

# **Children's Workforce Development Council**

## **Early Years Workforce – A Way Forward**

## **Introduction**

1. The Early Years sector has been transformed in the last five years. Its workforce is better qualified, better skilled and more diverse. More children are getting a better start in life.
2. The joint DfE and DH's Supporting Families in the Foundation Years<sup>1</sup> is a welcome document and demonstrates this government's commitment to continue to support what it calls the Early Education and Childcare workforce to make life better for our children and their families.
3. This paper is informed by employers, by CWDC Board and members and by the learning from the five years of the Early Years programme.

## **Purpose**

4. The purpose of this paper is to communicate key messages to DfE, the Teaching Agency and to other sector leaders who will support the Early Education and Childcare workforce in the future.
5. From 1 April 2012, CWDC's function of supporting this workforce will transfer to the Teaching Agency.

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<sup>1</sup> Supporting Families in the Foundation Years

## **Executive Summary**

6. The transformation in the Early Education and Childcare workforce towards being graduate led, minimum level 3, has been driven by both national and local leaders. This qualifications strategy has been a key lever to improving the quality of provision to young children. DfE, Teaching Agency, Local Authority and Voluntary and Private Sector leaders have an important role to support local areas maintain quality provision in the current climate of localism and economic downturn.
7. The key messages to national leaders are:
  - Regulation has been a welcome lever for the transformation of the workforce;
  - Quality of provision in the Early Education and Childcare sector is crucial for outcomes for children and families. The quality of the workforce is a key factor in determining the quality of provision. This workforce needs rigorous sustained attention;
  - The drive must be maintained for a graduate-led workforce through promoting the Early Years Professional Status , Level 3 as the baseline qualification for working with children 0-5 years and supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
  - The quality of the workforce is determined partly by the quality of training provision. This too needs rigorous sustained attention;
  - The drive must be maintained for a coherent and simple qualifications structure that parents and employers understand, have confidence in ;
  - There has been progress towards employer leadership of the sector. However, given the fragmented nature of the sector a strong policy direction by national government continues to be needed for the Early Education and Childcare sector in order to give employers the necessary degree of business confidence to make the significant financial investment in staff development necessary;
  - Keep public funding available to support this sector. The government must ensure that its market support to the sector (for example through subsidised places for two, three and four year olds and childcare tax incentives) is sufficient to support the ongoing level of investment necessary by employers; and
  - There is a significant unquantified, non-regulated section of the early education and childcare workforce. This workforce is vital in the lives of children but its training needs are mostly unmapped and unaddressed.

## **Recommendations:**

### National Leadership

8. DfE and The Teaching Agency should have systems in place for meaningful engagement with the Voluntary and Private Sector employers and providers. They are key stakeholders in the continued transformation of the early education and childcare workforce. They should contribute to the advisory board of the Teaching Agency and DfE strategic partnerships.
9. DfE and the Teaching Agency should give high profile support to Early Years Professional Status and the research evidence now available that demonstrates the impact of EYPs on outcomes for children. In addition it should provide clarification about the comparability of QTS and EYPS.

### Sustainability

10. DfE and the Teaching Agency to give attention to the issue of sustainability. A market assessment is needed of employers' ability to employ graduate workers across the whole sector (private, voluntary and statutory). Similarly due consideration must be given to parents' ability to pay for a quality assured service for their children in the current economic climate.

### Regulation

11. DfE should continue to regulate the early education and childcare workforce in order to continue the trend of improving the quality. Indeed it is essential that regulatory requirements are strengthened over time as they are currently set at a low level. The risks associated with the large unregulated workforce dealing with children should be assessed.
12. Raise the bar on regulation to encourage a graduate led, minimum level 3 workforce and to reflect what is being achieved in practice. This could include a requirement for registered childminders to pass an Introduction to Childcare course that is at a level 3 qualification level prior to registration in order to set them on this level 3 pathway at their point of entry.

### Qualifications

13. The government should retain a qualifications framework. Reduced numbers of qualifications, strictly quality assured are cost effective and very much wanted by employers.
14. DfE/ the Teaching Agency should keep the momentum of the qualifications strategy by:
  - Support the Spring 2012 cut-off date by which all new learners must achieve the Level 2 Certificate / Level 3 Diploma (or Extended Diploma which includes the Level 3 Diploma);

- Stipulate what is full and relevant for the purposes of registration and regulation, preferably by supporting (and if necessary adjusting) the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce and the Extended Diploma for 16-19 year-old learners;
  - Continue to use the Qualifications List for those delivering the EYFS to deal with historic qualifications only (as was originally intended) and not in perpetuity as an 'acceptable' qualifications list;
  - Ensure the Teaching Agency has the necessary levers to maintain progress on the qualification strategy;
  - Build on CWDC's work to describe progression routes and promote careers in early learning and childcare as well as apprenticeships and foundation degrees;
  - Ensure the qualifications review considers the qualifications system as a whole including quality assurance of and by awarding organisations and training providers, and the funding methodology for adult and young learners;
  - Resolve the Steiner Waldorf/ Montessori issues; and
  - Continue to promote the benefits of completion of the Qualifications Audit Tool to settings.
15. DfE / OfQual should ensure that awarding bodies have robust mechanisms to quality assure training programmes. This is important to give employers confidence in individual qualifications.
16. Government should ensure that the quality assurance processes used by its own funding agencies are sufficiently robust to ensure a high standard of delivery by training providers accessing public funds.

### Early Intervention

17. DfE /Teaching Agency should ensure that there is a strong focus on the importance of early intervention and engagement with parents woven into the scope and vision of the Teaching Agency from its inception.

