

# **Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: GLF implementation case studies**

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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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# Executive summary

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

This qualitative implementation study sought to explore facilitators and barriers to the implementation and take up of the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF) and graduate/Early Years Professional (EYP) training. Key objectives were to:

- provide early feedback on how the GLF was viewed and administered locally, including how it impacts on the LA and the local childcare workforce
- understand experiences of the GLF from childcare providers' perspectives, particularly in relation to decisions about participation, application processes, and training
- explore perceived early impacts on childcare settings.

The implementation study consisted of case studies set within eight local authorities (LAs). This allowed for an in-depth exploration of the implementation of the GLF across a range of LAs and early years settings. Within each LA in-depth interviews were conducted with LA staff involved in the implementation of the GLF and staff working in settings both in receipt and not in receipt of the GLF. The aim of the interviews with LA staff was to describe how the GLF had been implemented at a local level, while the interviews with staff working in early years settings explored awareness of the GLF and use of GLF funding.

## Chapter 2 – Implementing the GLF

LAs consulted settings in developing locally appropriate GLF policies, although the extent and scope of consultation varied greatly (from conversations with a few settings to full-scale audits of PVI providers). Settings in receipt of Transformation Fund (TF) were asked for feedback about which elements of this policy had worked well, and which elements needed adaptation. The case study LAs also engaged with other LAs about the design of their GLF policies and levels of funding.

In developing their GLF policies, LA staff reported retaining some of the language and structure of the Transformation Fund, in order to facilitate continuity of funding and because certain TF strands were well understood by settings. The three main strands of the TF which LAs utilised were the Home Grown Graduate Incentive (HGGI)<sup>1</sup>, Recruitment Incentive (RI)<sup>2</sup> and the Quality Premium (QP)<sup>3</sup>.

The levels of incentives attached to each of these strands varied between LAs. Some LAs set their incentive levels based on the amount of funding they had and the number of

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<sup>1</sup> *Home Grown Graduate Incentive (HGGI)*: funding for existing staff within settings to train up to graduate or EYP level, paid in addition to course fees, for example to enable settings to pay for staff cover.

<sup>2</sup> *Recruitment Incentive (RI)*: funding to enable settings to recruit an EYP or graduate who could take up EYP training, to be used to cover recruitment and salary costs.

<sup>3</sup> *Quality Premium (QP)*: funding to reward settings where staff achieve EYPS, used to improve the delivery of the EYFS (through staff training or purchase of resources) and to assist settings in retaining an EYP

eligible settings (assuming all eligible settings would need the same amount of money), whilst others conducted a market rate review of salary levels of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and other graduate practitioners in order to set incentives at a level high enough to retain graduates and EYPs within the early years sector.

LAs took two main approaches to achieving the 2015 target of a graduate leader in every PVI childcare setting, either focussing on individual settings to ensure that they all have an EYP or graduate in place, or looking at the childcare sector as a whole to build up a 'pool' of EYPs within the area.

Across the case-study LAs, early years leads reported that around half to two thirds of PVI settings had taken up some GLF funding. Take up of funding to train up existing staff members (the HGGI element) was reported as the most commonly taken up incentive. LA staff reported strong take up of the GLF to begin with, as those staff with level 3 or above qualifications motivated to get higher qualifications started accessing money for training to graduate or EYP level. However settings whose staff have lower level qualifications or who are less motivated have proved harder to engage which has led to the number of applications levelling off.

### **Chapter 3 – Engagement with the GLF**

Settings' engagement with the GLF was related to their views around the professionalisation of the childcare sector. Some setting managers considered the drive for higher qualified staff beneficial for both their setting and the sector more widely, others were concerned that a drive for qualified staff would undermine the importance of *experience* in providing high quality childcare. These different perspectives, and the tensions inherent within them, led to four main types of engagement with the GLF agenda:

- actively engaged – enthusiastic about the opportunities the GLF provides for upskilling
- passively engaged – not enthusiastic, but “going along with it”
- passively disengaged – did not see getting a graduate leader as a priority
- actively disengaged – opposed to the aims of the GLF and resistant to employing graduates

Applying for funding was also dependent on settings being both aware of the GLF and having enough information and support to enable them to apply. Some setting managers found written literature informative and easy to understand, while others found both the information conveyed and the frequency with which it was distributed unhelpful. Workshops and roadshows, where attended, were generally found to be informative. Individual visits to settings were seen as the most effective way of communicating the GLF to settings. During these visits assistance could be given in identifying suitable staff to undertake training, explaining in detail the funding available and helping with the completion of application forms.

The structuring of the financial incentives available through the GLF was a key facilitator to take up of GLF. Incentives that enabled settings to pay for staff cover and to enhance salaries were seen positively, and as factors that encouraged take up of the GLF. These were important as the home grown route was the preference for many settings, but this meant staff absence due to training (requiring cover), and extra work for that staff member (which managers liked to be able to financially reward). However, concerns were also expressed, particularly uncertainty about when the funding would end; and whether the incentive levels in place were sufficient to cover actual costs.

## **Chapter 4 – Training choices and experiences**

### **Graduate training**

The two categories of provider for gaining degrees (either foundation or full honours) were the Open University (OU) or local further education (FE) or higher education (HE) institutions. LAs played varying roles in the identification of training providers, either recommending specific providers, or producing a list of providers and courses from which practitioners could choose. Those that recommended providers were more likely to be involved in quality assessments of the training provision, whereas the LAs that provided lists of all providers tended to have less formal assessment procedures.

On the whole practitioners reported positive experiences of undertaking training, in terms of the content and applicability of the courses, and the support available. The transition from NVQ training to graduate training was seen as a challenge by practitioners, especially for those who had not received formal education for a long time. The volume of work involved in graduate training was raised as a concern, and resulted in practitioners needing to carry out a lot of study in their own time.

Support from managers and colleagues was cited as an important protective factor, as were the training bursaries that were available in some LAs which helped pay for necessary resources (books, stationery etc.) or travel costs.

### **Early Years Professional training**

Practitioners doing EYP training were engaged in one of four pathways, depending on previous experience, qualifications and also which pathways were available in their LA. The four pathways (which ranged from three to 15 months) were:

- Validation: for practitioners with relevant full degree qualification and practical experience (four months, part-time).
- Short: for practitioners with relevant full degree qualification but lacking specific practical experience (six months, part-time).
- Long: for practitioners with relevant foundation degree with any level of experience (15 months, part-time).
- Full: for practitioners with non-relevant honours degree with any level of experience (12 months, full-time).



Practitioners had a choice of working towards a full degree and then doing the validation or short pathway, or doing the foundation degree and then doing the long pathway. For some, the idea of embarking on the full or long pathway (12 or 15 months respectively) was too daunting, and the preference was to gain a full degree, which also had the benefit of being a more widely recognised and transferable qualification. For others, the long pathway seemed an easier option compared to doing a full degree that involved demanding elements (such as a dissertation).

Experiences of these pathways varied. The short pathway (six months) was felt to allow insufficient time for those with little previous experience to gain the relevant experience needed. The long pathway was less criticised, and was viewed as giving sufficient time for all the necessary practical experience to be obtained.

There was a view that providers needed to be more consistent in terms of their eligibility criteria, with respect to both qualifications and experience, to improve the universal recognition of the EYPS compared to other professional status such as qualified teacher status (QTS) which has national eligibility criteria.

### **Early Years Professional networks**

EYP networks were active in each of the LA case study areas. They ranged from virtual forums in LAs with only small numbers of EYPS, to actual meetings held either termly or monthly within the LA. EYP networks were viewed positively by those involved as a forum for professional development, training, and information-sharing, and also as a vehicle to share and, in some cases, observe practice.

## **Chapter 5 – Perceived early impacts**

The impact of the GLF was viewed positively by both LA staff and practitioners themselves. Practitioners working towards higher qualifications felt that this had a positive impact on the way they interacted with children, gave them more confidence, and allowed a better understanding of the theory underpinning government initiatives such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). LA early years teams observed that staff with higher qualifications delivered better quality childcare, and were more enthused about their work. The ability of an EYP to exhibit high quality practice could be limited by the practitioner lacking the necessary attributes to effectively lead practice and implement change within their setting.

The GLF was viewed to have had a positive impact on the graduate leader role, in terms of raising awareness and helping to define the nature of the role. Where managers had taken on the EYP role, they had had to move from a largely office based role to one that was more closely involved in the delivery of childcare. This led to sharing of administrative responsibilities with other staff, and demonstrated the possibility of balancing a managerial and EYP role.

At a setting level, practitioners who had or were working towards degrees or EYPS, felt that other staff had benefited from the cascading of learning, and that other staff members

were now thinking about new and different childcare methods. The success of this was dependent on the willingness of staff within the setting to change their practice and the abilities of the practitioner who had undergone the training to successfully impart their knowledge and affect change. Graduate leaders also needed to be used appropriately within settings and put in positions where they could successfully lead practice and other staff. In some cases other staff members were inspired to undertake further training as a result of a colleague's experiences.

Despite these positive impacts of the GLF, some settings staff reported short term negative impacts of the GLF with the quality of provision taking a dip whilst staff were absent, and negative feelings towards staff eligible for study leave under GLF. Also, those managers who were less engaged with GLF did not see any benefit to having staff members with graduate qualifications or EYPS, and felt that increased experience would have done as much or more than gaining a qualification.

## **Chapter 6 – The future of EYPs in settings**

Pay and conditions are seen as key in retaining graduates and EYPs within childcare settings. Concerns were raised by both LA staff and setting managers about retaining staff within the childcare sector after the GLF funding ends. Managers were concerned that without this additional money to enhance salaries they would be unable to retain these staff without having to raise fees for parents to cover the salaries. This was not always considered to make business sense for settings and thus some managers anticipated losing their graduates to either the teaching profession or to LA early years teams where both pay and working conditions were perceived as being better. Some settings envisaged their manager becoming their EYP as they already had enhanced salaries which could be sustained.

Some practitioners also wanted their increased qualifications and role to be recognised post-GLF, not only financially, but also as a 'leadership role' within their setting. Some practitioners mentioned moving to other settings or schools if their salary increases were not sustained. The graduate leader role was also important, and some practitioners said that they would move to a new setting if taking on this role was not possible within their existing one.

Movement within the childcare sector was not seen as a problem by local authorities and some setting managers, as it was felt that it would be useful to create a "pool" of graduate leaders and EYPs who moved freely within the sector. However, career aspirations were not solely directed towards the early years sector; and some practitioners intended to utilise their EYPS as a route into teaching.

# 1 Introduction to the GLF early implementation case studies

## 1.1 Graduate Leader Fund policy background

The Government has provided funding since 2006 to help transform and professionalise the early years workforce and to deliver the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare. The Transformation Fund (TF) was established in 2006 and provided £250 million in funding to private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years settings to fulfil these aims. The focus of the GLF on the PVI sector aimed to address differences in quality between the PVI and maintained sectors.

In August 2007 the then Government announced that the Transformation Fund would be superseded by the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF) from April 2008. The GLF, which provided a further £305 million in funding between April 2008 and March 2011, was intended to support all full day care PVI sector providers in employing a graduate or Early Years Professional (EYP) by 2015, to lead practice across the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The role of these graduate leaders is to support and mentor others, as well as to model skills and good practice to secure high quality provision.

In contrast to the TF, which prescribed funding strands and levels at which incentives should be set, the GLF was designed to allow greater flexibility for Local Authorities (LAs) to develop, target and publicise their own incentive systems to encourage settings to recruit or train graduates and EYPs to lead practice. When the GLF was introduced, each LA was free to design an approach to meet the needs of their local PVI childcare sector and meet the aim of employing at least one EYP in every PVI setting by 2015. This was to be informed by local knowledge of the early years workforce and feed directly into local strategies for workforce development.

In the most disadvantaged areas, local authorities could fund two graduate professional leaders per setting in order to improve early years experience for children in these areas. An additional allowance was incorporated for this purpose within LA allocations.

With the GLF the focus was on outcomes. To this end, each LA was expected to set its own targets for local workforce development for the duration of the GLF (i.e. until 2011) or beyond. Outcomes would then be measured against the baseline of the number of graduates leading practice in PVI full day care settings in each area.

From April 2011 LAs will support the development of EYPs in PVI settings through the Early Intervention Grant.

This qualitative implementation study sought to explore facilitators and barriers to the implementation and take up of the GLF and graduate/EYP training. Key objectives were to:

- provide early feedback on how the GLF was viewed and administered locally, including how it impacts on the LA and the local childcare workforce
- understand experiences of the GLF from childcare providers' perspectives, particularly in relation to decisions about participation, application processes, and training
- explore perceived early impacts on childcare settings

This qualitative implementation study forms part of a wider GLF evaluation, details of which can be found in Appendix A.

## 1.2 Methodology

### 1.2.1 Case study design

In order to assess the diversity of approaches used by LAs in successfully engaging with the PVI sector to increase the number of graduates leading practice in settings, a case study approach was adopted. This allowed for an in-depth exploration of the implementation of the GLF across a range of LAs and settings.

A total of eight LAs were selected for inclusion in the implementation case studies. Within each LA, interviews were conducted with LA staff involved in the implementation of the GLF and with staff working in settings both in receipt and not in receipt of the GLF. Sampling and recruitment for this strand of the research was undertaken in two stages involving firstly the sampling and recruitment of LAs and then of settings within these LAs.

#### Local authorities

LAs were selected to encompass diversity across a number of dimensions that might have a bearing on the successful implementation of the GLF. These dimensions were:

- geographical location (to ensure coverage across the majority of government office regions<sup>4</sup>);
- type of LA (to include two of each of the following: county; unitary; metropolitan borough; London borough);
- levels of deprivation (to include a range of levels of deprivation);
- spend on GLF-related strands of the TF as a proportion of their total TF allocation (to include a range of spending levels); and
- model of implementation of the GLF (to achieve variation in: incentives set; eligibility criteria; strategies for implementing and prioritising the GLF).

Letters and information sheets were sent via email to LA staff in selected LAs. One LA declined to participate and was replaced with a LA with similar characteristics as defined by the selection criteria outlined above. LA recruitment documents are appended (see Appendix B). An interview was then arranged with the GLF lead in the LA.

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<sup>4</sup> Government office regions have now been disbanded, this research used these regions as they stood in 2009.

## Settings

In order to understand facilitators and barriers to take up of the GLF and graduate/EYP training, settings in receipt and not in receipt of funding were included in each LA. LA staff who participated in the research were asked to provide a list of 20 settings to the research team, including settings receiving funding and not receiving funding. Letters and information sheets for managers and, if applicable, practitioners (those recruited as a graduate/EYP or taking up graduate/EYP training through the GLF) were sent to all 20 settings in each LA (see Appendix C).

