

National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce  
**Consultation for Individual Early Years and  
Childcare Workers and Childminders**

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## Consultation for Individual Early Years and Childcare Workers and Childminders

This consultation paper is designed specifically to gather the views of individual members of staff and childminders. The information gathered will be used to help us implement the action set out in the Scottish Executive Response to the National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce.

There are also consultation questions in the main Report of the Review. These are aimed primarily at managers of services, employers, representative bodies, training providers and other organisations involved in early years and childcare. Instructions for responding to that consultation are included in the main Report.

A copy of the Report of the Review and the Scottish Executive Response was sent to managers of all early years and childcare services and other key organisations. This booklet includes a summary of what the Review and Response said.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONSULTATION

We are inviting written responses to this consultation paper by **22 December 2006**.

#### **Please respond by:**

- **posting this consultation booklet to:**  
Early Years and Childcare Workforce Review Team  
2B-North  
Victoria Quay  
EDINBURGH  
EH6 6QQ
- **sending your response electronically** – to access this consultation online, go to **[www.scotland.gov.uk/view/views.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/view/views.asp)** where you can download the questions and e-mail your response to **[EYCWorkforceReview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EYCWorkforceReview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)**

If you don't have internet access you can telephone Freephone 0800 77 1234 to find out where your nearest public internet access point is.

**If you have any queries please e-mail [EYCWorkforceReview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:EYCWorkforceReview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk) or phone Steven Bell on 0131 244 7657.**

#### **Access to consultation responses**

We will make all responses available to the public in the Scottish Executive Library by 16 February 2007 unless confidentiality is requested. All responses not marked confidential will be checked for any potentially defamatory material before being logged in the library or placed on the website.

## **NATIONAL REVIEW OF THE EARLY YEARS AND CHILDCARE WORKFORCE**

Investing in our children and their childhoods makes sense. There are social and economic benefits for children and for families. However, we should also value childhood for just that. Children deserve the best possible childhood experience and we should celebrate it. Likewise, we should value the staff who work with children and their childhoods.

As a result of a growing body of research evidence, we are now, more than ever, recognising the benefits of quality early years and childcare services for children and parents. We know that children who attend quality early years services benefit in their cognitive and social development, and in confidence. Disadvantaged children benefit even more. School-age children can also benefit from childcare – improved attainment at school, attendance, behaviour; and in the level of parental involvement which is the single most important factor in improving children’s attainment at school, more so than parental income or level of education.

Working in early years and childcare is often seen as low-skill work. In reality, however, the services provided by workers in the sector influence how children develop and learn, and have the potential to help raise children out of poverty by giving them the best possible start in life whatever their family circumstances. It also removes barriers for some parents, particularly single parents, wishing to gain employment.

The roles and responsibilities of the workforce are diverse, challenging and changing. This Review is an opportunity for us to build on good work around the country, to set standards for the future and to ensure all workers achieve the status that their crucial role deserves.

## WHAT THE REVIEW SAID

The Review identified three main themes that will guide all of the changes that will affect the early years and childcare sector in the future. Those themes are leadership, worker development and flexibility.

- A Roles and Responsibilities Framework has been developed that creates a central **leadership** role for the lead practitioner/manager of a service. The lead practitioner/manager has a role in, for example: assisting their staff to appreciate how they as an individual and a service are contributing to the *Vision* for children; facilitating partnership, working with other occupational groups; and encouraging, advising and mentoring staff to develop their own skills and knowledge.
- We need to help each worker **develop** their skills, knowledge and potential throughout their career, to ensure that we have the workers with the right skills to deliver the quality services we need, and so each worker has the opportunity to pursue a rewarding career in early years and childcare.
- **Flexibility** in career choice for workers and employers should create a flexible workforce to allow the delivery of services that meet the needs of children and families in local communities. A flexible workforce which is able to work in different settings and with different professionals will be essential to deliver integrated and changing services.

## FINDINGS

### Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the workforce are diverse, challenging and changing. Each worker should recognise that they are part of a wider workforce, working in partnership with others to support delivery of an agreed set of outcomes for all children.

#### Summary Finding 1

To develop a single, shared framework to encompass the diverse roles and responsibilities of the early years and childcare workforce, which links explicitly to the *Vision* for children.