### Views from Employers

18. This paper has been informed by the views from the frontline, provided by CWDC's Frontline Employer team<sup>2</sup>, and by its Members group.
19. The most significant issues raised by the frontline are:
- The primary concerns of private nursery owner/ managers relate to sustainability and financial viability. Factors cited include increasing wage and running costs, parental debt, a general reluctance to increase fees in the

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<sup>2</sup> Early Years Legacy Paper – Notes on Conversations

current economic climate and reduced local authority financial support for training and graduate wage subsidy<sup>3</sup>;

- Local authority budget cuts are a big concern for childminders, with just under two thirds saying they are very or quite concerned about the impact of local authority cuts on childminding<sup>4</sup>;
- Occupancy patterns are an issue in those areas where the local authority is moving to a single annual school entry date. Termly entry to reception tends to 'smooth' occupancy for nursery providers;
- A reduction in the number of different qualifications is strongly supported by employers. The idea of a more unified qualification structure that allows people to 'cross over' disciplines is generally felt to be a good idea. Staff turnover among private nurseries remains low, therefore most settings have yet to recruit people with the new Level 2 Certificate and Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. However it was repeatedly stated that existing Level 3 qualifications fail to prepare people adequately;
- There is a widespread view among nursery owner/ managers that NVQ type qualifications that are mainly achieved in the workplace are not of sufficient rigour and, in particular, are not preparing young workers adequately;
- Employers report wide variations in the quality of training delivered by different providers and are somewhat sceptical about the length of time taken to achieve qualifications in some instances. (Quality issues were raised in those situations where a Level 3 qualification can be achieved in 4-6 months);
- The Single Funding Formula is an issue for a number of group-based settings with a higher number of children with additional needs. Private settings feel there is a marked discrepancy between what is available to the statutory sector and to them to support children with additional needs;
- The Single Funding Formula is also a key issue for childminders – at present only 17% are accredited to deliver this for 3 and 4 year olds<sup>5</sup>. The lack of accredited Quality Improvement Childminding Networks in around half of local authorities means that many are not supported to undertake the accreditation process. Funding levels for childminder places varies significantly between different local authorities, and the supplements are often not competitive. Funding rates also vary between the 2 year old offer and the 3 and 4 year old offer, which means that a childminder will experience a drop in income when a child in their care receiving the 2 year old free entitlement turns three, despite the fact that they can still only offer the same number of places because of ratio requirements;

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<sup>3</sup> Early Years Legacy Paper – Notes on Conversations

<sup>4</sup> NCMA membership survey 2011. Bromley: Lake Market Research

<sup>5</sup> NCMA membership survey 2011

- The difficulty in rewarding Early Years Professionals (EYPs) and graduates adequately is still a key issue and low pay generally is seen as the main barrier to recruitment and retention of good staff<sup>6</sup>. Loss of EYPs and graduate staff into schools and the statutory sector is still a significant factor despite the recent squeeze on public sector recruitment. Private settings perceive themselves to be used as a career 'stepping stone' into other sectors by graduates in many instances;
- As childminders tend to charge based on a 'going rate' for their local area, rather than their qualification level, it can be difficult to incentivise them to improve their qualifications. This is compounded by the fact that more than half of registered childminders have an annual turnover of £10,000 or less<sup>7</sup>, meaning that it is difficult to fund their own training. An incentive could be created by ensuring that the Single Funding Formula offers a substantial supplement for qualifications, as at present the supplements often only serve to align the local authority's rate with what a childminder currently charges;
- Budget cuts are the main issue for all local authority Early Years lead officers with a wide variation in 2011/12 settlements. A few areas have remained relatively unscathed, with minimal cuts to EY budgets; whereas others have been hit hard (one LA for example quotes a cut from £1.8m in 2010/11 to £250k in 2011/12);
- Most local authority leads are concerned about their ability to continue to support settings with training and development and the majority are reducing the subsidy they give to support EYP salary enhancement. This can be between £10-15k per EYP per setting. Many foresee a big knock-on to individual settings and therefore employment of EYPs as a result;
- Some local authority leads are concerned that the schools agenda is dominating in the bid for resource – local flexibility of funding means allocations are much more influenced by the local political agenda. Concerns were raised about the 'weight' that will be given to Early Years by the new Teaching Agency; and
- There was a high degree of cross-sector support for CWDC and what has been achieved in early years. Many employers raised concerns as to "*who will be fighting our corner?*" post-March 2012.

### **Impact and learning from the Early Years Programme**

20. The programme vision is:

*The diverse early learning and childcare workforce is graduate-led and qualified to Level 3 as a minimum in order to deliver high quality services and improved outcomes for children, in particular those facing disadvantage.*

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<sup>6</sup> Early Years Legacy Paper – Notes on Conversations