The settings were then contacted by telephone and a short screening questionnaire (see Appendix D) was conducted with setting managers who indicated they were willing to participate in the research. Answers given to this screening questionnaire were used to ensure diversity in terms of use of GLF funding (if applicable), size and type of setting, and geographical location (to include some settings in areas of high deprivation). In each LA, three settings in receipt of the GLF (referred to hereafter as GLF settings) and two settings not receiving funding (non-GLF settings) were recruited to take part in the research. A profile of the achieved sample of 40 settings is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.1 Sample profile (settings)**

Full day care settings	LA type <sup>5</sup>				Total
	County (2)	London borough (2)	Metropolitan borough (2)	Unitary (2)	
<b>GLF settings</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>24</b>
Recruit/retain graduate/EYP	1	1	-	2	4
Staff member(s) taking up graduate/EYP training	5	5	6	4	20
<b>Non-GLF settings</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>
No graduate/EYP or staff member undertaking graduate/EYP training	2	2	3	4	11
Graduate/EYP or staff member undertaking graduate EYP training	2	2	1	-	5
<b>Other characteristics (all)</b>					
Private/independent	9	8	10	10	37
Voluntary	1	2	-	-	3
Small (0-35 places)	2	4	7	6	19
Medium (36-60 places)	3	3	3	3	12
Large (61+ places)	5	3	-	1	9
In high deprivation area	4	3	5	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>40</b>

<sup>5</sup> Unitary authorities are LAs which form a single tier of local government. This is opposed to the two tier system where local government functions are divided between county councils and district councils. Metropolitan boroughs cover the six largest urban areas in England outside Greater London, and are effectively unitary authorities.

## **1.2.2 Fieldwork**

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with LA staff and with managers and practitioners (if applicable) in settings. Topic guides were developed in consultation with the Department (DCSF at the time) for use with each participant group (see Appendix E). Interviews took place between April and September 2009 and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

Within each of the eight case study LAs an interview was conducted with the member(s) of staff responsible for implementing the GLF. Interviews were conducted with individuals, or pairs or triads of participants involved in the implementation and administration of the GLF. Interviews with LA staff focussed on: the local childcare context; local strategies and priorities; GLF application systems; GLF take up and factors influencing this; payment systems; reactions from settings; and plans or suggestions for the future. The interview also covered the transition from the TF to the GLF.

A total of 55 interviews were conducted with managers and practitioners in the selected 40 settings between June and September 2009. In the 24 settings in receipt of GLF funding, interviews were conducted with the manager and a practitioner who had been recruited as a graduate or EYP or had taken up graduate or EYP training through the GLF. In nine of these settings the manager was also the graduate/EYP or staff member taking up graduate/EYP training. Therefore, a total of 39 interviews were conducted in settings receiving GLF funding. A further 16 interviews were conducted with the manager of settings not receiving GLF funding.

Interviews with managers focussed on: current provision and the local early years and childcare context; staffing, skills and training; awareness of the GLF and decisions about participation; experiences of receiving money and accessing training via the Fund; any impacts of the GLF on staff or provision at the setting; and suggestions for the future. Interviews with practitioners focussed on: awareness of the GLF and Early Years Professional Status (EYPS); decisions about taking up training; experiences of training, or being recruited as a graduate/EYP; and experiences and impacts of training and/or graduate/EYP status, both on themselves and the setting. Where the manager was also the graduate/EYP or taking up graduate/EYP training, interviews covered both the manager and practitioner topic guides.

## **1.2.3 Analysis**

All interviews were recorded with participants' permission, and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using 'Framework', a method developed at NatCen. Framework involves the systematic analysis of verbatim interview data within a thematic matrix. The key topics and issues emerging from the interviews were identified through familiarisation with interview transcripts as well as reference to the original objectives and the topic guides used to conduct the interviews. A series of thematic charts were then drawn up and data from each transcript were summarised under each topic. The final stage of analysis involved working through the summarised data in detail, drawing out the range of experiences and views, identifying similarities and differences, and interrogating the data to seek to explain emergent patterns and findings. In drawing the material together the

differences and similarities in the perceptions of participants in each case study LA, and in the views of settings accessing and not accessing the GLF both within and across LAs were explored.

The Framework approach is now supported by bespoke software, also developed by NatCen<sup>6</sup>. The new software enables a highly flexible approach to both the creation of the matrices (for example, enabling new columns or 'themes' to be added during the process of data management or the life of the project), and the analysis of data contained within them.

### **1.3 Report structure**

Findings from interviews with LA staff, setting managers and practitioners are organised into five substantive chapters as follows, each chapter starts with a short summary:

- Chapter 2 explores the implementation of the GLF, and details the different ways in which the case study LAs have developed, designed and communicated their GLF policies.
- Chapter 3 turns to the experiences of settings and examines the facilitators and barriers to their engagement with, and take up of, the GLF.
- Chapter 4 describes training choices open to practitioners, and their experiences of training.
- Chapter 5 discusses perceived early impacts of the GLF, considering impacts at the individual practitioner and setting level, as well impacts relating to the role of the graduate leader.
- Finally, Chapter 6 considers perspectives on the future of EYPs in settings.

The following terminology is used throughout this report when referring to staff members with Early Years Professional status and those conducting the graduate leader role. Early Years Professionals (EYPs) are those members of staff who have attained the Early Years Professional status (EYPS) through the available pathways, which are detailed in this report, and are fulfilling the role of graduate leader within the setting. Graduate refers to staff members who have a degree relevant to childcare, such as Early Childhood Studies, who are fulfilling the role of a graduate leader within the setting but do not have the EYPS.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information about the Framework software see [www.natcen.ac.uk/framework/](http://www.natcen.ac.uk/framework/)

## 2 Implementing the GLF

### Chapter summary

- LAs undertook a range of consultation activities in order to develop locally appropriate GLF policies.
- The GLF was designed to ensure continuity with the TF policies in terms of the incentives and language used.
- There were differences in the amount of funding available across the case study settings, and also in the requirements and limitations associated with this funding.
- LAs either targeted individual settings who did not have an EYP or graduate in place or promoted the GLF to all settings to raise the level of qualifications across the whole sector.
- Both written materials and face-to-face methods were used by LAs to promote and communicate about the GLF to settings.
- Settings in the eight case studies preferred to train existing practitioners to graduate level rather than recruit graduates or EYPs into settings.

In contrast to the TF, which prescribed funding strands and the levels at which incentives should be set, the GLF was designed to allow greater flexibility for LAs to develop, target and publicise their own incentive systems to encourage settings to recruit or train graduates and EYPs to lead practice. Each LA was free to design an approach which would meet the needs of their local PVI childcare sector and meet the goal of employing at least one EYP in every PVI setting (and two in settings in deprived areas) by 2015.

This chapter describes how the GLF has been developed and implemented at a local level. It begins by discussing the types of consultation activities undertaken by the case study LAs involved in this research in developing their GLF policies. Next, it explores the design of GLF policies across the case study LAs, before examining the different strategies adopted by LAs to target settings. Finally, it considers the ways in which case study LAs have communicated the GLF to settings, and take up of the GLF among settings.

### 2.1 Consultation

LAs described undertaking consultation with settings and other LAs in order to develop locally appropriate GLF policies. LAs undertook varying types of consultation activity with their PVI sector settings; these included formal consultation with settings facilitated by postal surveys, formal meetings, and visits to individual settings. There was variation in the extent of consultation. For example, one LA spoke to three settings as part of their consultation, while another LA invited a stratified sample of settings, representing the



range and variety of settings who would be targeted by the GLF, to take part in a consultation process. Informal consultation with settings also took place through existing channels for communication between the LA and PVI settings.

Settings in receipt of TF funding fed back to LA staff about which elements of the TF were working well and were appreciated by settings and which were not working well or needed some adaptation to best meet need. Consultation with settings in receipt of TF funding was viewed as essential by LA staff interviewed to understand and improve upon the perceived weaknesses in the TF policy strands aimed at increasing the numbers of graduates with EYPS in the PVI workforce.

*'I went back to the people who had some TF money and I said, well, you know, was it useful or wasn't it? What didn't work? So I got something back from that. And also from our own, you know, discussions we've had for a couple of years with people, we had an idea of what was working or wasn't.'* (GLF lead, LA 3)

LAs were also keen to ensure that their local policy reflected or fitted with the GLF policies of neighbouring LAs. This was a particular concern for smaller LAs, as staff taking up graduate or EYP training would be attending courses with staff working in neighbouring LAs. Consistency in the offer, within a region, was considered desirable to prevent any tension or resentment developing between practitioners on courses who may have received different levels of funding. LAs also sought to learn from LAs sharing similar characteristics. For example, one rural case study LA had consulted with other rural LAs, to discuss approaches to designing and implementing the GLF. Another forum to share approaches to the GLF accessed by LA staff was regional LA networks, which were based around regional offices. These were attended by up to 30 LAs, and facilitated discussion about key considerations for the design and delivery of the GLF in different areas.

In addition to consultation activities, LAs were also engaged in conducting a 'needs' analysis focussed on the specific aims of the GLF. This involved carrying out an audit of PVI providers and the qualifications of their staff to assess the need for additional training which they could design their GLF policy to address (and, as a result, funding within the LA). Where LAs had undertaken such an assessment, it was felt to be a key tool in designing a successful GLF policy.

Finally, although the initial design of LA GLF policies was informed by consultation with settings and other LAs and needs analysis of the local childcare market, LA staff did not see their current policies as fixed or static. Instead LAs were continually adapting their policies based on feedback from settings and the changing needs and requirements of settings. This evolution of policy was perceived to better enable LA GLF policies to meet the needs of their local childcare sector and ultimately meet the 2015 goal.

## **2.2 Policy design**

In developing their GLF policies, LA staff reported making deliberate decisions to retain the language and structure of the original related TF strands. One key reason for this was

to facilitate continuity between the TF and GLF, especially for those settings which were accessing TF funding which would continue under the GLF. A second reason was that these TF strands were understood by settings, and that to change them would involve additional communication to explain the differences and reduce the ability of LAs to build on settings' knowledge of the strands and maximise take up.

*'We took advantages from TF, the things that were the benefits, and we looked at what the barriers were to people, [we] took down the barriers to make it easier... We didn't want to make it so different that they were looking at something completely different as a programme.'* (GLF lead, LA 8)

Although there were minor differences in terminology and structure of the GLF between case study LAs, the overall design was similar, based on three main strands, as outlined below:

- *Home Grown Graduate Incentive (HGGI)*: funding for existing staff within settings to train up to graduate or EYP level (hereafter referred to as graduate or EYP training), paid in addition to course fees, for example to enable settings to pay for staff cover.
- *Recruitment Incentive (RI)*: funding to enable settings to recruit an EYP or graduate who could take up EYP training, to be used to cover recruitment and salary costs.
- *Quality Premium (QP)*: funding to reward settings where staff achieve EYPS, used to improve the delivery of the EYFS (through staff training or purchase of resources) and to assist settings in retaining an EYP.

Case study LAs also adopted a variety of approaches to setting the incentive levels. One approach involved identifying how many settings were eligible for funding, and setting the incentives at a level which would ensure every eligible setting could access the same level of funding. Another approach was to conduct a market rate review of salary levels of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and other graduate practitioners, and thus set their incentive levels high enough to retain graduates and EYPs in settings.

*'I did some research locally around what childcare practitioners [were earning] and how we could help use the Graduate Leader Fund to try and give them some equality between...their salary and that of the newly qualified teacher, which is how we kind of put together our package of trying to give as much to the settings as we could to enable them to raise the salary.'* (GLF lead, LA 4)

Across the case study LAs, HGGIs ranged from £1,000 to £7,000 per annum, with the amount depending on eligibility to apply for other strands and/or support packages also available. RIs ranged from £3,000 to £8,000 per annum, while QPs ranged from £5,000 to £7,000 per annum. Settings could be eligible for more than one strand. There were also differences across the case study LAs in how incentives were paid to settings or the stipulations made to settings outlining how incentives should be spent. Decisions about payment or spending were intended to try and reduce risks relating to practitioners

'dropping out' of training, or leaving the sector once qualified. Examples of these risk reduction strategies included: contracts with settings and/or staff taking up training confirming terms and conditions of funding (for example, specifying what the funding could be spent on, or a written commitment from staff to remain in the setting for a set period after gaining graduate or EYP status); requiring settings to contribute a proportion of course fees; paying course fees on a termly as opposed to yearly basis; providing 'training bursaries' in addition to payment of course fees to be used to purchase books and other study resources; and specifying the proportion (usually 50%) of RI or QP to be used to enhance the salaries of graduates and EYPs, or staff taking up graduate or EYP training in the setting.

### **2.3 Targeting the GLF**

Case study LAs adopted two main approaches to achieving the 2015 target. One approach involved targeting the GLF policy at the individual setting level in order to meet the aim of an EYP in each setting. A second approach took a wider view, in which GLF policy was focussed on 'upskilling' the workforce with the aim of building capacity through the development of a 'pool' of EYPs. In both approaches, settings were encouraged to apply for multiple sets of funding, either as part of a succession planning strategy, or to build the 'pool' of available EYPs within the sector.

*'The Home Grown Graduate [Incentive], the one that supports the Foundation Degree is not restricted because we want people to succession plan... so we're trying to encourage them to succession plan so that they can have the additional payments to support other people going up through a Foundation Degree, so that's where we've got a setting with three or four people all on a Foundation Degree and they've possibly got an EYP doing the long pathway.'* (GLF lead, LA 1)

LAs adopted various criteria for targeting settings. These included targeting settings based on their take up of the TF. One approach was to target settings which had not previously received funding through the TF, and were therefore considered less likely to have a graduate or EYP in place. Conversely, a second approach deliberately targeted settings which had accessed TF funding for graduate training, but had not applied for funding for EYPS training, the rationale being that they might have a graduate in place who could now go on to achieve EYPS. In LAs where a qualifications audit had been carried out, settings could be targeted according to staff qualification levels, and with a focus on either graduate or EYP training as appropriate. Settings which were eligible for the GLF, and had staff undertaking graduate or EYP training but had not accessed funding were also targeted by LAs to ensure they were able to support and retain these staff.

Another way that LAs targeted settings was to focus efforts on settings identified as being in, or serving families from, deprived areas, as these settings were perceived as having furthest 'distance to travel' in meeting the aim of the GLF to have two graduates/EYPs in place by 2015. LA staff did however report some confusion in relation to identifying settings where funding for two graduates/EYPs would be appropriate. For example, LA staff were not aware that the guidance should be interpreted flexibly, and felt that the

policy aim relating to settings in, or serving, deprived areas was misconstrued or problematic since it failed to take into account other relevant factors such as the size of settings, the specialist experience of staff within those settings, or the backgrounds of families served by the settings.

*'The setting could be in a disadvantaged area, but...some of these disadvantaged areas and non-disadvantaged areas are very close to each other, you know, they're across the road, the setting might be in the non-disadvantaged area but the children will live across the road in the disadvantaged area. So we felt that... it was completely arbitrary and did not reflect the true picture of the geography of the borough.'* (GLF lead, LA 3)

## **2.4 Communication and support**

A key difference between the TF and GLF is that under the GLF, LAs are able to set aside some funding to spend on communication and support as well as incentives and covering training costs. Case study LAs had developed various communication and support strategies to maximise take up of the GLF and information about the GLF was communicated in a variety of ways, as follows:

- via LA websites
- as part of written training information routinely provided to settings
- through LA newsletters and other EY practitioner publications
- through targeted distribution of written information
- through training providers
- via GLF 'roadshows' or workshops
- at events to celebrate achievement of qualifications (for example level 3 qualifications)
- phone calls/visits to individual settings.

Written literature about the GLF ranged from a short leaflet outlining the funding available, to a series of glossy booklets detailing each incentive strand and targeting settings and/or practitioners according to their qualification levels. The GLF and EYPS were also promoted through pens and bags with logos and slogans to increase awareness.