### Qualifications and Training

Whilst evidence shows that children do best in the highest quality centres, there is also evidence to show that a poor quality service can have negative effects for disadvantaged children. **Critically, the single most significant factor in determining the quality of the centre is the level of qualification of the manager of the centre, and to a lesser extent the level of qualification of the wider workforce.**

### **Summary Finding 2**

To develop a new qualifications structure for the sector, whose main attributes will be:

- one framework for the whole sector;
- services to be led by SCQF level 9 (ordinary degree or work-based equivalent) qualified professionals;
- entry and exit points at each level – supporting flexibility and movement;
- college, university and work-based routes – supporting flexibility and inclusion;
- recognition and accreditation of prior learning – supporting flexibility and inclusion;
- supports progression and continuing professional development (CPD);
- supports identification of shared skills/knowledge base across children’s services.

### **Recruitment and Retention**

To provide the kind of services we want for children we need to have the right people in the sector.

### **Summary Finding 3**

We identified a number of straightforward principles that should underpin all recruitment and retention practice:

- profile of the sector needs to be raised and professional identity established;
- need to attract the right workers to the profession;
- need to retain experienced, well-qualified staff;
- need a workforce that more closely reflects the diversity of the Scottish population.

### **Career Pathways**

We need to make sure that early years and childcare is an attractive profession: one that is respected, and where there are opportunities for development and career progression.

### **Summary Finding 4**

There are four key principles underpinning effective career pathways:

- transparency, flexibility and choice;
- qualifications which support – rather than hinder – a diverse range of career pathways;
- rewarding workers for increasing responsibility and skill; and
- attractive to a wide section of the community.

## Workforce Planning

The sector's greatest resource and asset is the workforce. All organisations involved in delivering early years and childcare services have a role in planning for that workforce.

### Summary Finding 5

Develop an approach to workforce planning that is consistent across the country but is flexible enough both to be useful to small individual providers and to much larger organisations such as local authorities.

## WHAT THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW SAID

In their response, Ministers set out what they intend to do to start the process, building on the progress the Executive has already made in improving services and providing development opportunities for many staff within the sector. The key actions Ministers intend to take are:

- **Developing leadership** in the early years and childcare sector by creating a workforce that is led by degree (or a work-based equivalent) qualified professionals. Ministers want the first managers to be able to start continuing professional development routes to the new professional leadership level by September 2008. Ministers will ask the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to amend their registration requirements from 2011 to require lead practitioner/managers to have attained this leadership level or to attain it within a specified period.
- **Creating a genuine career structure** for the workforce where career progression and development is supported by a qualifications and professional development framework. Ministers want the framework to be in place by September 2009 to allow workers to develop their professional skill and competence to progress their careers, which for some will be towards management and leadership roles. The Executive's analysis supported by economic theory indicates that increasing levels of qualification in the workforce would be expected to lead to increasing pay in the sector.
- **Supporting private and voluntary sector** providers of pre-school education to invest in their workforces by providing an additional £5m each year to increase the "advisory floor". Increased payments to providers will begin in the 2006-07 school year.

Ministers are confident that together, these actions will improve the status and recognition of the workforce and support improved recruitment, retention and progression within the sector.

## Key Proposals

Ministers' long-term ambition is for all centres to be led by early years and childcare leaders who are qualified (including through a professional development route) at SCQF level 9 (ordinary degree or work-based equivalent).

Ministers expect:

- work to construct an integrated qualifications and professional development framework to start in September 2006 and to be completed by September 2007;
- programmes offering the new qualifications and professional development for leaders to be in place by September 2008;
- programmes offering new qualifications and professional development for those entering and progressing through the workforce to be in place by September 2009;
- a toolkit which supports understanding of progression routes for early years and childcare workers to be in place by September 2009;
- the workforce to be considered as a highly regarded, high quality, highly qualified sector with workers earnings reflecting the quality of qualifications;
- local authorities to offer increased flexibility in delivering early years and childcare services.

To assist private and voluntary sector providers of pre-school education to recruit and retain qualified staff:

- from this year, the Scottish Executive will invest an additional £5m p.a. in pre-school education to fund an increase in the "advisory floor" used to inform local authority decisions about the cost of providing pre-school places;
- in the longer term Ministers intend to move towards a position where all centres providing quality services are funded on a similar basis.

## Consultation for Individual Early Years and Childcare Workers and Childminders

Please complete the details below to help us handle your response appropriately:

### Your Details

Name: _____
Address: _____ _____ _____
Post Code: _____
E-mail: _____
Consultation title: National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce

**1a.** Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in SE library and/or on SE website)?

Yes (go to 1b below)  No, not at all

**1b.** Where **confidentiality is not requested**, we will make your response available to the public on the following basis (**please tick one** of the following boxes)

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

Yes, make my response available, but not my name or address

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

**2.** We will share your response internally with other SE policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future for consultation or research purposes?