<sup>7</sup> NCMA membership survey 2011

21. The programme outcomes are:
- Employers are leading the drive to a graduate-led minimum level 3 workforce;
  - The supply of skilled graduate Early Years practitioners is increased;
  - Highly qualified new entrants from a range of diverse backgrounds are joining the workforce;
  - The workforce is increasingly diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, age and disability and reflects the community it serves;
  - Training and assessment for Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) accreditation is provided in sufficient quantity to meet government aims and employer demand; and
  - Practitioners see themselves as part of the children's workforce, are confident in the use of evidence-based practice and able to identify and respond to children and families that need support at an early stage.
22. Employers are leading the drive to a graduate-led minimum Level 3 workforce. In terms of qualifications 72% of the workforce has achieved at least a Level 3 qualification, a percentage that has been growing steadily in recent years (2009 Childcare and Early Years Provider Survey). However, this tends to vary between types of provision, with 49% of childminders qualified to level 3 or above. 13% have at least a Level 6 qualification and for childminders this figure is 3%. The sector is investing in training and development. 36% of full day care staff and 22% of childminders are working towards a qualification, 22% of settings have at least one EYP and a further 49% of settings have someone working towards EYPS. The EYPS graduate leadership product and the promotion of the Level 2 Certificate and Level 3 Diploma are recognised as significant levers to improve workforce skills.
23. The supply of skilled graduate Early Years practitioners is increasing. As of September 2011 there were 8350 EYPs with 2604 candidates in training. It is likely that 10,000 EYPs will have been trained by the end of this financial year. However, once again this varies between types of provision, with only 223 childminders trained as EYPs according to CWDC records. Demand for places remains buoyant and is likely to outstrip the funding the government can provide. Information provided by training providers as part of the recent EYPS tender exercise identified more than double the number of candidates compared to funded places available. DfE Ministers have now agreed to open up funded places to candidates working in maintained settings as part of the new EYPS contracts from January 2012 which will further drive demand. Under the previous contracts access to funded places for people already working in the sector were restricted to private and voluntary settings, children's centres and childminders. This Ministerial decision means that staff working in nursery schools and maintained schools with reception classes will now be eligible for funding. Questions about the comparability of EYPS and QTS (and pay) are likely to increase as more EYPs are employed in the maintained sector alongside teachers. The priority for places and funding will be to candidates working in settings in disadvantaged areas.



24. The training has also been opened up to self-funding candidates who are willing to pay the fees themselves or whose employer may be willing to do so as part of the government's drive to maximise the use of public money.
25. Highly qualified new entrants from a range of diverse backgrounds are joining the workforce. The New Leaders in Early Years pilot aims to recruit, train and retain graduates who have a 2:1 degree or higher from a range of disciplines outside the Early Years sector who have the capacity to become outstanding leaders in the sector. While pilot numbers are small the scheme is progressing well with an evaluation underway to help inform a decision about future roll out from September 2013.
26. 17% of EYPS candidates are from minority ethnic backgrounds, 3.7% are male across all pathways (although the new entrant full pathway is slightly better at 7.5%). Work continues to improve the diversity of candidates and a variety of good practice is now available to build upon.
27. Research evidence is now available that demonstrates the impact of EYPs. The Graduate Leader Fund final report was published in July 2011 and presents the findings of a national evaluation, designed to assess the early impact of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) on the quality of provision being offered to under fives. The research commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), the University of Oxford, and the Institute of Education (University of London), finds that nurseries that employed EYPs made significant improvements in quality compared with settings that did not. This research reinforces the importance of investing in graduate leadership across the Early Years workforce and recognises the pivotal role that EYPs play.
28. The three year Longitudinal Study final evaluation report on the impact and role of EYPs is due in July 2012. Initial findings from this study have also been encouraging.
29. From April 2011 the local authority funding allocations for Early Years workforce development are not ring fenced therefore local authorities will require strong evidence for investing in Early Years and graduate leadership rather than in other areas of work. These two studies will be important contributions to this evidence base.
30. The learning to date and the policy direction in relation to graduate leadership has been incorporated into the tender and contract for the revised new EYPS which will have its first intake in January 2012. The strategic objectives of the contract require training providers to:
  - Direct activity so that EYPs are most likely to benefit children at the greatest disadvantage;
  - Develop sustainable alternative funding sources for EYP training;
  - Actively engage with, and respond to the needs of, employers in order that there is sufficient supply of high-quality EYPs to meet demand; and
  - Encourage more applications from under-represented groups (e.g. men and people from minority ethnic groups) to undertake training and enter the workforce.

**Points for further consideration:**

**Regulation and sector leadership**

31. There is little doubt that the government's support for graduate leadership, together with the availability of funding for their training and employment has helped to boost the supply of graduate level Early Years practitioners. In addition our evidence shows that employers are strongly committed to improving the quality of their workforce through professional development. However, funding for the salaries will become a real issue for many employers without the right environmental and market conditions.
32. Evidence from our discussions with the sector point to wholehearted support from employers for the professionalisation and up skilling of the early learning and childcare workforce. However, our evidence suggests that mandatory requirements are still the most common factor for employers in identifying skills gaps in their workforce. To continue the trend of increasing the quality for the Early Years workforce, it remains essential that mandatory requirements are retained.
33. The drive for a graduate-led workforce through establishing the Early Years Professional role and promoting Level 3 as the baseline qualification for working with children 0-5 years and supporting the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is viewed as the correct strategy but increasing the number of graduates in the workforce increases pressure on employers' wage costs. While this is less of an issue for those settings serving more affluent parents, take-up of places by lower-income parents requires a range of public subsidies, either directly through childcare tax credits or indirectly to settings through local authority support. The current economic climate and heavy fiscal restraints on public spending is therefore threatening the viability of our qualification-led workforce development strategy.
34. As less than 4 in 10 nursery providers expect business conditions to improve over the next 12 months,<sup>8</sup> the qualification strategy is becoming increasingly compromised by the economic context within which our employers are operating.
35. Despite significant challenges progress has been made towards the sector leading its workforce development. However, given the fragmented nature of the sector this requires strong policy direction by government in order to give employers the necessary degree of business confidence to make the significant financial investment in staff development necessary. The government is committed to work with the sector to co-produce solutions but this should be done in a staged way as part of an explicit change programme. Growth in the sector is forecast to remain weak with a number of economic risks that have the potential to dampen demand for nursery care. The government must therefore ensure that its own market support to the sector (for example through subsidised places for two, three and four year olds and childcare tax incentives) is sufficient to support the ongoing level of investment necessary by employers.