Face-to-face communication was considered particularly effective. For example, 'roadshows' or workshops took place in different parts of the LA to maximise attendance and often included a presentation by a practitioner who had achieved EYPS, which LA staff interviewed felt was an effective way of promoting the benefits of having an EYP to other settings. Phone calls or visits to settings were made by advisory teachers, workforce development team members or members of the early years team. During these conversations and/or visits LA staff were able both to inform the setting about the GLF in terms of the policy and available funding and work on a one-to-one basis with the setting to identify staff who could potentially take up training, advise on training providers and options along with providing one-to-one support in completing application forms.

Training providers were also considered to be in an ideal position to communicate the aims of the GLF to practitioners and settings, encourage take up, and answer or direct queries about funding, and case study LAs had worked closely with training providers to facilitate this.

## **2.5 Take up**

Across the eight case study LAs, early years leads reported that around half to two-thirds of PVI settings had taken up one or more strands of the GLF. Settings had primarily taken up the HGGI, indicating a preference to train existing staff members to graduate and EYP level, rather than recruit graduates or EYPs into settings. LA staff described how take up of the GLF had been strong to begin with and was beginning to level off; this was thought to be because settings with staff with level 3 and above qualifications who were motivated to undertake graduate and/or EYP training had accessed the GLF and staff had commenced courses. LA staff acknowledged that settings without staff at level 3 or above or without staff motivated or in a position to undertake training were going to be harder to engage.

## 3 Engagement with the GLF

### Chapter summary

- The way settings engaged with the GLF related to their views about professionalising the childcare sector.
- There were four main types of engagement with the GLF agenda:
  - active engagement – enthusiastic about the opportunities the GLF provides for upskilling staff
  - passive engagement – not enthusiastic, but “going along with it”
  - passive disengagement – indifferent and did not see getting a graduate leader as a priority
  - active disengagement – opposed to the aims of the GLF and resistant to employing graduates
- Views and experiences varied about the ease with which settings had accessed information about the GLF. Barriers to settings applying for funding included not having enough information about the GLF, leading to confusion about what funding they could apply for and not having enough time to fill out the paperwork.
- Settings appreciated the financial incentive on offer through the GLF and the assistance it gave them to train their staff.

This chapter explores settings’ engagement with the GLF and draws on data from interviews with setting managers and practitioners. It begins with a discussion of the different types of engagement with the GLF identified through this research. It goes on to explore settings’ experiences of finding out about and applying for funding. Finally, it examines settings’ take up of GLF incentives.

### 3.1 Types of engagement

Settings’ engagement with the GLF was related to their views regarding the professionalisation of the childcare sector. A key theme to emerge through interviews with setting staff (managers and practitioners) was a shared view of the changing nature of childcare and early years provision. Participants described how the culture of childcare was shifting from a local, independent and traditional childcare sector in which experience and skills were valued above qualifications, to a new, professionalised sector where government had a more prominent role and within which higher qualifications were valued, akin with the teaching profession.

There were different perspectives among setting staff interviewed about the degree of emphasis that should be placed on higher qualifications. One perspective was that while both experience and qualifications are integral elements of a good quality childcare, professionalisation was resulting in the ‘downplaying’ of experience and good practice, for

example in settings without a graduate or EYP, yet rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Related to this view was the concern that less qualified, but otherwise excellent, practitioners would be marginalised by the push for graduates in the early years workforce. An alternative perspective was that qualifications should be prioritised in order to improve quality in childcare, and that the sector should not just stop at being graduate-led but should adopt a European model in which all practitioners are graduates. While managers and practitioners tended to lean towards one view or the other, they also tried to maintain a balance between what they saw as beneficial aspects of both experience and qualifications. In other words, even those that valued higher qualifications would place high importance on the graduate leaders being experienced. Conversely, those less enthusiastic for qualifications would still talk about the value of further training.

These different perspectives, and the tensions inherent within them, played out four main types of engagement with the GLF agenda, as outlined below.

### **1. Actively engaged**

Participants in settings who were 'actively engaged' with the agenda were generally able to talk at length about the GLF and its aims. Those working towards or holding childcare-related degrees or EYPS, were generally very engaged with the agenda, often for personal and career reasons. Yet, despite participants' engagement with the GLF, there were sometimes still concerns about either the aims of the GLF or about the feasibility of achieving those aims.

### **2. Passively engaged**

Those that passively engaged with the GLF were generally not enthusiastic and tended to give the impression that they were 'going along with it' or 'playing ball', because it was a government-led agenda. There were also those who were undertaking training, or who had gained higher qualifications, because their manager had asked them to, or managers or practitioners felt it would benefit their career and therefore they had 'nothing to lose' by taking up training.

### **3. Passively disengaged**

Those that were passively disengaged from the GLF and its aims were more indifferent about it and did not consider it to be a high priority. They tended to be disinterested or did not have a sense of urgency towards having a graduate leader in their setting. Participants that were passively disengaged had not accessed the GLF and would sometimes talk about the lack of time they had to look into applying.

### **4. Actively disengaged**

Those managers that were actively disengaged from the GLF and its aims were quite vehement in their opposition to it. They were resistant to the government agenda and did not intend to apply for the GLF. They felt resentment that they might be forced to employ a graduate or EYP and that they would only do so if there was legislation.

### 3.2 Applying for GLF funding

Applying for funding was dependent on settings finding out about the GLF. Some settings found written literature about the GLF informative and easy to read and understand, and the regular receipt of GLF literature and reminders about the GLF through articles in training magazines were appreciated as settings felt that they were continually being reminded of the funding available and as such were more likely to apply. There were, however, some criticisms made of written literature as a method of communicating the GLF to settings. Criticisms ranged from the content of the literature in terms of the amount of information included in it to the frequency with which it was both distributed and received. Recently employed managers in settings were sometimes unaware of the funding because they personally had not received the information and their predecessor had not passed it on to them.

One of the key barriers to settings being informed about the GLF through the written literature and to take up of the policy itself was staff not having enough time to read the materials sent to them, filing information away before reading it and not applying for funding because they did not have the time to find out about the GLF. Other staff, who were perhaps unaware of 'roadshows' taking place in their area or who had not received an individual visit, felt that a more proactive approach than written literature was required to encourage them to apply to the fund.

*'[The GLF] needs to be promoted more proactively so people really understand what they can get, you know, what they can apply for and how to do it. To get a nice, glossy leaflet was very nice, and I did read it, but it didn't get me to do anything useful.'* (Manager, Non-GLF setting, LA 1)

In terms of face-to-face communication of GLF policies, workshops and other information events were seen as valuable by settings staff in informing settings about the GLF. Where staff were invited to attend GLF roadshows or workshops, they did not always have time to attend these events due to both work and personal commitments. Settings also reported first becoming aware of the GLF through training providers, and this was another important route for settings to find out about the GLF.

Individual setting visits were seen as a valuable means of communication of the GLF and along with the personal support provided by LA staff in application processes, were viewed as very useful by staff working in settings as they were able to receive information specific to their setting and one-to-one support in applying for funding. Settings reported finding the application forms long and often arduous, and the role played by LA staff in responding to specific questions and queries relating to the application form was viewed as vital in facilitating settings to apply. However, the application form still posed a substantial barrier to some settings applying for funding, and the perceived amount of time it would take to fill out the form prevented them from beginning the application process.

Where settings had not applied for GLF funding, there appeared to be confusion about what levels of training were funded through the GLF and what qualifications people initially needed to be able to access it. For example, one setting manager thought the setting was



not eligible for funding because they were unaware that the GLF funded graduate as well as EYP training. Confusion about the conditions of the funding also led to people not accessing the fund. For example, in settings where staff were currently undertaking graduate training they had not applied for funding through the GLF as they thought they would have to go on and complete their EYPS in a certain amount of time when this was not in fact a condition of funding in their LA.

Other barriers to applying were not having suitable staff to undertake training (for example, not qualified to level 3, or being unwilling or unable to commit to undertaking graduate/EYP training) and the requirement for staff undertaking EYPS to spend 50 per cent of their time in the rooms (this was viewed as a barrier by managers wishing to take up training). Staff with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) were sometimes unwilling to undertake EYP training as they did not think it would add anything to their practice, or enhance their CV. Finally, upskilling staff was not always a current or pressing priority for private settings which operate as businesses with business priorities. Also, where new managers had come into post they were often more concerned with implementing a more general training strategy and setting up policies and procedures than investigating and taking up funding such as the GLF. Certainly, the communication of the GLF was viewed as requiring continual effort by LA staff in order to ensure that eligible settings are aware of the funding available.

### **3.3 Take up of incentives**

A key facilitator to take up of the GLF was the structuring of the different incentives on offer, which enabled settings to pay for cover while staff undertook training, to enhance staff salaries, and provide additional resources to facilitate delivery of the EYFS. Overall, settings which were engaged (actively or passively), predominantly chose the 'grow your own' route to securing a graduate leader within the setting. This preference for 'home grown' graduates was influenced by two main factors. Firstly, it was felt to be important to encourage existing practitioners' continuing professional development by enabling them to take up graduate or EYP training. This stemmed from managers' loyalty to their existing workforce and because they felt qualifications would bring added value to the setting and staff practice. Secondly, managers were reluctant to recruit graduates and EYPs into settings because of concerns about the impact it would have on their existing staff. Managers were concerned that being 'led' by a new member of staff could lead to tension and resentment. There was also a concern that although a recruited graduate or EYP would be qualified to lead, they may not have the sufficient experience to fulfil the role of graduate leader in the setting, whereas an existing member of staff would already have this.

Managers particularly appreciated that the GLF provided funding that facilitated settings to backfill where a member of staff was on training; this was seen as essential as it meant that the setting and quality of provision was not affected by the member of staff being absent one day a week during term time or while on study days.

*'From our point of view it...covers their absence so that we don't have to say to people, 'No you can't go on it because we can't afford to get cover when you're not here''.(Manager, GLF setting, LA 8)*

The ability to enhance salaries was also viewed positively. For example, managers could reward those undertaking training for their commitment to courses which often took up a lot of their personal time and impacted upon their home lives. GLF funding also allowed/facilitated settings to purchase essential resources that supported staff in undertaking training, such as printer cartridges, books and IT equipment. Settings were also permitted to use the funding to buy resources to aid and improve the delivery of the EYFS. Funding was used to improve outdoor play areas, and provide training to other setting staff (for example, level 3 or EYFS training).

For settings not currently in receipt of the GLF, the incentives and support packages available were identified by staff working in those settings as a factor that would encourage them to take up the GLF in the future.

*'Well, it's stupid not to, if you're doing the course, to be honest. At the moment I'm paying for it myself, which, that's my decision, but, particularly if the [setting] get[s] £2,000 out of it to help the other training, we could use that big time.'* (Manager, Non-GLF setting, LA1)

Settings found it helpful to be made aware upon receipt of GLF funding of what would be required from them in terms of monitoring spending. Greater awareness at the outset meant settings were better able to monitor their expenditure as they went along, rather than spending significant time collating receipts and invoices to account for the money when monitoring returns were due. Although monitoring was viewed by managers as time-consuming there were no objections to supplying this information as a condition of receiving the funding.

In contrast to the positive views of funding available for staff cover, salary enhancements and resources discussed above, there were concerns expressed by managers in relation to whether the incentive levels set by their LA would be sufficient to cover backfill costs or salary enhancements. These managers felt they would be financially disadvantaged through their receipt of GLF funding, as 'home growing' or recruiting and retaining graduates was likely to entail additional costs which would need to be met by the setting. Of particular concern was uncertainty about when the funding might end, leaving settings unable to continue to pay higher salaries without increasing fees. Some of the settings had firsthand experience of staff leaving the setting after undertaking GLF-funded training to take up LA jobs or work in schools, and these negative experiences acted as a barrier to taking up the current GLF policy in their LA. Some settings who had not accessed the GLF perceived there to be barriers to allowing staff out on training, despite the financial remuneration. Concerns were raised about the difficulties of finding both reliable and qualified staff to cover for staff in training and the potential negative impact of staff absence on the quality of provision in the setting.

# 4 Training choices and experiences

## Chapter summary

- Practitioners undertook graduate level training through the Open University and local higher education and further education institutions. Practitioners chose which training provider to use based on both personal circumstances and work commitments.
- Practitioners experienced varying levels of support while undertaking graduate level training. This was provided through virtual forums, supervision from lecturers and also settings staff.
- Practitioners undertook a variety of EYP pathways based on their previous qualifications and experience working in early years provision.
- Practitioners experience of the EYP pathways varied; shorter pathways were felt to be less useful than longer ones in preparing practitioners for the EYP role and also did not offer enough time for assessment portfolios to be compiled.
- EYP networks also played a key role in the development of EYPs and cementing the role of graduate leaders within settings, offering support and additional training opportunities to EYPs and in some cases trainee EYPs.

This chapter describes how practitioners gained EYPS. It presents the options available through the GLF to gain graduate level qualifications, how practitioners decide where and how to undertake this training along with experiences of graduate level training. The chapter then considers practitioners' experiences of EYP training pathways. It concludes by illustrating how Early Years Professional networks provide continuing opportunities and support for EYPs.

## 4.1 Graduate training

The two types of training providers used by practitioners to take a foundation or full degree were the local further education (FE) and higher education (HE) institutions or the Open University (OU). Within the case study LAs different processes were in place for identifying training for practitioners. LAs either recommended training providers and courses, or provided lists of all providers and courses available from which practitioners could choose. Where LAs recommended training providers, they monitored quality of provision in different ways. Their approaches included informally monitoring the pass and dropout rates of courses, contacting providers when a complaint was made about them, to more stringent and regular assessments of the quality of training provided which included observing lectures and teaching sessions.

### **4.1.1 Decision making**

Key considerations for practitioners taking up training were location, flexibility and support. For practitioners choosing to undertake degrees through the OU, distance learning was a preferred route because of the increased flexibility this option provided for juggling work and home commitments; they were able to complete their modules in their own time without having to attend lectures and tutorials at specific times. Those who opted for this type of provision did so also as a result of existing commitments to their setting. They were often the managers of these settings and were concerned about the additional stress placed on staff if they were absent from the setting for any time. Evening courses were also less attractive to practitioners who felt they would be too tired after working a full day at work. Despite the advantages of the OU, there were concerns about the isolation resulting from distance learning and a lack of contact time and support. In contrast other practitioners reported experiencing a full range of support in the form of mentoring, regular supervisions and online forums.

Practitioners who decided to access training through local institutions did so because they felt that they needed the motivation and support that was available through physical contact with tutors, supervisors and other students (including other nursery practitioners) on their course. They also welcomed being able to study on day-release from the setting, rather than having to fit learning in during their own time as was required if undertaking training through the OU or on evening courses.

The choice of provider depended on prior knowledge, location and courses available. Where practitioners had already undertaken childcare qualifications, such as higher national diplomas (HNDs) or other level 4 qualifications, they preferred to go to the same institutions as they were already familiar with the set up and staff there. Location of the provider was also an important factor in decision making with practitioners, where possible, preferring to attend the institution closest either to their home or the setting they worked in to reduce the travel time required to attend training. The reputation of the institution was also important to some who accessed training. In terms of the specific course that practitioners elected to undertake, this was sometimes linked to more practical factors, such as the day and timing of the course and whether they could complete the course in the evening. This allowed practitioners to select providers and courses that would best fit into their personal and work life. Another important factor in decision making was the transferability of previous qualifications. For example, where a practitioner had already completed the equivalent of a level 4 qualification they would try to use this qualification to reduce the amount of time required to complete a degree and this might have implications for the provider chosen.

