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**Respond by 22 April 2013**  
**Ref: Department for Education**

**Consultation on the criteria for Early Years Educator  
qualifications (Level 3)**

## **Consultation on the criteria for Early Years Educator qualifications (Level 3)**

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) currently sets out the requirements for staff: child ratios for all providers delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage and the qualification levels that practitioners must hold. It is the role of the Teaching Agency to define the Level 3 'full and relevant' qualifications that practitioners included in the specified ratios must hold.

This consultation seeks your views on proposed 'full and relevant' criteria to underpin new Level 3 qualifications from September 2014 that will qualify individuals to become Early Years Educators.

**To** Parents/carers, Nurseries and Other Pre-School Settings, Local Authorities, Awarding Organisations, Training Providers, Early Years Practitioners, Childminders, Schools, Teachers

**Issued** 26 February 2013

**Enquiries** If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288

**To** e-mail: [Fullandrelevantcriteria.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Fullandrelevantcriteria.CONSULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Contact Details**

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Public Communications Unit by e-mail: [consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's '[Contact Us](#)' page.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government's publication ['More great childcare'](#) (January 2013) sets out the vision for quality in early education and childcare and includes the Government's response to Professor Cathy Nutbrown's report ['Foundations for Quality'](#) published in June 2012.
- 1.2 As well as the influence of parents and families, high quality early education and childcare, delivered with love and care, can have a powerful impact on young children. The evidence is clear that a good start in these early years can have a positive effect on children's development, preparing them for school and later life.
- 1.3 The Government wants to make sure there is more great childcare available for parents and children. The introduction of Early Years Teachers (Graduate) and Early Years Educators (Level 3) will support early years providers in ensuring that those they employ to work with babies and young children become increasingly skilled and professional.
- 1.4 Professor Cathy Nutbrown recently reviewed qualifications for the early education and childcare workforce. Her report, ['Foundations for Quality'](#), was a timely reminder of the case for a more professional and more highly qualified workforce. She rightly celebrated many examples of excellent practice, but also highlighted a number of concerns over the quality of early years qualifications. She expressed 'significant doubts over whether the content of courses covers the skills and knowledge that people need to work in the sector'. Professor Nutbrown also noted that 'at present, there is no requirement for those studying at any level to demonstrate competence in English and mathematics in order to complete an early years qualification'.
- 1.5 The Government strongly endorses Professor Cathy Nutbrown's view that the workforce supporting our babies, young children and their parents should be well-qualified, well-respected and well-led. The Government will ensure new and better qualifications at Level 3, to qualify people to become 'Early Years Educators'. These qualifications will be the modern equivalent of the highly respected Nursery Nurse Diploma which used to be provided by the National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) but was discontinued in the mid-1990s.

- 1.6** The Government accepts Professor Nutbrown's recommendation that the previously articulated plan to move to a single early years qualification should be abandoned. However, all new Early Years Educator qualifications from September 2014 must meet the 'full and relevant' criteria agreed following this consultation.
- 1.7** Working with Ofqual and Awarding Organisations, the Teaching Agency will consider titling and badging arrangements to ensure learners and employers are confident that a qualification enables individuals to work in early years and be counted within EYFS staffing ratios.

## **2** Early Years Educator Criteria

- 2.1** The Statutory Framework for the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) (EYFS) currently sets out the requirements for staff: child ratios in nurseries and for childminders delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the qualification levels practitioners must hold. It is the role of the Teaching Agency to define the Level 3 'full and relevant' qualifications that practitioners included in the specified ratios must hold.
- 2.2** The Teaching Agency currently does this by defining criteria that underpin qualifications developed by Awarding Organisations. Qualifications that meet the criteria are defined as 'full and relevant' and are included on the [Early Years Qualifications List](#).
- 2.3** The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Education & Childcare) has asked the Teaching Agency to consult on new, tougher 'full and relevant' criteria to ensure the new Early Years Educator qualifications build on the richer content and standards as recommended by Professor Nutbrown.
- 2.4** The Government agrees with Professor Nutbrown that it would not be practical to apply the new Early Years Educator criteria retrospectively. This would be disruptive to the workforce. The most sensible approach is that qualifications are assessed against the criteria in place when they were awarded. This will ensure that nobody is unfairly disadvantaged by changes to the system.

### 3 Training leading to Early Years Educator Qualifications

- 3.1 Training providers will develop courses to support learners to achieve the Early Years Educator qualifications. These will take, on average, two years to complete for new entrants. DfE will work with partners in further education and training to improve the quality of training available to childcare trainees.
- 3.2 Entrants to these training courses will be expected to have secured at least a C grade in GCSE English and mathematics.
- 3.3 Training providers will be expected to include a high proportion of practical work experience in their courses, normally only with good or outstanding high quality providers.

### 4 Aims of consultation

- 4.1 The purpose of this consultation is to seek your views on the proposed 'full and relevant' criteria to underpin new qualifications from September 2014 that will qualify individuals to become Early Years Educators.
- 4.2 The criteria lay out the minimum for what an Early Years Educator should know, understand and be able to do to be considered qualified at Level 3 when delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is divided into two sections:

**Section i** summarises qualification content and assessment criteria  
**Section ii** defines the minimum requirements that underpin content criteria

- 4.3 The draft criteria were developed taking into account Professor Nutbrown's proposals. In addition consideration was given to the content of the former NNEB Nursery Nurse Diploma, the National Occupational Standards for Child Care Learning & Development and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 4.4 The Teaching Agency will publish the Early Years Educator (Level 3) criteria for the new qualifications in Summer 2013. Awarding Organisations will develop qualifications in time for introduction from September 2014.

## 5 How To Respond

### 5.1 by emailing

[Fullandrelevantcriteria.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Fullandrelevantcriteria.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk)

or by downloading a response form which should be completed and sent to: DfE Consultation Unit, Area 1C, Castle View House, East Lane, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2GJ.

## 6 Additional Copies

### 6.1 Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from the Department for Education e-consultation website at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations>

## 7 Plans for making results public

### 7.1 The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be published on the DfE e-consultation website in Summer 2013.