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<sup>8</sup> *Children's Nurseries UK Market Report 2011*, Laing & Buisson, published 10 August 2011

36. The current levels of regulation for nannies should also be considered within the context of the growing professionalism of the early year's sector. The recent Education Committee review on the role and performance of Ofsted highlighted issues with the current voluntary register, and the potentially false level of security that it may provide for parents. Nannies are becoming an increasingly professionalised workforce; in comparison to 51% of NCMA childminders, 62% of NCMA nannies are qualified to level 3 or above, and two thirds have undertaken child protection training. However, only half have undertaken training within the last 12 months, and for those that have not one of the key reasons was that there was not a requirement to do so<sup>9</sup>.

### Qualifications and skills

37. CWDC's qualifications strategy aims to simplify, rationalise and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of early learning and childcare qualifications as well as to facilitate portability and practitioners' lateral movement across the children's workforce. It grew out of the previous government's commitment to a qualifications strategy. CWDC worked with seven awarding organisations to develop the Qualification and Credit Framework Level 2 Certificate and the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Early Learning and Childcare Pathway).
38. The opening of the Early Years Professional Status to the maintained sector is welcome. It is not yet clear how this will fare in the less regulated environment of free schools and academies.
39. The success of the qualifications strategy will be impacted by low pay and the current challenging market conditions for the childcare market. The DfE should consider a revised market review alongside to the qualifications review.
40. The current process of streamlining the number of qualifications has strong support from employers. Employers repeatedly report that they would prefer to see a smaller number of easier to understand and credible qualifications, rather than be faced with a plethora of different and often unfamiliar qualifications.
41. The government should hold its nerve on retaining a qualifications framework and avoid allowing a totally training provider-led approach. Reduced numbers of qualifications, strictly quality assured are cost effective and very much wanted by employers.
42. It has always been the intention of DfE and CWDC that from a 'specified date' all new learners who wished to achieve a Level 2 or a Level 3 qualification that is deemed to be full and relevant for the purposes of registration and regulation would need to undertake these qualifications.
43. Practitioners with existing qualifications are not all expected to undertake the new qualifications. The Qualifications List for those delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage was developed to identify which 'legacy' qualifications are considered full and relevant and how practitioners can top up any qualifications

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<sup>9</sup> NCMA membership survey 2011

not deemed full and relevant. This is linked to the Qualifications Audit Tool, which encourages employers to review the qualifications held by their workforce and to engage in continuing professional development as well as providing real time data on the qualifications held by the workforce.

44. Initially the 'specified date' from which new entrants would have to undertake the new qualifications was April 2010. This has been postponed to Spring 2012 because of challenges from awarding organisations, supported by OfQual and from two early years providers; Steiner Waldorf and Montessori. CWDC is supporting two awarding organisations to develop an extended diploma to meet the needs of 16-19 year old college-based learners, which includes the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce.
45. Whilst employers frequently report that newly-qualified workers do not always possess the full range of skills and knowledge they would like to see, it is evident that there are a number of interrelated factors that influence the quality of both initial training and continued development of the Early Years workforce. The principal factors raised by employers as having an impact include:
  - Qualification design and content;
  - Delivery and assessment arrangements;
  - Funding and resources for training providers;
  - Quality control of the learning process; and
  - Career guidance and assessment.
46. Feedback from employers points to the key issue as one of quality assurance of the delivery and assessment process. The delivery market of Early Years qualifications is characterised by a mix of public institutions and independent training providers. The government therefore needs to ensure that the role of awarding bodies and the effort they devote to the quality assurance of training programmes is of sufficient rigour to give employers confidence in individual qualifications.
47. Similarly, the government needs to ensure that the quality assurance processes used by its own funding agencies to ensure a high standard of delivery by training providers accessing public funds are sufficiently robust to identify and prevent poor practice.
48. It is important that our learning is fed into the independent review of Early Years qualifications by Professor Nutbrown. She will consider the content of current qualifications and how they could be strengthened. However, unless measures are taken to improve the quality of delivery, changing the specification or content of a particular qualification in itself will have a limited impact on addressing employer skills concerns. If the review moves away from measures to rationalise and simplify qualifications it will be more difficult to quality assure the content of qualifications (i.e. what learners must know, understand and be able to do) the training and development (i.e. the input to learners) and the assessment process (i.e. judging whether a learner is actually knowledgeable and competent). In addition there will be increased bureaucracy and waste of financial and human resource, leading to increased cost to the public purse at a time of severe constraint.