### **4.1.2 Experiences of graduate training**

On the whole practitioners were happy with the quality of training that they received in terms of content of their course and the applicability of their learning to their occupation. They also spoke positively about the support available to them and resources that they could access. Support was available in a variety of formats for those undertaking training through the OU and local providers. There was electronic support available through online forums and portals such as the Virtual Learning Area and Blackboard. Online forums

facilitated discussion between practitioners following similar courses whilst portals also enabled practitioners to access resources such as lecture notes and assignments. Support was also available through provider staff who would act as tutors for the practitioners, contactable by telephone, e-mail and in person when attending the colleges. Resources were also available at colleges to support practitioners with library and IT skills training essential for their study and assignments. Practitioners attending local institutions also felt supported by other practitioners on their courses, being able to work together and learn from each other's experiences. In addition, support from the setting was also critical in practitioners' positive experiences of training. Where practitioners were supported by managers or other staff, through formal or informal mentoring, this was cited as an important protective factor in completing courses. Specific concerns about the quality of provision included staff not providing the necessary levels of support to practitioners and inconsistencies in staffing on courses meaning that practitioners were unsure who to contact for support.

Challenges reported by practitioners undertaking graduate training included the transition from NVQ training to graduate training. Graduate training was experienced as much more theoretical in nature, and requiring secondary research, unlike vocational qualifications which involved providing evidence of their own practice. Practitioners felt that graduate training required a big step up, and the transition was made even harder for those who had had a long gap between gaining their previous qualifications and embarking on degree level training. The volume of work involved in degree level training was also brought up by practitioners and resulted in them spending significant amounts of their own time completing assignments at weekends and evenings, which was often hard for individuals with other personal and family commitments. Practitioners noted that success required discipline, motivation and good organisational and time planning skills in order to study alongside a full-time childcare job.

There were two important factors which enabled practitioners to complete courses. First, the availability of training bursaries which helped practitioners to either obtain resources, such as IT equipment, books and stationery, or fund travel expenses for attending college or university. Second, whether a practitioner was allowed to take study leave or not. A key barrier identified to undertaking training was being unable or discouraged from taking study leave by the setting, or being required to make up day release or study leave hours taken. This meant practitioners were disadvantaged by being required to work full time alongside their training, and resulted in them either working compressed hours in fewer days, or reducing their working hours (and taking a pay cut) to allow them the time required to undertake their training.

## **4.2 EYP training**

Practitioners taking up EYP training were engaged in one of up to five 'pathways', depending on their qualifications and levels of experience, and pathways offered in their LA. Pathways ranged from 4 to 24 months in duration, as follows:

- Validation: for practitioners with relevant full degree qualification and practical experience (four months, part-time)

- Short: for practitioners with relevant full degree qualification but lacking specific practical experience (six months, part-time)
- Long: for practitioners with relevant foundation degree or who require longer placements or training (15 months, part-time)
- Full: for practitioners with non-relevant honours degree and little experience of working with children (12 months, full-time)
- ECSD to EYPS: for those completing a degree in Early Childhood Studies (18-24 months, full-time)

The key difference between the pathways was the length of time after completion of the gateway that practitioners had before they were required to submit their portfolios and be assessed. This different timescale reflected the additional needs of those with either little to no experience in childcare to gain the necessary hands-on experience, or for those with relevant foundation degrees or non-relevant honours degrees, to gain the required knowledge to operate as an EYP in the setting. For example, the short pathway is suitable for those with QTS who have limited experience of working with children up to the age of three years.

A key barrier identified by both LA staff and practitioners to accessing the EYP pathways, was having grades A\* to C in GCSE English and Maths (which is required for all pathways). In some LAs training had been put in place to facilitate practitioners achieving grades A\* to C in GCSE English and Maths. For example in one setting the LA had worked with local colleges to find appropriate tutors to run bespoke courses in GCSE English and Maths for practitioners wishing to undertake EYPS. The courses were run at LA Children's Centres as these venues were considered to offer a non-threatening environment and were well known within the childcare workforce.

#### **4.2.1 Views about the EYP pathways**

A key issue for practitioners was the length of the pathways. LA staff and practitioners reported concerns about the short pathway. There were particular concerns that the six month short pathway did not provide enough opportunity for practitioners who lacked experience with certain age groups to gain the required experience. LA staff and training providers in one case study LA were planning to withdraw the short pathway as they too felt it was an unreasonable timeframe in which practitioners could gain the required experience.

Practitioners who had undertaken the short pathway suggested that the longer pathways were more appropriate and would better enable practitioners to gain the necessary experience required for the EYP role. Concerns were also expressed in relation to time available to compile the portfolio of evidence for the EYP standards. For example, in some cases practitioners undertaking the short and validation pathways had needed to defer their assessments to allow them to complete the portfolio.

This was not a universal view however, with those who had entered onto either validation or short pathways with full relevant degrees and experience working in the childcare

sector indicating that they had sufficient relevant knowledge and experience to complete it on time.

The content of the short pathway was also criticised by more experienced practitioners who felt that it did not provide any new learning opportunities, and was mostly about proving and demonstrating existing knowledge and practice. One practitioner who had undertaken a short pathway recommended that the pathways could include a module on management and leadership.

Practitioners who had gained or were working towards a foundation degree in early years could choose to continue studying towards a full degree, and then undertake the short pathway, or go straight onto the long pathway. Practitioners reported anxiety about immediately embarking on a further 12 to 15 months' of study on the long or full pathway and in some cases expressed a preference for studying towards a full childcare degree and then undertaking the short pathway as a full degree was more widely recognised and provided a transferable qualification. In other cases, practitioners viewed the long pathway as an easier option than completing an honours degree and then a short pathway, preferring a longer pathway over some of the more demanding elements of an honours degree such as having to write a dissertation. Within the case study research the long pathways were criticised less by practitioners than the short pathways. The long pathway was viewed as giving sufficient time for all of the necessary practical experience to be obtained along with compilation of the assessment portfolio.

No matter which pathway was undertaken there were some consistent views of the pathways and EYPS that emerged from the interviews with practitioners. One view was that providers needed to show more consistency in terms of eligibility criteria with respect to both qualifications and experience. It was felt that a more consistent approach would, in turn, increase the recognition and status of EYPS in the sector so it would be more universally recognised and valued compared to other professional qualifications such as QTS. The pathways and work involved were seen to be a big step up both from foundation degree and full degree level and support from mentors, colleagues and other practitioners was felt to ease this transition. Completion of pathways was facilitated, as with completion of degree level training, by release from settings and money and time available for study outside of the setting.

### **4.3 Early Years Professional networks**

Local EYP networks also played a key role in the development of EYPs and cementing the position of graduate leaders within settings. These were operational in all the case study LAs, although there was variation in their operation and membership. For example, two LAs ran virtual networks providing support and resources for EYPs, as they did not have a large enough number of EYPs or practitioners on EYP pathways to operate a network with meetings. Other LAs organised monthly to termly network meetings with some also varying the location of their meetings to better facilitate attendance in a larger LA. Where LAs had close links with other LAs in their region they were able to hold joint county or regional network meetings to share practice more widely and facilitate a greater variety of training opportunities. A key difference between the LA EYP networks was the

membership of these groups; some of the LAs restricted membership to those who had already attained EYPS taking the view that this group had specific needs based on their status and would be best supported through a network especially for them. A contrasting approach was to extend membership to those on EYP pathways and other nominated practitioners seeing this as a valuable opportunity for them to learn from those already qualified, in a mentoring capacity. One LA invited network members to make suggestions about training, and this was perceived to give members greater influence and ownership of the network than in other LAs.

The EYP networks in operation were viewed positively by all EYPs or practitioners on EYP pathways who accessed them in the sample. Across the LAs the networks were seen to be a vital forum for professional development, offering additional training, information and resources for EYPs. They were also seen, by both members and LA staff to provide a useful vehicle for EYPs to share practice with some meetings taking place in settings so that EYPs could demonstrate and observe practice. One LA EYP network had further extended this approach and arranged for a number of EYPs to go to Denmark to observe practice there. Other LA EYP networks ran specific training weekends for their local EYPs.

It was also reported that practitioners in some settings were linking up with Children's Centre Support Teams, and managers envisaged that the development of stronger links with different networks of EYPs would help them to gain a better understanding of different areas of practice, bringing PVI sector provision in line with quality of provision in the maintained sector.



## 5 Perceived early impacts

### Chapter summary

- Practitioners undertaking graduate and EYP level training were viewed by LA staff, managers and colleagues as having a greater understanding of child development which they were observed as using to improve their own practice.
- Changes in role while undertaking pathways and after gaining EYPS meant that EYP managers could spend more time in rooms leading practice than previously.
- Having graduate leaders improved the provision on offer within settings. It enabled practitioners to make changes to the range of provision along with providing support and a mentoring role for other colleagues.
- Having staff undertake advanced training acted as a catalyst for other staff to undertake professional training.
- Improved staff qualifications were thought to help raise the profile of settings amongst parents who recognised the importance of staff qualifications on provision.
- Three barriers were identified to EYPs and graduate leaders making an impact upon the provision on offer within settings:
  - Staff with EYPS or in graduate leader roles not having the necessary skills, attributes and experience to fulfil the requirements of the role
  - The inappropriate use of EYPs within settings, not being in positions where they can lead practice
  - Staff being unreceptive to accepting new ideas for provision from the EYP or graduate leader

This chapter explores participants' perceptions of early impacts of the GLF and draws on the perspectives of LA staff and managers and practitioners from settings receiving GLF funding. It begins with a discussion of perceived impacts of the GLF on individual practice, and goes on to explore perceived impacts on settings. Finally, it considers the impact of the GLF on the 'graduate leader' or EYP role.

Although this chapter discusses early impacts that study participants associated with the GLF, the prevailing view was that it was too soon to discuss impacts due to the long-term nature of practitioners working towards relevant qualifications (for example, childcare relevant degrees and foundation degrees and EYPS). Furthermore, while respondents were more certain about the impact of the GLF on the role of the 'graduate leader', they were less certain about the extent to which quality of practice or children's achievements could be attributed to the GLF. This was due to the existence of other factors that participants perceived as potentially influencing improvements in practice, such as the

introduction of the EYFS or because of an ongoing commitment settings already had to ensure quality in practice.

## **5.1 Perceived impacts on individual practice**

LA staff believed that the GLF and associated training opportunities had empowered practitioners who did not previously feel there was sufficient status attached to the work they were doing. LA staff reported that practitioners taking up graduate or EYP training had become more inspired in their work and as a result were driving up quality in the PVI sector through making changes to provision<sup>7</sup>. For example, LA early years teams were observing that staff with higher qualifications (levels 4 to 6) delivered a better quality of childcare because they were more reflective, tended to self-evaluate more, were open to suggestions and more enthused about their work.

Practitioners reported feeling more confident and enthusiastic when they interacted with children and felt that this was because they were better informed about the theory underpinning the design and delivery of the EYFS. This was supported by managers of settings who also reported that practitioners became more effective practitioners with a deeper understanding of children and ability to reflect and self-evaluate their own practice.

Practitioners found that graduate and EYP training had helped them to make sense of new government changes to childcare such as the EYFS, Every Child Matters and Safeguarding Children. Practitioners themselves felt that working towards degrees or EYPS had increased their understanding of child development and helped them relate better to them, which was having a positive impact on the children in terms of increasing concentration and reducing challenging behaviour. Research undertaken as part of graduate and EYP training, for assignments and assessment portfolios, was seen as more effective for practitioners when developing their understanding of new government agendas compared with continuing professional development (CPD) training days. Settings felt that EYPs and those training towards the status better understood and therefore better implemented the push towards facilitating better personal, emotional and social development, which was stressed in the EYFS. Furthermore, practitioners who felt their setting was never up to date with paperwork and policies found the training helped them to address this and gave them a sense of being more 'professional'. Practitioners also appreciated the opportunity to take time out of the setting and review practice, which they felt they were previously too busy to do.

Specific degree modules on subjects such as working with parents had also made small changes to their practice. Additionally the academic work, such as essays and assignments, which practitioners had to do as part of their degree course, had helped them to gain new skills in writing and research which they were able to apply to their practice (for example, in planning activities).

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<sup>7</sup> More information about the changes made to provision by EYPs is included in the final report of this evaluation (Mathers et al. (2011) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Final Report).

### *Case study example*

For one practitioner whose degree was not particularly early years focussed, gaining EYPS had improved her understanding of innovative and child-focussed methods of childcare. The EYPS enabled her to challenge and question any practice that was not aimed at improving child outcomes. She also attributed the achievement of an 'Outstanding' rating in a recent Ofsted inspection to the knowledge she gained through the EYPS. She believed that it allowed her to think about alternative ways of achieving objectives and to develop personalised approaches to achieving outcomes. She also reported that knowledge gained through the EYPS directly impacted on children by raising levels of concentration, the extent to which children engaged with activities and reducing challenging behaviour. (Practitioner, GLF setting LA 1)

However within settings there was the concern that those either working towards or having already achieved a degree or EYPS, may not have the necessary skills, attributes and experience to fulfil the graduate leader role successfully. It was felt that while the push for a professionalisation of the sector has provided greater opportunities for people to get into childcare, the adverse affect has been that practitioners holding or working towards degrees and EYPS lacked the necessary experience in early years education. It was argued that one repercussion of the government aim for a graduate leader in every setting was forcing settings to recruit those lacking experience, when other less qualified applicants may have made better leaders. There were also concerns that childcare would now attract those students who were not passionate about childcare, but more career driven. However, a contrasting view was that with childcare becoming a legitimate career choice this has meant that better students, albeit with less experience, have entered into the sector.

## **5.2 Perceived impact of gaining EYPS on practitioner roles**

The GLF was perceived to have impacted in a positive way on the role of graduate leaders, through raising awareness and helping to define the nature of the role, and the responsibilities which it brings compared to other staff members. EYPs had also gained an increased sense of job satisfaction particularly through seeing other staff put into practice what they had taught them. However the introduction of the new status for practitioners was not seen by all as a positive addition and was seen by some staff members to undermine their experience, accumulated over the course of a career in childcare.

*'I've got to prove to the Government that I'm good enough to do my job which I've been doing for twenty whatever years anyway.'* (Manager-practitioner, GLF setting, LA 4)

In cases where managers had taken on the EYP role, managers saw their role as moving from a largely office-based role which was fairly removed from the practical side of childcare to one that was more pedagogical and involved in the delivery of childcare. In fulfilling the role of the EYP, managers tended to look more closely at whether everyone worked well together and as part of a team, at practice and implementing changes, at

making sure staff understood why they were doing things differently and also supporting them in doing so.

The ability to spend an increasing amount of time in rooms was important to managers who were undertaking graduate or EYP training. They wanted to be more practice than office based and said they would appreciate not having to worry about managerial issues whilst trying to cascade knowledge and skills throughout the nursery rooms. LA staff spoke of the plan of some EYP managers to relinquish management responsibilities after qualifying because they did not believe they could have an impact on practice when they were based in an office. Managers who were training towards the EYPS had started sharing managerial tasks with their deputies and delegating tasks to senior staff members in order to spend more time in rooms. The ability of managers to share administrative responsibilities with other staff and in this way spend more time in rooms to lead practice demonstrates that they have been able to balance and fulfil both the manager and EYP roles and that these roles do not necessarily have to be carried out by two separate individuals.