Yes  No



## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

### Instructions for completion

The following questions are specifically for individual early years and childcare workers; whether you work in a group setting with other staff, for example in a nursery or after school club, or as a sole worker, perhaps as a childminder.

Questions A to D are for childminders only. Questions E to I are for staff who work in group settings.

We would ask you to record your response in the space provided after each question.

### Questions A to D for Childminders Only

Childminders deliver essential services and are an integral part of this workforce. Working in quite different circumstances to most other early years and childcare workers – usually as the sole provider and manager of a service. Childminders are registered with the Care Commission and there is not currently a requirement for childminders to hold qualifications. Ministers do not have any plans to introduce a requirement, but we do want to see childminders undertake qualifications and professional development.

**A** How important is it that childminders have qualifications that are on a par with the rest of the early years and childcare workforce?

Very Important       Important       Not important

Comments:

A qualifications and professional development framework will be designed to accommodate the specific circumstances of sole workers such as childminders, to encourage their training and learning.

**B** Would you actively undertake training and learning if it was recognised within a single qualifications and professional development framework for the whole early years and childcare sector?

Yes  No

**C** As a sole worker what prevents you from undertaking training and learning?

**D** What would help you to start or continue your learning and development?



## Questions E to I for Staff Working in Group Settings

### Qualifications and Training

Research indicates that children do better in early primary school when the early years and childcare service they attend is led by a manager or lead practitioner who is qualified to degree level, for example a teacher (although this person doesn't necessarily have to be a teacher).

The Review proposes that managers and lead practitioners should be qualified to SCQF level 9 (equivalent to an ordinary degree). This might be a new qualification which provides a mix of theory and practical experience and which would build on existing qualifications, e.g. HNCs or SVQs. The Review anticipated that any changes would take place over a number of years.

**E Is an SCQF level 9 (ordinary degree equivalent) qualification for managers and lead practitioners high enough?**

Yes  No

Comments:

Whilst working in early years and childcare it is important to reflect on your practice and to continue to learn and develop your skills.

**F Does your employer support you in your continuing professional development (CPD)?**

Yes  Please give an example

No  What would help?

### Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and Retention is about how employers attract and keep the staff they need.

**G** Describe from your experience, what attracted you to work for your current or any previous early years employer?

**H** If you could suggest to employers how they could help attract new recruits or keep workers in the sector, what would be your three most important suggestions?



### Roles and Responsibilities

Over the years the roles and responsibilities of the early years and childcare worker have steadily evolved and continue to change. The Review found that many of the tasks and jobs carried out across the sector are similar, even though there are currently a huge range of different job titles. As our understanding of the needs of children and young people expands, the workforce who cares for those children need to become more adaptable, flexible and skilled in order to deliver the best service possible.

**I In your role as an early years and childcare worker, are there any training gaps between what you were initially trained to do and the work you now carry out in the workplace?**

Yes  No

**What are those gaps?**

## The Scottish Executive Consultation Process

Consultation is an essential and important aspect of Scottish Executive working methods. Given the wide-ranging areas of work of the Scottish Executive, there are many varied types of consultation. However, in general, Scottish Executive consultation exercises aim to provide opportunities for all those who wish to express their opinions on a proposed area of work to do so in ways which will inform and enhance that work.

While details of particular circumstances described in a response to a consultation exercise may usefully inform the policy process, consultation exercises cannot address individual concerns and comments, which should be directed to the relevant public body. Consultation exercises may involve seeking views in a number of different ways, such as public meetings, focus groups or questionnaire exercises.

Typically, Scottish Executive consultations involve a written paper inviting answers to specific questions or more general views about the material presented. Written papers are distributed to organisations and individuals with an interest in the area of consultation, and they are also placed on the Scottish Executive website enabling a wider audience to access the paper and submit their responses<sup>1</sup>. Copies of all the responses received to consultation exercises (except those where the individual or organisation requested confidentiality) are placed in the Scottish Executive library at Saughton House, Edinburgh (K Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh EH11 3XD, telephone 0131 244 4552).

The views and suggestions detailed in consultation responses are analysed and used as part of the decision making process. Depending on the nature of the consultation exercise the responses received may:

- indicate the need for policy development or review
- inform the development of a particular policy
- help decisions to be made between alternative policy proposals
- be used to finalise legislation before it is implemented.

If you have any comment about how this consultation exercise has been conducted, please send them to:

Early Years and Childcare Workforce Review Team  
2B-North  
Victoria Quay  
EDINBURGH  
EH6 6QQ

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<sup>1</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)





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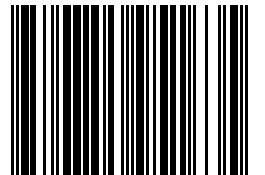
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