### Early intervention

49. There has been a raft of recent reports which have highlighted the importance of early intervention, high quality Early Years education and the importance of well-qualified staff working with young children: Frank Field MP, *Poverty Review – The Foundation Years*; Graham Allen MP, *Early Intervention: The Next Steps*; Dame Clare Tickell, *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning*. These have been followed by the Early Years Policy Statement - Supporting Families in the Foundation Years.
50. The Early Years programme is being developed and delivered in this context of emerging government policy. The importance of early intervention has been highlighted as a cornerstone of the government's approach, whether it is 'early' in children's lives at a formative stage of their development or 'early' before problems set in and become entrenched. There is widespread recognition that it is better to identify problems early and intervene effectively than to respond only when the difficulty has become acute. Evidence shows that making a difference to children's achievement in the early years is critical. Pupils who start off in the bottom 20% of attainment at the EYFS profile aged five are six times more likely to be in the bottom 20% at Key Stage 1<sup>10</sup>.
51. High quality Early Years Professionals have the skills and experience to support early intervention across the full range of early education and childcare provision and are key to delivering the government's policy.
52. The new EYFS framework is intended to free up professionals to spend more time working with children helping them to develop. This is to be encouraged, but unless the issue of affordability by employers to continue to employ graduate workers is addressed, the government may fail in its attempts to improve quality across the sector.
53. The new EYFS framework also proposes that parents get much clearer information on how their children are doing with the introduction of a new progress check for every two-year-old in early education. Parents can therefore be confident that children are developing well and any problems will be picked up early.
54. The focus on early intervention and improving outcomes particularly for disadvantaged children is at the heart of the Early Years programme vision and it is important that this is sustained and enhanced through its next stage of development and the transition into the Teaching Agency.

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<sup>10</sup> DfE, 2011

## APPENDIX 1

### Early Years Workforce – A Way Forward Notes on conversations with Early Years stakeholders – issues raised

#### Nursery Owner/ Managers

##### Finance

1. Cost pressures are now beginning to bite. Due to the economic climate most settings have held prices over the past two years but are now facing cost and wage inflation. Wages typically +2.5 % pa, energy costs up to a 20% increase over the past two years.
2. Parents are also finding it more difficult to meet fees – job losses and more mothers moving to part-time working cited. The level of arrears on fees has increased over the past two years.
3. Most LAs have reduced the level of subsidised training available to settings. Some withdrawn support altogether. Typical costs quoted for mandatory staff training now having to be met by employers: First Aid £80pp, Food hygiene £60pp, safeguarding £80pp. Together these are adding a significant sum to staff overheads.
4. Many private settings are now looking to increase fees in the autumn, typically by around 4-5%.

##### Occupancy

5. A move by the LA to a single school entry date is affecting numbers in at least two areas. Termly entry tends to 'smooth' occupancy - a large outflow in September can leave numbers down until after Christmas which has implications for staffing levels.
6. A change to maternity and parental leave arrangements has resulted in many settings seeing less under one-year-olds.

##### Qualifications

7. The idea of a more unified qualification structure that allows people to 'cross-over' disciplines is generally felt to be a good idea and a reduction in the number of different qualifications is supported by employers. However it was repeatedly stated that the current qualification fails to prepare people adequately.
8. Generally, staff turnover remains low therefore most settings have yet to recruit people with the new L3 diploma. However there is a widespread view that NVQ-type qualifications that are mainly achieved in the workplace are not of sufficient academic rigour and are not, in particular, preparing young workers adequately.

9. A lack of teaching in child development is almost a universally cited weakness.
10. Training that meets additional needs is difficult to access. *“Diploma doesn't go into sufficient depth about child development and partnership working”, “Woeful lack of child development knowledge”* are typical comments. *“Job is now far removed from just sitting and playing with children”*.
11. Employers state that students coming out of college have a lack of knowledge about EYFS and are not up to speed with observations etc.
12. Employers also reported a variation in the quality of training provided.
13. Most settings accept student placements. However their involvement in workplace assessment of students varies widely.
14. A number of employers questioned how realistic it was to train people to Level 3 in sometimes less than 12 months. Most stated they would have expected a greater amount of directed teaching/ learning to be delivered than they are witnessing.
15. The majority view is that employers accept they have an obligation to train people on the job. However most state that newly qualified workers are not being prepared sufficiently by the current system of training and qualifications.
16. The 'old' NNEB qualification is much more highly rated by employers.

### **Additional Needs**

17. A number of employers have noticed a shift in the number of children with additional needs and more complex family circumstances.
18. A lack of support to help staff in working with other professionals was highlighted (e.g. Team Around the Child, Common Assessment Framework, safeguarding etc.)
19. Online CAF training was severely criticised by three providers as being too shallow.
20. The Single Funding Formula is an issue for a number of settings with a higher number of children with additional needs. There is a discrepancy between what is available to the statutory sector and to private settings to support children with additional needs – 6p per hour per child quoted. This is not enough to buy in additional support. Additionally, LA funded HLTA support is vastly reduced and is unable to provide regular support.

### **Pay and reward**

21. The general inability to reward EYPs and graduates is still a key issue.
22. Many settings still point to the differential between the statutory and private sector in terms of resource to put towards staff salaries. Private settings typically lose graduates to work in Children's Centres and school support roles.

23. Low pay generally is seen as the main barrier to recruitment and retention of good staff<sup>11</sup>.

### **Recruitment**

24. The main method of recruitment is by work of mouth, retaining speculative CVs and student placements.
25. Local press has mixed success.
26. The Jobcentre network is almost universally viewed as ineffective with poor matching by Jobcentre staff – *“adopt an attitude of just send whatever applicants they have regardless”*.

### **Skills**

27. Many settings cited a lack of management skills as an issue. These tended to be around business management skills and ‘room leadership’ skills.
28. Practical skills training (e.g. first aid, food hygiene, etc.) were also becoming an issue for many settings – inflexible delivery and the cost of staff cover were frequently raised.