A concern, generally expressed by LA staff, was that graduate leaders were not being used appropriately in settings. It was felt there was a lack of understanding among managers about the role of graduate leaders and this has meant they have not been able to fulfil expectations and that their expertise is not being fully utilised. The support and backing of setting management was viewed as important by practitioners undertaking the graduate leader role, and where this was lacking it limited their ability to 'lead' and implement changes. For example, one practitioner reported being unable to implement changes she had thought of as a result of undertaking graduate training because the settings' management committee would not approve them. Doing training but not being able to implement changes in settings proved frustrating for practitioners. Furthermore, LA staff expressed concern about the development of 'a community of despondent EYPs' who having gained the qualification had experienced little if any impact on their role in their settings. Also problematic is that managers feel that after heavy investment by the setting in recruiting or 'growing' graduate leaders, further training is not necessary and hence are not allowing them out of the setting for continuous professional development. It was suggested that some of the tension between managers and graduate leaders could be alleviated through a better understanding of each other's roles. In some cases, managers were perceived to be reluctant to relinquish their role in curriculum planning which is a key part of the EYP role, viewing this as the 'nice part' of the job when compared to the day-to-day management of an early years centre.

## **5.3 Perceived impacts on settings**

### **5.3.1 Provision**

The role of the EYP is to lead practice and provision throughout settings. Through gaining EYPS, EYPs had started leading in the implementation of sustainable improvements to

the delivery of childcare in their settings<sup>8</sup>. For example, a number of practitioners undertaking training had been involved in redesigning safer outdoor areas which were more conducive to the way children learn and play. They found that the children responded to changes well and were more engaged in activities because they had been given more freedom and choice to do what they wanted. This had resulted in fewer behaviour management problems and fewer instances of crying. Children who had been led by setting staff who had undertaken graduate or EYP training were seen to be in a better position before going onto reception in terms of the knowledge and skills they had acquired, than children in previous years.

Managers found it difficult to disentangle the impacts of higher qualifications and the EYFS, but indicated that both these factors together were driving improvements in quality.

*‘Our incidence of behavioural problems has rocketed down since – it’s difficult to say whether it’s as a result of the EYFS or as a result of having a graduate in post because the two things happened at a similar time. But...the children have a very positive experience here. And... that is as a result of our graduate really.’*  
(Manager, GLF setting, LA 1)

The graduate leader role was described by participants as being particularly effective where they were able to lead practice across settings. Two case study examples are presented below which illustrate how EYPs could lead practice in this way.

#### *Case study example*

For one practitioner, gaining EYPS had led to a higher profile role both within her setting and also more widely in the LA, where she had been approached to become the EYP Performing Arts specialist for the LA, with a remit to share her knowledge and model practice across other settings. (Practitioner, GLF setting, LA 7)

#### *Case study example*

One EYP worked for a chain of five nurseries and was the company EYP. Her role involved working in each setting with the Education and Care Managers, working alongside staff, to role model practice and support staff to develop their own practice, and also to work alongside children and parents. Her overarching EYP role meant that she could facilitate a higher level of communication, sharing of ideas and expertise, and teamwork between the five nurseries that had previously worked in isolation. As she was not a nursery manager she did not get encumbered with administrative tasks such as working out ratios, paperwork and registrations and could concentrate on ‘upskilling’ staff which she believed was a key part of being an EYP. (Practitioner, GLF setting, LA 1)

However, another perspective identified in this research asserted that experience and a natural ability to relate to and engage with children were more likely than qualifications to

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<sup>8</sup> More information about the changes made to provision by EYPs is included in the final report of this evaluation (Mathers et al. (2011) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Final Report).

impact on the quality of childcare provided in the setting. Managers holding this view reported that there had been no benefit to the setting from practitioners working towards degrees. Doubts were expressed about whether staff members undertaking graduate or EYP training were bringing as much back to the nursery or room as they would have done from simply gaining more experience as practitioners. Degrees and EYPS were viewed by these managers as simply 'another qualification', and were not perceived as having any tangible impact on practice.

Managers were also concerned that having EYPS did not necessarily mean that EYPs were good practitioners. For example, managers were concerned that EYPs did not always tailor their approaches according to the ages and stages of the different rooms they were in, and tended to use overly complex language with children. They might also lack experience in managing challenging behaviour, or understanding of health and safety issues relating to nursery-age children.

There were also some negative impacts of staff under going training identified by both LA staff and staff in settings. In settings where senior staff, such as managers and room supervisors, were undertaking graduate or EYP training, their absence whilst away on courses was seen to negatively impact upon the quality of the childcare provision. LA staff reported that the quality of childcare in settings decreased while staff were away studying but attributed this dip in quality to a natural part of the training cycle and expected quality to rise again.

### **5.3.2 Settings' staff**

#### **Staff practice**

There was an appreciation among managers and practitioners interviewed that graduate leaders needed to play a 'team working' role, and that it was vital that graduate leaders worked alongside and respected the other team members, and that other less qualified team members were encouraged to learn from them. LA staff, managers and practitioners described the impact of EYPs and trainee EYPs on the cascading of learning to other staff in settings and as taking on more of a mentoring and supportive role in relation to other staff members. Staff studying towards or gaining degrees or EYPS felt that other setting staff had really benefited from the knowledge they had passed on to them and that they seemed to be interacting better with the children. They had noticed that where other practitioners were receptive to new ideas, these staff had also become more confident about their own practice. Practitioners undertaking training were however cautious about going too fast for other staff and also found that they themselves needed a period of consolidation to absorb what they had learnt and put it into practice. Managers reported that interesting discussions about childcare had been stimulated by new suggestions from staff undertaking graduate and EYP training. They felt that graduate and EYP training had brought some excitement into settings because it had made staff members think about new and different methods of childcare.

*'This has taken it...completely to another level, with regards to the quality and variety of experiences that the children are having. And the background knowledge*

*of all the staff [...] the setting is like a completely different place now that we have got [a graduate] in place.'* (Manager, GLF setting, LA 1)

#### *Case study example*

A manager-practitioner working towards EYPS regularly visited rooms to change the practice. She found that an effective way of encouraging staff to put into practice the new things she had learnt was to demonstrate them in each room. Rather than just telling staff what to do, this approach enabled staff to build up confidence to be able to do it themselves. Furthermore, this approach was viewed as effective because it involved demonstrating new ways of doing things, and did not imply criticism of existing practice. (Manager-practitioner, GLF setting, LA 8)

Less positive accounts of cascading learning were also reported by practitioners. Two key barriers emerged, which were sometimes experienced together. Firstly, recipients, particularly those working in specific rooms, reported problems in ensuring consistency across the setting and disseminating learning so that other rooms were also benefiting from new ways of working with children. They reported being given few opportunities to share or model skills. Secondly, practitioners found it difficult to ensure other staff, who were resistant to change and set in established routines, were encouraged and facilitated to implement the new skills and learning being modelled to them.

There was a perception among practitioners undertaking training that it could sometimes be stressful for the staff who were left to run the setting while they were on courses, and that seeing staff being able to leave the setting early to go to college, particularly when children were misbehaving might create tension. A further issue was the perceived 'special treatment' of practitioners training towards EYPS. One EYP had noticed frustration amongst the rest of the staff because she was given priority for going on training programmes. The potential for the GLF to impact negatively on staff morale and relationships is clear here.

Finally, managers and practitioners were positive about the use of funding to provide all-staff training and purchase resources to facilitate delivery of the EYFS. For example, settings had used the funding to pay for activities and equipment for children such as yoga, dance and drama classes and to improve outdoor play areas.

### **Staff development and learning**

Another perceived consequence of the cascading of learning happening because of the GLF, was that other staff in settings became motivated to gain further qualifications. This was particularly the case among staff with level 3 qualifications, who began to actively consider undertaking graduate or EYP training. In settings where the GLF had been taken up by one staff member, LA staff reported that they tended to receive an application from another staff member in the same setting around six to nine months later. There was a view amongst graduates and EYPs that staff seemed more interested in different childcare approaches and would question them about the new techniques they had learnt and that staff also seemed more interested in training and gaining qualifications. However

this experience was not shared by all; despite efforts to encourage staff to become qualified beyond level 3, not all staff necessarily wanted to progress further.

A barrier to the EYP being effective in leading other staff within the settings was not having the cooperation of other staff members and staff not being willing to be led and to try new approaches. As discussed earlier, graduate leaders reported testing different approaches to encourage staff to put into practice new approaches learnt through graduate and EYP training. Experience of supervising or managing staff was cited as a key factor in the willingness or likelihood of staff to follow the guidance and implement the changes suggested to them. For example an EYP who was also the setting manager felt that the management module of her EYPS and her experience as a manager had helped her to get staff on board with the new changes. She found that she was able to get them on board effectively by not just pushing the ideas she had learnt onto them but by also asking for their opinions and then coming up with a way to combine ideas so that everyone in the setting felt they had contributed and was willing to take them forward. However, the graduate leader role also led to concerns about the impact of the new role on their salaries and responsibilities. For example, managers reported that staff were worried about potential pay cuts and reduced responsibility as well as having to 'answer' to new authority figures. In settings where graduate leaders were not performing well there was resentment that the graduate was paid more and frustration that they had no real aptitude for leading staff or working with children.

### **5.3.3 Other impacts on settings**

#### **Raising the profile of settings**

Managers commented that employing staff with higher qualifications (levels 4 to 6) made their settings appear more professional to parents. There was agreement that higher qualifications made settings more competitive in the marketplace, and even where managers valued experience over qualifications, they still strove to employ better qualified staff as it made good business-sense. One setting attributed increases in the number of children on their registers to hiring more qualified staff.

However, a contrasting view was that parents were less interested in qualifications and more concerned about whether their child would be adequately cared for. Managers holding this view felt that until graduate-level qualifications become an Ofsted requirement, settings would not prioritise employing graduate-level staff.



# 6 The future of EYPs in settings

## Chapter summary

- There are two key concerns for settings and LAs in maintaining practitioners with EYPS in the PVI early years sector:
  - Salary and working conditions were seen as central to maintaining practitioners with EYPS in settings, however once the GLF funding, which had been so instrumental in supporting and maintaining EYPs within settings, came to an end settings feared they would not be able to match these salary enhancements through fees. Higher salaries and improved working conditions could lead EYPs to leave the PVI sector to work in the maintained sector.
  - The career aspirations of those with EYPS were also a threat to maintaining EYPs within the PVI sector. EYPs spoke of their desire to become primary school teachers or LA advisors, while others wanted to become setting managers meaning that they would have less opportunity to lead practice in these roles.

This chapter examines perspectives of LA staff, managers and practitioners relating to the feasibility of and perceived challenges for sustaining the impacts outlined in the previous chapter. Although the GLF was perceived to have positive impacts on the practice and roles of graduate leaders, LA staff and managers raised concerns about sustaining positive impacts when funding comes to an end.

A key concern for LA staff and settings is how graduates and EYPs can be retained. Strong concerns were expressed about being able to retain graduates within the PVI childcare sector, and that a lot will move into teaching or to maintained Children's Centres, where they were considered more likely to receive pay and enjoy working conditions that will better reflect their qualifications. Two main issues raised by participants, relating to salaries and working conditions and the career aspirations of graduates and EYPs, are discussed in this chapter.

## 6.1 Salary and working conditions

Pay and conditions in the PVI childcare sector tended to be perceived as worse than in other sectors, such as teaching, and were considered to be important factors in the ability to retain graduate leaders. Managers expressed doubts about settings' ability to afford higher salaries and incremental salary increases without the extra government funds. Due to perceived poor conditions for practitioners in the childcare sector there was a concern that those with degrees and EYPS would leave to join the teaching sector or LA early years teams, where pay, hours and annual leave entitlements were more favourable. This

concern was validated by participants who were working towards or holding a degree or EYPS, as they said that this was an option if their pay and conditions did not improve.

There were differing views about whether the employment of graduate leaders within the sector could be sustained beyond the GLF. One view was that staff holding higher qualifications were good for business, because they were attractive to parents. If parents attached sufficient importance to settings employing a graduate leader, then corresponding fee increases might become an option. However, another view was that qualifications are not a primary concern for parents in choosing a full day care setting. Alongside this latter view was the perception that one of the main concerns for parents, rather than qualifications, was the affordability of childcare. This was especially the case for those settings that placed a high priority on keeping fees low in order to enable parents in lower socio-economic groups to access childcare. Concern about sustaining pay increases for graduates and those with EYPS was also more strongly expressed by managers of small, non-chain private settings, in comparison to larger, chain private settings, particularly those where a graduate leader was employed to work across a number of settings.

Because of the difficulties of securing available funds for increasing salaries, the GLF was seen to be instrumental in retaining graduates and EYPs. Hence, concerns about the sustainability of this funding translated into concerns about the retention of graduate leaders.

*'I think of how long it's going to last...I always get the feeling with these [initiatives] it's very much a sort of a government fashion thing, and, "It's great! Yes! Let's have a year of doing this. This sounds really great", and then it's all gone and forgotten, and you've got to carry on on your own.'* (Manager, GLF setting, LA 3)

Although concerns about sustaining salaries were a significant issue, the importance of good working conditions was also emphasised. Participants working towards or holding a degree or the EYPS, emphasised the importance of being able to play the role required of them as a graduate leader. For example, one practitioner interviewed reported that they had left a previous setting because they were not given sufficient responsibilities and power to make changes as a graduate leader. Similarly, it was felt that poorer quality settings, for example those that were not scored highly on Ofsted inspections, were less likely to retain graduates or EYPs. This was because they might not be the type of setting where a graduate leader would thrive and be sufficiently motivated.

Opposing views about the importance of pay over job satisfaction were expressed by staff. One attitude was that money was not important and that the satisfaction of working with children and in the early years sector was the main reason to work in the sector. These practitioners had entered the sector knowing it paid little and had no expectations of earning a high salary. A contrasting attitude was that salary was important and for some practitioners this was the main incentive for taking up graduate and EYP training in the first place. Those practitioners with higher qualifications (levels 4 to 6) who were unwilling to continue working for the minimum wage were worried about what would happen to their

pay once the funding had run out and some spoke of plans to move to other settings or schools if their salary increases were not sustained.

Various suggestions for retaining graduates and EYPs were put forward by participants. One suggestion was that a manager or owner-manager who also took on the graduate leader role would be more likely to stay in the setting. A second idea suggested was that in smaller settings, a graduate leader or EYP could be employed by a group or consortium of settings, in order to spread the cost. A third suggestion was that the graduate leader or EYP be required to work for only 38 weeks a year, which would fit with the government requirement to implement the EYFS for that amount of time. However, the graduate or EYP could still demand a high salary and it was felt that this would be even more difficult to justify if they were working a shorter year in comparison to other staff. A fourth suggestion was that the increased ratio (of children to practitioner) for an EYP could mean a reduction in the total number of practitioners employed by a setting, which would free up resources to put towards retaining the graduate leader. However, this suggestion was viewed as problematic as two members of staff would be required to cover when the EYP was absent. Finally, it was suggested one way to retain graduates and EYPs was to invest in poorer quality settings so that they would become places where graduates and EYPs would like to work.

## **6.2 Career aspirations**

LA staff and settings managers, who had engaged with the GLF agenda and worked with either a graduate or EYP, commented on how the GLF had helped to professionalise the sector, raised the bar in achievement, and given staff the confidence and motivation to achieve more in their careers. However, higher career aspirations were perceived, by both LA and settings staff, to have implications for sustaining the impact of the GLF within settings because they have led to some staff wanting to leave settings, if not the sector altogether. For some practitioners who had always aspired to be school teachers, graduate and EYP training was viewed primarily as a route into teaching.

