially we have a lot of members in scope so we would like to send out a very short survey on your retirement planning needs. This will literally ask you a question or two and take a few short seconds to complete. Please look out for it in the coming weeks.

Health & Well-Being



We continue to focus on health and well-being and look for structural changes to support us in our workplace. In our last Learning Rep news Martyn explained how we have been engaging with Education Support who are the only UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and school staff. He caught up with Faye McGuinness their Director of Programmes for Education Support at the AGM and related details of their conversation, which is well worth a read if you haven't done so already. See here [LRnewsletterJUNE24.pdf \(eis.org.uk\)](#) This will give you more of an insight into who Education Support are and what they can potentially do for you and your colleagues in the workplace.

[Education Support, supporting teachers and education staff](#)

Along with Martyn our colleague Claire Chalmers has also been participating in our Health and Well-being Steering Group chaired by Linda Lees (Head of CEC's Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning). At the last meeting in June our representations to the Group that PL relating to H&WB could and should be included within our PRD plans received broad acceptance and discussions were had about how to filter this down into schools. **This week we received confirmation from Linda that Lorna French has now sent out an email communication to senior leaders reaffirming this. We are especially pleased about this development and wish to publicly thank our senior leaders in CEC for enabling a consensus.** The importance of this cannot be understated as it is evident that some members are still being put upon to 'pick' things entirely off their school improvement plan. Of course there is an element of this making sense if it is an area you want to focus on for your own professional development, but don't forget that we must all reflect upon the GTCS Standards as part of the PRD process. In this, it is clear that '*Promoting health and wellbeing of self, colleagues and the children and young people in my care*' is required (1.1 Professional Values, Social Justice, The Standard for Career Long professional Learning, GTC Scotland).

CEC Professional Learning



We have come a long way from when we used to use (or in my case, try to find) the old CPD paper directory that should have been held in the school office for staff to peruse. Now in the digital age we have 'Edinburgh Learns', 'Edinburgh Learns Digital' and 'myLearning Hub' which can be accessed through the Orb, websites or by periodic emails dropping into your inbox. I'm showing my age, but all of this has put my head in a spin and I yearn for the simplicity of the old paper CPD version. Clearly we are beyond that but it is our feeling that we need something more 'streamlined' which will allow us to access the wide range of excellent PL opportunities that are being offered. At this stage we are beginning to open up discussions with our CEC colleagues so that we can begin to explore how this can be done.

Your Learning Reps



Martyn and I are your Learning Reps. In our role as Learning Reps we seek to support and promote the learning aspirations of you the members. We met recently to discuss and plan for areas of learning that we would like to focus on in the coming year, but are there any areas of personal professional interest that you would like to develop? We are always keen to support members and offer advice where we can. Please do not hesitate to get in touch and we will always try to get back to you as soon as possible. Hopefully we will get the chance to meet and engage with some of you in the near future.

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Your Professional Learning 2024



Hopefully you will have seen an ebulletin from our PL Coordinators at EIS HQ drop into your inbox detailing a range of PL opportunities for the forthcoming session. I've cut and pasted the introduction below as a reminder but it also has links to Pauline, Zoe and the EIS website.

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of **Your Professional Learning** for 2024-25. This ebulletin covers the range of opportunities offered by the EIS, from member-led workshops to courses developed with partners.

We want to ensure PL is driven by EIS members, and so we warmly welcome your thoughts on your own professional learning, and what's on offer. Please contact PL Coordinators Pauline McColgan:

pmccolgan@eis.org.uk and Zoe McKeown:

zmckeown@eis.org.uk if there are any areas you would like to discuss.



We look forward to welcoming you along to these opportunities in the coming months. Please find information on upcoming courses below or [visit the professional learning section of the EIS website](#) to browse all opportunities.