## **2. Local Authority Early Years (LEAY) Leads**

### **Funding**

29. Budget cuts are the main issue for all LAEY leads.
30. Wide variations in 2011/12 settlements are reported. A few areas have been relatively unscathed with minimal cuts; others have been hit hard (Hertfordshire for example quotes a cut from £1.8m in 2010/11 to £250k in 2011/12).
31. Most LAs are concerned about their ability to continue to support settings with training and development.
32. Most LAs are having to reduce the subsidy they give to support EYP salary enhancement. This can be between £10-15k per EYP per setting. Many foresee a big knock-on to individual settings and employment of EYPs.
33. Many LAs are now adopting a strategy of supporting “statutory functions only”.
34. Some areas are concerned that the schools agenda is dominating in the bid for resource – local flexibility of funding means allocations are much more influenced by the local political agenda.



## **Qualifications**

35. Support for rationalisation of qualifications – direction of travel is positive.
36. LAEY leads tend to echo the view that the new L2 & L3 qualifications are too generic.
37. Some criticism of the L2 certificate as being much too generic for ratio purposes in EY settings. Level 3 is seen as somewhat “watered down” from its predecessor.
38. All LAs however acknowledge that there are wide variations in the quality of providers in the delivery of qualifications.
39. Concerns expressed about the lack of external verification and Quality Assurance, for example variations in the number of ‘observed sessions’ of students – range from 18-2 per course depending on provider.
40. Employer concerns regarding delivery time were also echoed – *“NVQ3 in six months”*.
41. There is mixed support for Level 4 qualifications. There are issues about HE accreditation of prior learning between Level 4 and foundation degree. The general feeling is that a gentle lead in to the Foundation Degree is an effective ‘bridge’ between Level 3 and Level 5.

## **3. Further Education Providers**

### **Level 3 Diploma for Children and Young People’s Workforce (CYPW)**

42. Further Education providers are concerned that the Level 3 Diploma needs to include a lot more knowledge and experience for 16-19 year-old learners. A robust two year combined programme of teaching and practical experience is favoured.
43. Restricting the age focus to under five year old limits the options for younger learners who are often unsure of where they would like to end up. A broader age range also helps to understand and support children with transition issues.
44. The CYPW Diploma does not attract UCAS points and is not graded. Combined with a lack of research and academic rigour this restricts its use as an entry qualification for HE.
45. The lack of specification on workplace assessment and directed learning content in the diploma leads to wide variations in the quality of delivery.
46. Both employers and FE providers have raised concerns that the content of the new diploma is not specific enough on child development and play.

47. The CYPW Diploma attracts 65 credits, whereas National Diplomas in other sectors (e.g. Travel and Tourism) attract 180 credits. This raises issues in relation to status and standing in comparison with other sectors.
48. Similarly, the CYPW Diploma typically attracts in the order of £800 in public funding for providers, whereas other National Diplomas attract around £3,500 in public support. This impacts on the amount of support and guided learning providers are able to deliver.

## APPENDIX 2

### Summary Data from Owner/Manager Consultation Events

1. Four consultation events were held with nursery owners/ managers across Staffordshire during March 2011. These were focused on issues facing early years employers in terms of:
  - Recruitment & retention
  - Skills development
  - Sources of information
  
2. Number of attendees:

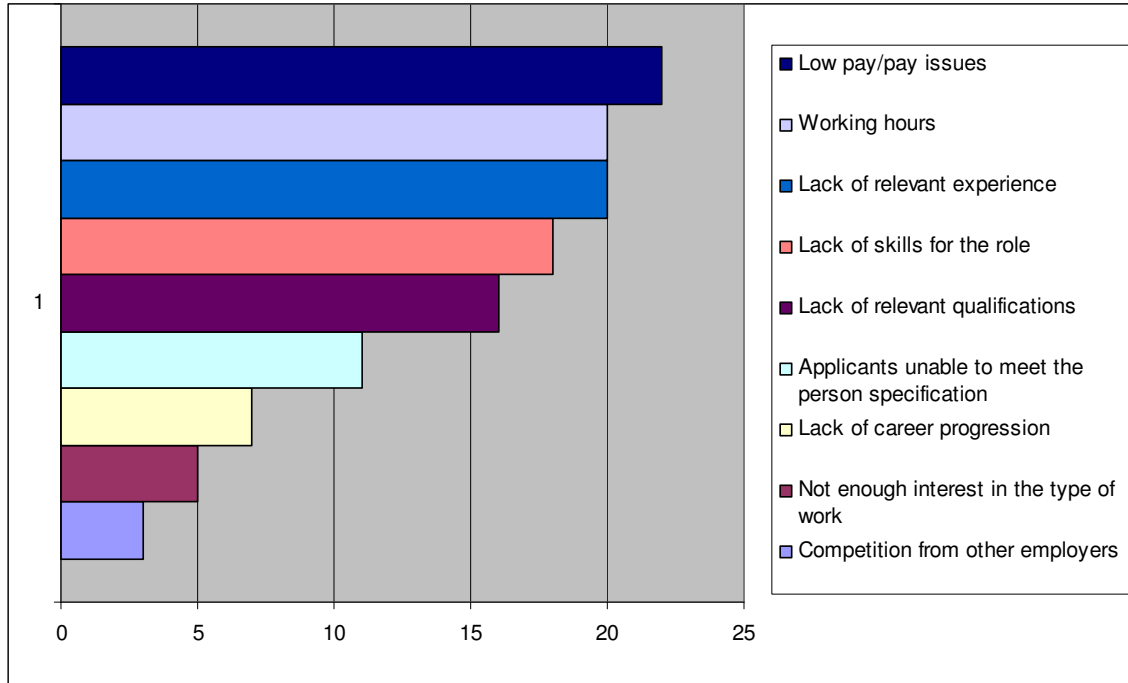
Cannock & Lichfield	19
Tamworth & Burton	14
Newcastle & Staffordshire	
Moorlands	19
Stafford & South Staffs	16

**Total      68**
  
3. A voting system was used in which the group were asked a set of questions and recorded their responses. Verbal responses were also recorded in support of their answers<sup>12</sup>. The questions and the responses are set out overleaf.