Other graduate leaders had not intended to leave their settings but their experiences of the graduate leader role had made them aspire to manage or run a setting. For example, graduate leaders, particularly those who faced resistance from senior staff to the changes they wanted to implement, aspired to own or become the setting manager in another setting, in order to fully implement what they had learnt. Here the motivation to move to another setting was to have autonomy to make changes and fully fulfil the graduate leader role. Furthermore, some staff were being forced to think of moving to other settings or sectors because other people in the setting were also studying towards the EYPS and the setting would ultimately be able to employ only one EYP.

This kind of 'within sector' movement was viewed as 'healthy' by some managers, and perceived as positive by LA staff, who were keen to build capacity by creating a 'pool' of graduate leaders within the PVI sector who would move freely within in. For this reason, case study LAs were actively considering extending eligibility for GLF funding to sessional staff and childminders.

Views put forward by participants to ensure retention of graduate leaders within the sector included ensuring the EYP status was recognised across the early years and primary education sectors. Some LA staff reported that teachers' unions had advised practitioners with QTS, including early years advisory teachers, not to undertake EYPS as it should be viewed as a lesser status compared to QTS<sup>9</sup>. Where LAs had actively encouraged advisory teachers to undertake EYPS, this was seen to be good practice, and a key way of ensuring parity between EYPS and QTS, and encouraging graduate leaders to remain within the sector. Finally, participants suggested that funding should be extended to consolidate early successes in professionalising the sector.

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<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that this was the view of a LA staff member and therefore need not be consistent with official union advice.

# Appendix A Evaluation design overview

The national evaluation of the GLF began in June 2007 and completed in the spring of 2011. It consisted of a range of research activities which were designed to assess the impact and implementation of the GLF.

Other elements of the evaluation include:

*A literature review* setting out the existing evidence base for the impact of training on quality in the early years education and childcare sectors and other related fields. The initial stage of this was reported in December 2007.<sup>10</sup>

*Secondary analysis* of monitoring data from the Transformation Fund was conducted for the report on the Baseline Survey in July 2008. This report has some basic data from the annual Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey<sup>11</sup> carried out on behalf of DCSF.

*Transformation fund implementation study* a qualitative study to explore the early implementation of the Transformation Fund. This was reported in December 2007.<sup>12</sup>

*Impact study*<sup>13</sup> to examine changes in the quality of childcare delivered in settings where no change in leadership has occurred compared with settings where specific types of leadership change have occurred.

*Best practice case studies*<sup>14</sup> among full day care settings that demonstrate the greatest improvements in childcare over time will be carried out after the final quality assessments have taken place.

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<sup>10</sup> Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund. First interim Report. NatCen, Institute of Education, University of Oxford. December 2007

<sup>11</sup> Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2008. Phillips, Norden, McGinial and Cooper. BMRB Social Research. DCSF Research Report DCSF-RR164 [http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR164\(R\).pdf](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR164(R).pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund. First interim Report. NatCen. Institute of Education, University of Oxford. December 2007

<sup>13</sup> Mathers et al. (2011) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Final Report Research for Department for Education

<sup>14</sup> Mathers et al. (2011) Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund: Final Report Research for Department for Education

# Appendix B Local authority recruitment documents

## Introductory letter to local authorities

Dear

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) has commissioned a programme of research to evaluate the Graduate Leader Fund, which the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is managing on their behalf. The research is being carried out by a consortium involving the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Oxford University, and the Institute of Education (University of London). The evaluation will explore both the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund and the impacts it has on the childcare workforce and the quality of childcare delivered.

The first strand of the evaluation will be conducted by NatCen and will involve case-study work in selected local authority areas. The study will focus on the early implementation of the Fund from the perspectives of local authorities and managers of childcare settings.

Local authorities have been selected from across the nine Government Office regions. They will represent a cross-section in terms of the level of Graduate Leader Fund spending monies available locally, local socio-economic indices, and previous participation in aspects of the Transformation Fund. We are writing to tell you about the study and to ask for your help. Your local authority has been selected for inclusion in the case studies and we would be very grateful if you would be willing to take part

The interview will explore your operational role and responsibilities in the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund in [NAME OF LA]. This is expected to take about 60 minutes and will focus on the local childcare context and experiences of the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund. Additionally, the researchers will also ask for guidance in identifying appropriate childcare settings to involve in the case-study research in your area. We are interested in settings in receipt of GLF funding, and those which have not received funding.

The information sheet enclosed with this letter describes the study in more detail and provides further information about what participation would involve.

We will contact you in the next week to discuss the participation of your local authority in this case-study work. We hope that you will be willing to take part in this important study and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

*Ranns*

Helen Ranns  
Lead Researcher

## **Information sheet for local authorities**

Further information (Q&A) about research into:  
**Graduate Leader Fund National Evaluation**

### **What is the aim of this research?**

This research aims to evaluate how the Graduate Leader fund has been implemented and whether the Graduate Leader Fund helps to increase the skills of the childcare workforce and childcare quality. The objectives of this strand of the research are to:

- Provide early feedback to on how the Graduate Leader Fund is viewed and administered locally, how it impacts on the local authority and the local childcare workforce, and how it relates to other local initiatives.
- Explore experiences of the Graduate Leader Fund from childcare providers' perspectives, particularly decisions about participation, application processes, receipt of funding or training, and perceptions of early impacts on childcare settings.

### **Who is conducting the research and who is it for?**

The research is being carried out by a consortium involving the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Oxford University, and the Institute of Education (University of London) on behalf of the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The strand of the evaluation that you are being invited to take part in is being conducted by NatCen. NatCen is the largest independent social research institute in Britain. We design, carry out, and analyse research in the fields of social and public policy. Further information about us can be found on our website: [www.natcen.ac.uk](http://www.natcen.ac.uk)

### **Why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

Your local authority has been selected as one of eight LAs to participate in an implementation case study which will explore the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund from the perspective of local authorities and PVI child day care settings.

### **If I take part in this research, what will be involved?**

Taking part in the research will involve a 60 minute interview with a member of the NatCen research team. This interview will be digitally recorded. Further to the interview you will also be asked to provide information on settings in your LA that are both in receipt of Graduate Leader Fund funding and not in receipt of Graduate Leader Fund funding. This information will then be used to recruit settings for further interviews to take place.

### **What will we be talking about?**

The interview will focus on: the local childcare context; local strategies and priorities; Graduate Leader Fund application systems and decision-making; local take-up and factors influencing this; payment systems; reactions from settings; and plans or suggestions for the future. The interview will also cover the transition from the Transformation Fund to the Graduate Leader Fund.

### **Is it confidential?**

Your participation will be treated in **strict confidence** in accordance with the Data Protection Act. No information that you provide will be shared with the settings in your LA and your LA will not be identified in the final report.

### **What happens now?**

**A member of the NatCen research team will contact you to discuss your LA's participation in this important piece of research. If you agree to participate in the research, an interview will be arranged at a date and time convenient for you.**

What if I have other questions?

If you have any other questions about the study we would be very happy to answer them. Please contact Helen Ranns at NatCen on 020 7549 9556 or by email to [helen.ranns@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:helen.ranns@natcen.ac.uk)



# Appendix C Recruitment documents for settings

## Letter to setting managers

Dear

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) has commissioned a programme of research to evaluate the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF), which the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is managing on their behalf. As you may know, the Graduate Leader Fund is an investment by the Government in the early years and childcare workforce. The aim of the Fund is to create a new level of graduate Early Years Professional Status leaders and a better qualified workforce generally without the additional costs being passed on to parents. Funds are available to private, voluntary and independent sector providers of full daycare.

The evaluation is being carried out by a consortium involving the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Oxford University, and the Institute of Education (University of London). The aim of the evaluation is to explore both the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund and the impacts it has on the childcare workforce and the quality of childcare delivered.

The first strand of the evaluation will be conducted by NatCen and will involve case-study work in selected local authority areas. The study will focus on the early implementation of the Fund from the perspectives of local authorities, managers of childcare settings, and members of staff for whom GLF funding has been received.

We are writing to ask for your help with this important evaluation. We have selected eight local authorities across the nine Government Office regions. They represent a cross-section in terms of the level of Graduate Leader Fund spending monies available locally, local socio-economic indices, and previous participation in aspects of the Transformation Fund. Within each local authority we want to speak to staff at five settings, including settings which have applied for funding and settings which have not. We would like to speak to settings managers and, in settings which have applied for funding, we would also like to speak to the staff member for whom GLF funding has been received. We have selected your setting from a list of PVI full day care settings supplied to us by your local authority and we would be very grateful if you would be willing to take part in this research.

Participation would involve a one-to-one interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes with you, in your role as setting manager, to be conducted in your setting or an alternative venue of your choice, at a time most convenient to you. The information sheet enclosed with this letter describes the study in more detail and provides further information about

what participation would involve. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the study further please do not hesitate to contact me.

### **For settings which have received GLF funding**

If your setting has received GLF funding, we would also like to conduct an interview with the staff member for whom funding was received. We enclose a sealed envelope, for you to pass onto that staff member, which includes an introductory letter and information sheet. We are keen that you highlight to them that participation is entirely voluntary, and that your or they should let us know if they would prefer not to take part. We will be speaking to them about their own experiences of the GLF including recruitment and/or training and their perceptions of any impacts of the GLF on the setting. When we contact you to discuss your participation we will ask if there is a staff member in the setting for whom GLF funding has been sought and if they would like to participate in the research. We would ideally like to interview you and your staff member on the same day, but we will of course be as flexible as required in order to facilitate this.

We will contact you soon to discuss your setting's participation in this research. We hope that you will be willing to take part in this important study and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Helen Ranns  
Lead Researcher  
National Centre for Social Research

### **Information sheet for setting managers**

Further information (Q&A) about research forming part of:

## **Graduate Leader Fund National Evaluation**

### **What is the aim of this research?**

This research aims to evaluate how the Graduate Leader fund has been implemented and whether the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF) helps to increase the skills of the childcare workforce and childcare quality. The objectives of this strand of the research are to:

- Provide early feedback to on how the GLF is viewed and administered locally, how it impacts on the local childcare workforce, and how it relates to other local initiatives.
- Explore experiences of the Graduate Leader Fund from childcare providers' perspectives, particularly decisions about participation, application processes, receipt of funding or training, and perceptions of early impacts on childcare settings.

### **Who is conducting the research and who is it for?**

The research is being carried out by a consortium involving the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Oxford University, and the Institute of Education (University of London) on behalf of the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The strand of the evaluation that you are being invited to take part in is being conducted by NatCen. NatCen is the largest independent social research institute in Britain. We design, carry out, and analyse research in the fields of social and public policy. Further information about us can be found on our website: [www.natcen.ac.uk](http://www.natcen.ac.uk).

### **Why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

We have selected eight local authorities, of which yours is one, to represent a cross-section in terms of the level of GLF spending monies available, local socio-economic indices, and previous participation in aspects of the Transformation Fund. Within each of these areas we will explore how the GLF has been implemented from the perspective of local authorities and PVI child day care settings.

### **If I take part in this research, what will be involved?**

Taking part in the research will involve a 60 to 90 minute interview conducted in your setting or an alternative venue of your choice, at a time most convenient to you. The interview will be with a member of the NatCen research team, and will be digitally recorded. The recording will then be transcribed and stored in a secure server, with only the NatCen research team having access to it. One year after the report has been published the recording and transcription will be destroyed.

### **What will we be talking about?**

The interview will focus on: current provision and the local early years and childcare context; staffing, skills and training; awareness of the GLF and decisions about participation; experiences of receiving money or training via the Fund; any impacts of the GLF on staff or provision at the setting; and suggestions for the future. The interview will also cover the transition from the Transformation Fund to the GLF.

### **Is it confidential?**

Your participation will be treated in **strict confidence** in accordance with the Data Protection Act and neither you nor your setting will be identifiable in our reporting to the DCSF or more widely. We will not tell your local authority which settings we have approached to take part in this research. We will also not share any information you give us with any member of staff in your setting.

### **What happens now?**

Over the next two weeks, someone from NatCen may contact you by telephone to ask if you would like to take part and, if so, ask you a few questions about your setting. We need to make sure that a cross-section of settings are included in the study and for this reason we cannot guarantee that everyone who volunteers to take part will be interviewed, although we would hope to include most. If you would prefer not to be contacted about this research, please use the number below to let us know and we will not contact you again. Participation is entirely voluntary.

### **What if I have other questions?**

**If you have any other questions about the study we would be very happy to answer them. Please contact Helen Ranns at NatCen on 020 7549 9556 or by email to [helen.ranns@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:helen.ranns@natcen.ac.uk)**

### **Letter for practitioners**

Dear Colleague,

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) has commissioned a programme of research to evaluate the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF), which the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is managing on their behalf. As you may know, the Graduate Leader Fund is an investment by the Government in the early years and childcare workforce. The aim of the Fund is to create a new level of graduate Early Years Professional Status leaders and a better qualified workforce generally without the additional costs being passed on to parents. Funds are available to private, voluntary and independent sector providers of full daycare.

The GLF is delivered through local authorities and CWDC, with the aim of creating a new level of graduate early years professional leaders and a better qualified workforce generally without the additional costs of doing so having to be passed on to parents.

The evaluation is being carried out by a consortium involving the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Oxford University, and the Institute of Education (University of London). The aim of the evaluation is to explore both the implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund and the impacts it has on the childcare workforce and the quality of childcare delivered.

The first strand of the evaluation will be conducted by NatCen and will involve case-study work in selected local authority areas. The study will focus on the early implementation of the Fund from the perspectives of local authorities, managers of childcare settings, and members of staff for whom GLF funding has been received.

We are writing to ask for your help with this important study. We have selected eight local authorities across the nine Government Office regions. They represent a cross-section in terms of the level of Graduate Leader Fund spending monies available locally, local socio-economic indices, and previous participation in aspects of the Transformation Fund. Within each local authority we want to speak to staff at five settings, including settings which have applied for funding and settings which have not. We would like to speak to settings managers and, in settings which have applied for funding, we would also like to speak to the staff member for whom GLF funding has been received. Your setting has been selected for inclusion in the case study for [insert local authority] and we would be very grateful if you would be willing to take part.


Participation in this research would involve a one-to-one interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes with you, in your role as a member of staff who has benefited from GLF

funding, to be conducted in your setting or an alternative venue of your choice, at a time most convenient to you. Your participation will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act and neither you nor your setting will be identifiable in our reporting to the DCSF or more widely. We will not tell your local authority which settings we have approached to take part in this research. We will also not share any information you give us with your manager.

The information sheet enclosed with this letter describes the study in more detail and provides further information about what participation would involve. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the study further please do not hesitate to contact me. If you would prefer not to take part, that is fine, as your participation is entirely voluntary. Please just let your manager or myself know.

We will contact your manager soon to discuss the setting's participation in this research. At that time, we will also ask your manager if you are willing and able to take part, and arrange an interview with you through your manager. We hope that you do feel able to take part in this important study and thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "H Ranns".

Helen Ranns  
Lead Researcher  
National Centre for Social Research

## **Information sheet for practitioners**

Further information (Q&A) about research forming part of:

### **Graduate Leader Fund National Evaluation**

#### **What is the aim of this research?**

This research aims to evaluate how the Graduate Leader fund has been implemented and whether the Graduate Leader Fund (GLF) helps to increase the skills of the childcare workforce and childcare quality. The objectives of this strand of the research are to:

- Provide early feedback to on how the GLF is viewed and administered locally, how it impacts on the local childcare workforce, and how it relates to other local initiatives.
- Explore experiences of the Graduate Leader Fund from childcare providers' perspectives, particularly decisions about participation, application processes, receipt of funding or training, and perceptions of early impacts on childcare settings.

#### **Who is conducting the research and who is it for?**

The research is being carried out by a consortium involving the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Oxford University, and the Institute of Education (University of London) on behalf of the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). The strand of the evaluation that you are being invited to take part in is being conducted by NatCen. NatCen is the largest independent social research institute in Britain. We design, carry out, and analyse research in the fields of social and public policy. Further information about us can be found on our website: [www.natcen.ac.uk](http://www.natcen.ac.uk)

#### **Why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

We have selected eight local authorities, of which yours is one, to represent a cross-section in terms of the level of GLF spending monies available, local socio-economic indices, and previous participation in aspects of the Transformation Fund. Within each of these areas we will explore how the GLF has been implemented from the perspective of local authorities and PVI child day care settings.

#### **If I take part in this research, what will be involved?**

Taking part in the research will involve a 60 to 90 minute interview conducted in your setting or an alternative venue of your choice, at a time most convenient to you. The interview will be with a member of the NatCen research team, and will be digitally recorded. The recording will then be transcribed and stored in a secure server, with only the NatCen research team having access to it. One year after the report has been published the recording and transcription will be destroyed.

#### **What will we be talking about?**

The interview will focus on: awareness of the Graduate Leader Fund and EYPS and decisions about participation; experiences of receiving money or training via the Fund or being recruited as an EYP in the setting along with experiences and impacts of having EYPS or working towards it on themselves and the setting.

#### **Is it confidential?**

Your participation will be treated in **strict confidence** in accordance with the Data Protection Act and neither you nor your setting will be identifiable in our reporting to the DCSF or more widely. We will not tell your local authority which settings we have

approached to take part in this research. We will also not share any information you give us with your manager.

**What happens now?**

Over the next few weeks, someone from NatCen may contact your manager by telephone to ask if you would like to take part. If you would not like to take part please let your manager, or me, know. Your participation is entirely voluntary and your manager passing this information onto you does not mean that you have to take part.

**What if I have other questions?**

If you have any other questions about the study we would be very happy to answer them. Please contact **Helen Ranns** at NatCen on **020 7549 9556** or by email to **[helen.ranns@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:helen.ranns@natcen.ac.uk)**

# Appendix D Screening questionnaire and recruitment script for settings

## SECTION 1. Introduction

*My name is [REDACTED], and I am calling from the National Centre for Social Research, NatCen for short. We recently sent you a letter about taking part in a programme of research evaluating the Graduate Leader Fund, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).*

*Does that ring bell? Is it a convenient time to talk now? If not ask when's a good time to call back?*

**Ask them whether they have had an opportunity to read the research information leaflet and letter.**

**Check if they have any questions about what they know about it so far before you tell them a bit more about it.**

*The research has been commissioned by DCSF and we are an independent research organisation and completely separate from both the Government and your local authority.*

*The study will focus on the initial implementation of the Graduate Leader Fund including awareness, views, experiences and any early impacts of the initiative on early years and childcare setting. We will be speaking both to early years and childcare providers that have received funding or training through the Graduate Leader Fund as well as to those that have not done so.*

*Taking part in the study would involve being interviewed by a researcher from the NatCen. It would last between 60-90mins. It is more like a conversation than a survey – researchers ask for your views– there are no right and wrong answers, we just want to hear about your settings experiences and awareness of the Graduate Leader Fund.*

*It would take place at your setting or at an alternative venue of your choice, at a convenient time for you.*

*Everything you say will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act and neither you nor your setting will be identifiable in our reporting to the DCSF or more widely. We will not be telling your local authority which settings we have approached to take part in this research.*

*The interview will be recorded so that we can be sure that we correctly remember everything that you tell us, but only the research team will listen to it and we will not pass the recording on to anyone else. We destroy recordings after the report has been written.*



**ASK if they are happy to take part?**

*If 'Yes' proceed to settings screener below.  
If 'no' ask why not and try to address any questions/ concerns the participant may have.*

SECTION 2. Screener

*If it's OK I would just like to ask you some questions about your involvement with the GLF, this is just so that we make sure we are talking to people who have a variety of levels of involvement with the Graduate Leader Fund.*

**1. What is the type of setting that you work in?**

- Private
- Voluntary
- Independent
- Unsure

**2. How many registered places do you have? (write in number)**

**3. Has your setting applied for any funding through the Graduate Leader Fund?**

*PROMPT- funding from your local authority to help you increase the skills of your staff towards graduate level and improve childcare quality*

- Yes
- No

Yes- proceed to Q4  
No- proceed to Q6

**4. Was your application successful? (i.e. received funding)**

- Yes, received funding
- No, application unsuccessful

Yes- Proceed to Q5  
No- Proceed to Q6

**FOR SETTINGS WHICH HAVE ACCESSED FUNDING THROUGH GLF**

**5. What are you using the funding for?(write in response then code)**

.....

To **train a staff member** to(wards) graduate or EYPS level

To **recruit a graduate** staff member or a staff member with EYPS

To **recruit/ train a second graduate** (30% Super Output Areas/ areas of deprivation)

**Any other activity**  
(i.e. commitment to have an EYP in place in a certain time frame, level 3-5 training)

**Ask if they were able to pass on the information about the study to the staff member who is training / was recruited through the GLF (if not, offer to speak with staff member). Do they know whether that person like to take part in an interview as well (if not, offer to speak to staff member).**

**If staff member would like / is able to take part as well, please organise the two interviews for the same day if possible. *Highlight that researchers will be flexible in order to facilitate this.* Arrange a date and time for the interviews using the interviewer availability schedule.**

**Check that they are happy for interviews to take place at the setting. If so, check name(s) of staff, address and contact details:**

**Name(s) of staff members to be interviewed:**

**Name of setting:**

**Address:**

**Contact nos. for day of interview:**

If they would like the interviews to take place at another venue, explain that it needs to be somewhere private, and quiet enough for the interview to be recorded.

**Remind them that they can get in touch with us at any time if they want more information or want to change the date/time of the interviews. They can contact Helen Ranns on: 020 7549 9556 (They can find these contact details printed on the information sheet)**

Thank respondent.

Proceed to Section 3

**FOR SETTINGS WHICH ARE NOT IN RECEIPT OF GLF FUNDING**

6. Can I check whether you have any staff with graduate level qualifications in your setting, so any staff with level 5 qualifications or above (i.e. a Foundation or honours degree relevant to early years education/ childcare, QTS, EYPS)? (Code response)

Yes

No

If 'no', ask: Do you have any member of staff undergoing training towards graduate level or EYPS?

Yes

No

If setting fits into sample matrix arrange a date and time for the interview using the interviewer availability schedule.

Check that they are happy for interviews to take place at the setting. If so, check name(s) of staff, address and contact details:

Name(s) of staff members to be interviewed:

Name of setting:

Address:

Contact nos. for day of interview:

If they would like the interview to take place at another venue, explain that it needs to be somewhere private, and quiet enough for the interview to be recorded.

Remind them that they can get in touch with us at any time if they want more information or want to change the date/time of the interview. They can contact Helen Ranns on:

020 7549 9556 (They can find these contact details printed on the information sheet)

**Thank respondent.**

Proceed to Section 3

**SECTION 3. After the recruitment call**

Email Helen and the interviewer the details of the interview(s) including:

- Type of the provider and experience of the GLF
- Respondent(s) name(s)
- Date and time of interview(s)
- Address
- Phone number
- Any relevant travel information/directions

# Appendix E Interview topic guides

## Topic guide for local authority interviews

### Interview aims

To obtain:

- Overview of local childcare market, LA workforce strategy, and how GLF fits into this
- Understanding of how the GLF is being implemented and administered
- LA perspectives of challenges and successes in the implementation and administration of GLF
- Overview of training provision for PVI settings, and LA experience and perspective of uptake of training
- LA perspectives of the impact of the GLF
- Suggestions for the future

Guidance for interpretation and use of the topic guide: **The following guide does not contain pre-set questions but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with each participant. It does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as respondents' contributions will be fully explored throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews.**

### A. Introduction

- Introduce self, & NatCen
- Remind re GLF evaluation – commissioned by the DCSF
- Remind about purpose of this strand of the research
  - explain design of research (*depth interviews in 8 LAs with LA GLF managers, settings managers and staff*) and aims (*exploring implementation process, take up and any early outcomes*)
- In addition to participation in an interview we would welcome their help in the selection of childcare settings in their local area (*through provision of information on PVI full daycare settings in LA and status in relation to the GLF*)
- Discuss confidentiality (*including between LA and the childcare settings*) & anonymity
- Use of audio- recorder & data storage
- Length of interview & time for discussion about settings selection afterwards
- Any questions

## **B. Background**

*AIM: to ascertain nature of respondent's role in relation to GLF and obtain an overview of local childcare market and LA childcare workforce strategy*

- Respondent's role
  - Overall responsibilities
  - Length of time in post
  - How GLF fits with other responsibilities
  - Details of role, if any, in relation to TF
  
- Local childcare market
  - Patterns of demand for childcare across the LA– level, hours provided, locations
  - Relative wealth/deprivation/ability to pay for childcare
  - Take-up/use of childcare in LA
  - Pattern of provision –PVI/maintained sector, full day-care, sessional, childminders
  - Dominant forms of provision across the LA
  - Particular local challenges in meeting need
  - Particular local successes in providing to market
  
- Locally set targets and outcomes in relation to workforce strategy and training and development

## **C. Purpose of the Graduate Leader Fund**

*Aim: to explore respondent's understanding of the purpose of the GLF, and experience of transition from the TF to GLF*

*NOTE: TF included multiple streams of funding: Recruitment Incentive; Quality Premium; Home Grown Graduate Incentive; L3-5 training; training to work with children with additional needs. Responsibility for L3-5 and working with children with additional needs are now included in Outcomes, Quality and Inclusion block of the Sure Start Early and Childcare Grant.*

- Understanding of GLF
  - Focus
  - Aims
  - What funding is available for
  - What funding aims to achieve (i.e. graduate-led EY by 2015)
  
- Perceived differences between TF and GLF
  - Focus
  - Aims
  - Number and range of funding options
  - Guidelines provided to LAs (differences between TF and GLF)
  - Perceived reasons for change from TF to GLF
  
- Differences in implementation and administration between GLF and TF(*explore administration of GLF fully in sections 4 and 5 below*)
  
- How GLF relates to local childcare market and provision in the LA
  - Local provision/ demand met
  - Full day care settings (definition of)

- Fit of GLF with other programmes/ initiatives to improve quality of settings
  - LA Quality assurance programme

#### **D. Implementation of GLF**

*Aim: to explore how the GLF has been implemented in the local authority; how it has been set up, applications are being managed and payments made, along with any monitoring taking place within the local authority. Also how it has been communicated to settings and any facilitators or barriers to this.*

##### **Development**

- Involvement of PVI settings in GLF implementation strategy
  - Consultation
  - Collaboration
- Main focus of GLF implementation
  - All settings
  - Targeted settings (e.g. in deprived areas, flexible offer settings)
- Criteria for eligibility
  - How decided on
  - How advertised
- Levels of and set up of
  - Incentives
  - Funding levels
  - Conditions attached to funding and incentives
- Areas of high deprivation
  - How identified
  - How informed about additional graduate
  - Any differences in administration

##### **Communication**

- Communicating information about the Fund to settings
  - Extent to which 'marketing' of the GLF was undertaken by the LA; examples
  - Methods of communication
  - Successes & challenges in communication
  - Dealing with queries/ offering support (e.g. requests for guidance on role of graduate leader)

##### **Overarching factors**

- Facilitators and barriers to implementation
  - Culture/ ethos of LA
  - Culture/ ethos of PVI settings in the LA (ie. as primarily education or childcare focussed)
- Experience and reflections of changes in implementation between TF and GLF

#### **E. Administration of GLF**

*Aim: to explore how GLF is being administered in the LA, and how this developed.*

- Administrative systems - Administration of applications, payments, training
  - Who has responsibility for administering and overseeing GLF in LA
  - How is the application process managed
    - Guidelines given
    - Additional information provided
  - Payment systems
    - Paid upfront
    - Paid in arrears
    - Paid in instalments
  - Design of the GLF administrative systems
    - Reasons for design
- How LA are joining up the funding streams of GLF and Outcomes, Quality and Inclusion block of the Sure Start Early and Childcare Grant (how dovetails with existing relevant local and national strategies)
- Monitoring of payment and outcomes
  - Accountability
  - Overview of uptake, spending, dispersal of funding
  - Overview of how PVI settings using funding
- Experience and reflections of the transition from TF to GLF
  - Changes in administrative set up
  - Changes in take up

## **F. Enabling PVI settings to access training**

*Aim: to explore how training has been provided to settings both in the past and under GLF.*

### Non-GLF training

*(Training below level 3. ie. not graduate level training, working with children with special educational needs)*

- Training models in LA (before TF and during TF) (e.g. commissioning training, approved provider and course lists, no LA guidance given to settings, LA staff provide training directly)
  - How model developed (historical perspective)
  - Reasons for this model existing
- Take up of training and match with expectations and objectives
- LA perspectives of quality of training on offer and its relevance

### GLF level training

*(This is training to either graduate level (Level 3-6) for HGGI or EYPS level training)*

- Overview of training provision through GLF
  - Options as above
  - Reasons for change in model (if any)
  - Fit with GLF
- Take up of GLF training and match with expectations and objectives



- LA perspectives of quality of GLF level training on offer and its relevance

### **G. LA perspectives of impact of GLF**

*Aim: to explore the respondent's views of the impact of the GLF*

- Perspective of LA on take up of GLF funding
  - How matches with expectations and objectives
  - Barriers and facilitators to PVI settings accessing funding
- Ability of settings to secure and grow graduates
  - Barriers (ie. lack of scope for creativity)
  - In comparison with TF
  - Facilitators
- Perceived impact on
  - Level of qualifications of staff in PVI settings (ie. graduates/ EYPS)
  - Recruitment and retention in PVI settings
  - Engagement with PVI settings
  - Roles of staff within the LA
- Feedback and reaction from PVI settings
  - How collected
  - Any changes made as a result
- Reflections on whether GLF has allowed LAs to improve implementation of securing graduate EYPs
  - New focus for PVI settings and LA
  - Continued commitment
  - No new commitment in settings
- How has GLF improved the implementation of securing graduate EYPs
  - How is this measured
- Local efforts to monitor the effects of the GLF
  - Monitoring mechanisms
  - Feedback options
- Perceived impact of employing an EYP
  - Outcomes for settings
  - Outcomes for staff
  - Outcomes for children

#### ***Ask respondent to think of specific examples of good practice***

- How and why successful
- Facilitators to good practice

### **H. Future and suggestions**

*Aim: to explore any future plans and changes in the implementation and administration of GLF in the LA, along with general views of the GLF and any suggestions for improvements.*

- Plans and suggestions for changes locally in
  - Administration systems

- Application process
  - Provision of, and PVI settings' access to, training
  - Other
- Involvement of settings in reviewing GLF and future planning
  - Lessons to be shared with other LAs
  - Suggestions for improvements to design of GLF generally
  - Any other comments re GLF (implementation and / or impact)