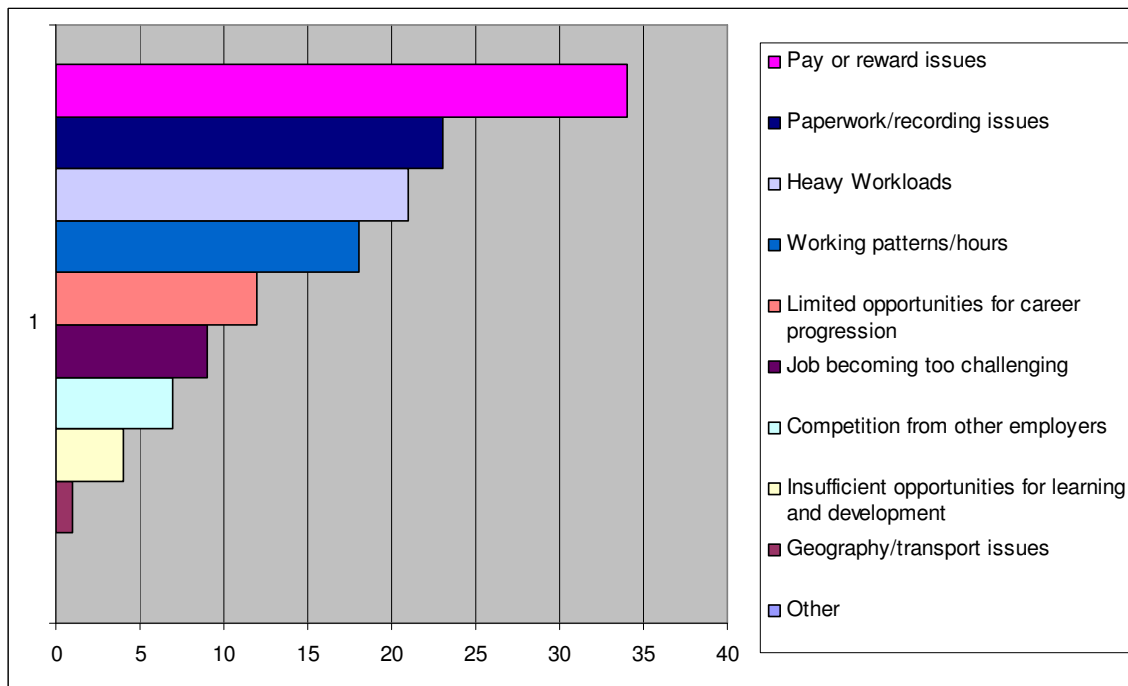
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<sup>12</sup> Transcript notes of responses are available however for the sake of brevity these have not been included here.

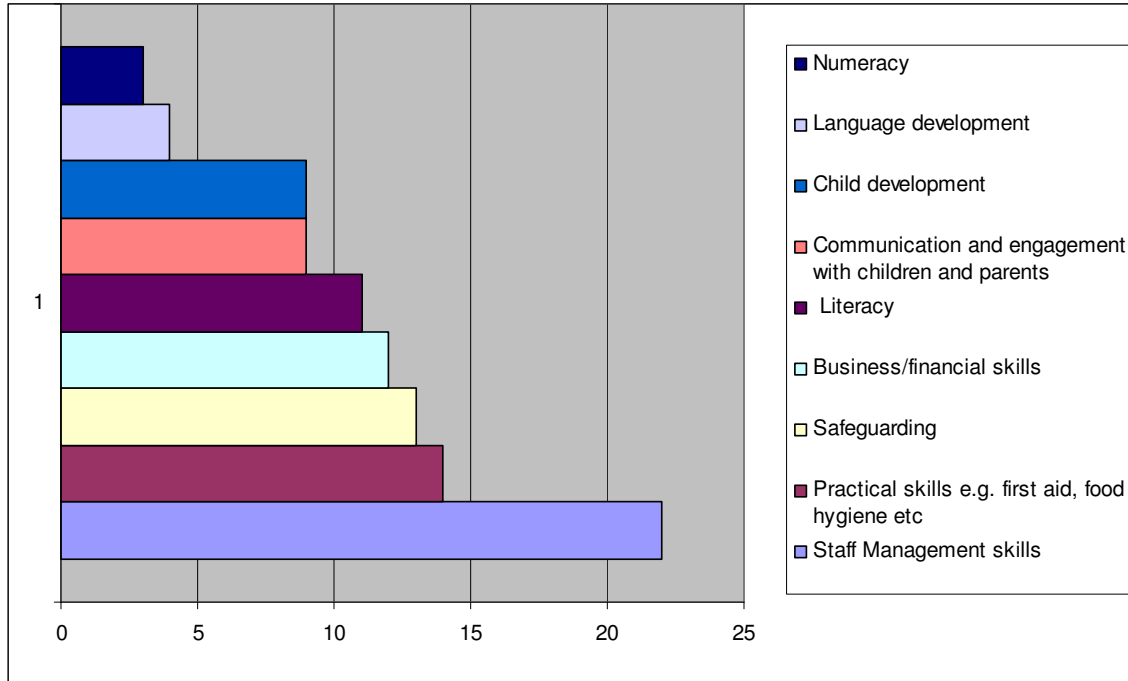
In the past 12 months have any of the following made it difficult to recruit staff?



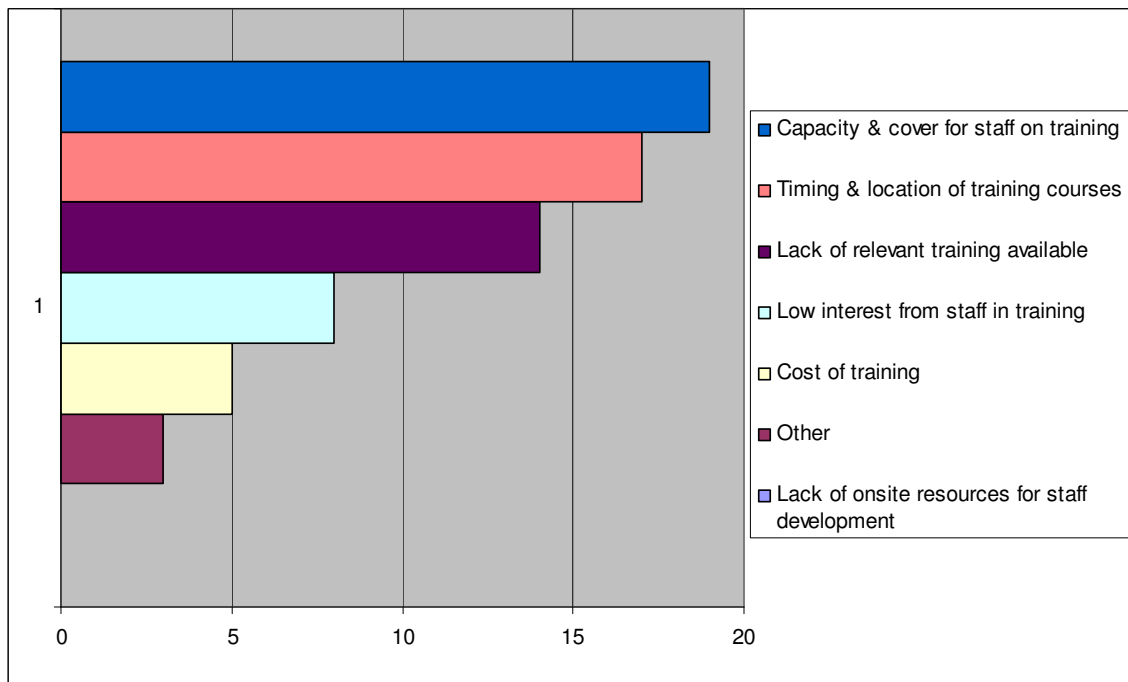
In your experience do you think any of the following will make it more difficult to retain good staff?



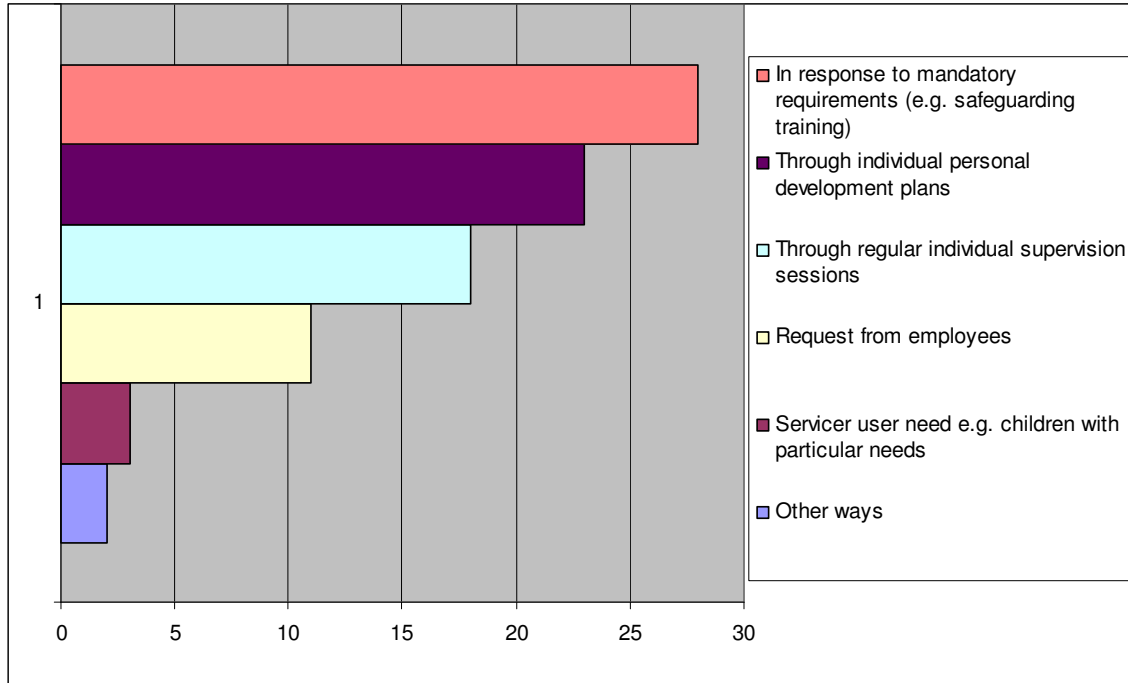
Have you experienced or do you foresee any skills gaps in the following areas?



Do any of the following make staff development more difficult for you?



How do you normally identify skills gaps or training needs?



Thinking about where you get information and advice to support your business, which source would you use most often?