### **Topic guide for manager interviews**

#### **Interview Aims**

##### **To obtain:**

- An overview of the institutional and local context of the setting; number of places, session coverage, nature of catchment area
- Staffing and development strategy, objectives, aspirations
- Awareness of the Graduate Leader Fund and information sources
- Awareness and experiences of transition from TF to GLF
- Decision about participation in the GLF
- Reasons for non-participation in the GLF
- Experiences of applications process and outcomes
- Experiences of payment processes and implications
- Level of funding received and views about it
- Uses of funding or intended uses, timescale, factors influencing decision
- Impacts of GLF on recruitment
- Nature of training taken up or to be taken up, factors influencing choice, and constraints
- Settings' views of the perceived or expected impacts on the setting, staff, children, parents
- Suggestions and improvements for the future

Guidance for interpretation and use of the topic guide: **The following guide does not contain pre-set questions but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with each participant. It does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as respondents' contributions will be fully explored throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews.**

#### ***Note to interviewer:***

*Interviews will be with settings that have received funding or training via the Graduate Leader Fund and with those that have not. The sections are marked for which group they are applicable.*

#### **A. Introduction**

- Introduce self & NatCen
- Remind re GLF evaluation – commissioned by the DCSF

- Remind about purpose of this strand of the research
  - explain design of research (*depth interviews with 24 PVI settings in receipt of GLF funding, with staff member with EYPS or working towards it, as well as managers in these settings. Also, with LA GLF managers in 8 LAs and managers of 16 PVI settings not in receipt of GLF funding*)
- Discuss confidentiality (*including between LA and the childcare settings*) & anonymity, as well as voluntary nature of interview/ specific questions.
- Use of audio-recorder & data storage
- Length of interview
- Any questions

## **B. Respondent's role and details of the setting**

*Aim: to obtain an overview of the institutions and local context of the setting.*

- Respondent's role in the setting
  - How long in role
  - How long in early years education or the childcare sector (and in what capacity)
  - Own qualifications in early years education/ childcare
- Status of the setting: private, voluntary or independent
  - Principal funding sources
  - Whether any specific training budgets
- Details of the setting
  - Nature of provision; hours of childcare provision
  - Number of children (maximum capacity and current capacity); ages of children catered for
  - Any specific 'approach' underpinning childcare (e.g., Montessori, Steiner, High-Scope)
- What sorts of background the children come from
  - whether any children with additional needs or disabilities
  - whether any children for whom English is not the main language spoken at home
- Total number of staff at the setting and qualifications
  - Full or part time
  - Volunteers
  - Staff with level 5 qualifications or above (ie. a Foundation or honours degree relevant to early years education/ childcare, QTS, EYPS)
- Does your setting have a training plan in place
  - Aims
  - Timescale

## **C. Awareness of GLF**

*Aim: To explore respondent's awareness of the GLF, sources of information, change from TF to GLF*

- Whether or not they are aware of the GLF
  - If yes, whether they are currently receiving any funding or training via the GLF
  - Details of all types of funding or training received
- Awareness, understanding and views about the policy goal of a graduate in every PVI full day care setting by 2015
  - Awareness of policy and they how became aware (sources of information)
  - Views about the intended impact of this policy on PVI settings, other staff, parents and children
  - Views on the suitability of this aim in relation to settings
- When they first heard about the GLF
  - Who from (e.g. LA or other source)
  - How they heard (e.g. leaflet; workshop)
  - How actively the GLF was promoted (by whom; examples)
- What type of information they received
  - How useful was information
  - Anything that was missing/should have been included
  - Whether they had any questions
- Awareness of what the GLF can be used for  
Prompt on strands, as outlined in LA written GLF policy documents
- Experiences and views of the transition from TF to GLF  
Changes in
  - Focus
  - Aims
  - Number and range of funding options
  - Guidelines provided to LAs (differences between TF and GLF)
  - Perceived reasons for change from TF to GLF
- Implications for the setting of moving from TF to GLF
  - Removal of funding for TF specific elements
  - Receiving funding from alternative sources

#### **D. Role and added value of EYPS in setting**

*Aim: to explore the respondent's understanding and awareness of the EYPS and their views of the added value of having an EYPS in their setting*

- Role of EYPS
  - Day-to-day activities
  - Responsibilities
- Added value of EYPS
  - Day-to-day activities
  - Responsibilities
  - Quality of provision
  - Quality of practice – for the EYP and other staff?
  - Impact on leading other staff?

**NOTE TO INTERVIEWER**

**Go to section E for settings which have applied for GLF funding**

**Go to section H for those setting which have not applied for GLF funding**

**Settings which have applied for GLF funding**

**E. Application for GLF funding**

*Aim To explore experiences of applying for GLF funding, including what elements applied for, outcomes of application and differences between TF and GLF application process.*

- What funding elements have they applied for/ received  
Prompt on strands, as outlined in LA written GLF policy documents

***For each element applied for explore...***

- How they decided to apply
  - what were the main considerations
- To what extent were any of the following factors in the decision
  - amount of funding available
  - eligibility criteria for the GLF
  - requirements and conditions
  - need for more staff training
- Details of the application process
  - any help or advice given
- How easy or difficult they found the application process
  - time required to complete applications
  - ease of form filling/ provision of information required
  - views about the adequacy of any guidance given
- Outcome of the application (i.e. whether or not successful)
  - for settings which were unsuccessful, explore perceived reasons for outcome and intentions regarding future applications for funding
- How they feel about the application process
  - any ways in which it could have been improved
- If also applied for TF funding extent to which process differed
  - Guidelines provided
  - Application process

**NOTE TO INTERVIEWER**

**Proceed to section F for settings which have received GLF funding**

**Proceed to section I for settings which have not received GLF funding**

## **Settings which have received GLF funding**

### **F. GLF funding (level of and what used for)**

*Aim: to explore what level of funding has been received and how this money has been spent*

#### ***For each element of funding applied for explore***

- What is the total value of the funding received
  
- When was the money received
  - how long between submission of application and receipt of money
  - what were the arrangements for payment (paid in arrears, in advance etc...)
  - views about the payment process
  
- Details of how the GLF money received has been **spent** and/or intended use of funding, e.g.
  - Training
    - Explore type and level of training
  - Increases in wages or salaries
  - Additional costs due to staff participating in training: details
  - Additional money spent on training/professional development
  - Improvements to the quality of services to children and parents : details
  - Equipment for the setting
  
- Factors influencing decision-making around expenditure
  - clarity of guidance on how money should be spent
  - whether or not felt restricted by any requirements/conditions
  - if they had free-rein to use the money as they wished, what would they have done
  
- Monitoring of funding spent
  - By LA
  - Information provided

*Where funding used for training explore...* (other training accessed to be focussed on in Section I)

- Type of training accessed
  - Who provided by
  - How decided on
  - Level of training
  - Perceived quality and suitability of training

## **Setting which have received GLF funding**

### **G. Assessment and early impacts**

*Aim: to explore the early impacts of GLF funding on the setting, staff, children and parents*

- Views about importance of taking part in the GLF to a setting like theirs
  - Any perceived repercussions of *not* taking part (e.g. *impact on competitiveness locally*)

- How well they think the GLF is geared to meeting their specific training needs, & why
  - Views about terms and conditions
  - Whether any qualifications or training they would like to have taken up but which were not within the GLF guidance: what & why

### **Explore all...**

- Early impacts (*positive and negative*) of the GLF
  - on the setting (e.g. quality of care; staff recruitment & retention, skills levels, career paths, etc)
  - on setting staff ( e.g. job satisfaction; staff development/ increase in staff skills; childcare approaches)
  - on parents (e.g. parental awareness of GLF; satisfaction with child's progress)
  - on children (quality of care they have experienced; reactions to any new approaches)
- Extent to which early impact a result of TF or GLF
  - Continuation of work started under TF
- In a setting like theirs, how would we recognise if the GLF was having an impact
  - examples of how it was making a difference

## **Settings which have not applied for GLF funding**

### **H. Deciding not to apply**

*Aim: to explore why the setting decided not to apply for GLF funding, including and future participation plans.*

- How they decided not to apply
  - what were the main considerations
- To what extent were any of the following factors in the decision
  - amount of funding available
  - eligibility criteria for the GLF
  - requirements and conditions
  - need for more staff training
- Future participation in GLF
  - Any plans for applying in the future
  - What would encourage them to apply

## **All settings**

### **I. Training needs and training received**

*Aim: to explore the training needs of settings along with information on any training received. NOT SPECIFIC GLF FUNDING*

- Whether or not staff have received training in past year
  - Awareness of whether or not received via the GLF

### **If staff have received training**

- Numbers involved in each type of training received, e.g.

- Training to achieve levels 3 to 5
  - Training for working with children with additional needs
  - Graduate or EYPS training
  - Any other training for the professional development of staff: details
- Degree of choice they had over
    - What training to take
    - Training provider

***For each type of training received explore...***

- How training was accessed (and funded)
- How training was organised (by LA, setting or other)
- How training was delivered
  - Location
  - Duration
- Views about quality of training provision
  - Extent to which training received has met needs of staff/setting

**If no training received**

- If no training received, whether or not have applied to LA for particular types of training in past year
  - Details of response
  - If training application rejected, reasons for the rejection

**Perceived training needs for the setting**

- Views about the importance of training for their setting
  - What additional training and/or quals bring to the setting
- What they consider to be the main training needs for their setting, & why
  - Specific skills training
  - Specific qualifications
  - Relative importance of skills acquisition versus obtaining qualifications
- Awareness of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)
  - Understanding of its purpose
  - Any questions that need answering
  - Views about its value to the sector
  - Views about its relevance to the setting
- What are the main barriers to taking up training, e.g.
  - Timing
  - Covering staff hours (or arranging alternative care for children looked after by child minders)
  - Type of training available
  - Location
  - Other

**All settings**

**J. Suggestions for future of GLF**

*Aim: to explore what works well for the GLF and what needs improving.*



- If they are a participant, whether they would recommend participation to others; why/ why not
- What works well
  - Application
  - Guidance
  - Availability and suitability of information
  - Training available
  - EYPS in setting
- What needs improvement/ limitations of GLF
  - Application
  - Guidance
    - Availability and suitability of information
    - Training available
    - EYPS in setting
- Any other comments re GLF

### **Topic guide for practitioner interviews**

#### **Interview aims to:**

- ascertain nature of respondent's role in setting and how they got there, particularly relating to EYP
- explore respondent's awareness, understanding and views of graduate leader policy, the Graduate Leader Fund and the Early Years Professional Status
- explore respondent's experience of applying to the Graduate Leader Fund or if recruited externally, the recruitment process.
- explore respondent's experience of having Early Years Professional Status or working towards it, and the impact it has had both on themselves and others elicit respondent's suggestions on improvements needed for the GLF

Guidance for interpretation and use of the topic guide: **The following guide does not contain pre-set questions but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with each participant. It does not include follow-up questions like 'why', 'when', 'how', etc. as respondents' contributions will be fully explored throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews.**

#### **A. Introduction**

- Introduce self & NatCen
- Remind re GLF evaluation – commissioned by the DCSF
- Remind about purpose of this strand of the research
  - explain design of research (*depth interviews with 24 PVI settings in receipt of GLF funding, with staff member with EYPS or working towards it, as well as managers in these settings. Also, with LA GLF managers in 8 LAs and managers of 16 PVI settings not in receipt of GLF funding*)
- Discuss confidentiality (*including between LA and the childcare settings*) & anonymity, as well as voluntary nature of interview/ specific questions.

- Use of audio-recorder & data storage
- Length of interview
- Any questions

## **B. Background**

*AIM: to ascertain nature of respondent's role in setting and how they got there, particularly relating to EYPS*

- Respondent's role
  - Responsibilities
  - Length of time in role
  - How took up role (*researcher to probe on whether respondent was recruited as a graduate or is a previous member of staff*)
- Current status in relation to EYPS
  - *If achieved, when.*
  - *If working towards EYPS, when anticipated to achieve EYPS*

### Where respondent has not achieved EYPS

- Education level/ qualifications prior to undertaking training funded by the GLF
- Previous experience prior to participation in GLF
  - In PVI settings

## **C. Awareness, understanding and views of GLF and EYPS**

*AIM: to explore respondent's awareness, understanding and views of graduate leader policy, the Graduate Leader Fund and the Early Years Professional Status*

- Awareness, understanding and views about the policy goal of a graduate in every PVI full day care setting by 2015
  - Awareness of policy and they how became aware (sources of information)
  - Views about the intended impact of this policy on PVI settings, other staff, parents and children
  - Views on the suitability of this aim in relation to settings
- Understanding and views of the 'graduate leader' role
  - What this role entails
  - Views on if a need for this role
  - *If currently a graduate leader, any differences between expectation and reality of role*
- Understanding and views of the GLF
  - Who it is funded by
  - Who is eligible to apply
  - Awareness of different forms of funding available (prompt using written policy document to establish levels of awareness of different elements of GLF funding)
  - How easy it is to find out information (available sources of information)
- Understanding and views of EYPS
  - Aims of the EYPS
  - Views about the value of EYPS for the setting

## **D. Experience and views of applying to the GLF/ becoming a GLF recruit**

*AIM: to explore respondent's experience of their setting applying to the Graduate Leader Fund or if recruited externally, the recruitment process.*

If respondent previously employed in setting:

- How and why introduced to GLF and potential funding
  - Who introduced to them and in what way
  - Information provided at this stage
- Format
- Appropriateness/ correct level
  
- How and why were they identified to apply for the funding
  - Previous experience/ qualifications
  - Expression of interest in GLF
  
- Factors affecting whether to apply or not to GLF to work towards EYPS
  - Personal
  - Educational aspirations
  - Employment aspirations
  
- Process of applying to GLF (who managed process)
  - Who managed by
  - Their involvement in the application process (filling in form, providing specific details)
  
- Facilitators and challenges in the application process
  - Application form
  - Guidance
  - Expectations

If respondent recruited to work towards EYPS:

- How recruited into setting
  
- Understanding of GLF and EYPS training requirement when applying
  - How information gained
  
- Factors affecting decision to apply for position
  - Personal
  - Educational aspirations
  - Employment aspirations

If respondent recruited as an EYP:

- How recruited into setting
  - Knowledge of EYPS requirement when applying for job
  
- Understanding of the role and how related to GLF
  
- Factors affecting decision to apply for position
  - Personal
  - Educational aspirations
  - Employment aspirations

**E. Experience and views of working towards or holding EYPS**

*AIM: to explore respondent's experience of having Early Years Professional Status or working towards it, and the impact it has had both on themselves and others, and their setting?*

For those currently not achieved EYPS:

- Training
  - Training undertaken to date
    - Who training provided by (ie. college, LA itself)
  - How applied for the training
  - Factors affecting form and length of training accessed
- Other training options
  - Views of training in terms of applicability and suitability to their own needs
  - Fit of training with ongoing employment (ie. time pressures)
- Suggestions for improvements to training provision
  - Range
  - Length
  - Access
- Future plans for participation in training
  - Within GLF
  - Outside of GLF

For all:

- Benefits and drawbacks of EYPS, or working towards it for the respondent
  - Responsibilities and expectations specific to EYPS (e.g. monitoring requirements, increased pressure and responsibilities)
  - Salary
  - Employment prospects (and future employment plans)
- Support available
  - EYPS LA Network
  - Other support
- Whether accessed support or not
- Views on suitability and level of support offered
- Perceived impact of EYPS (ie. added value) and the training received on:
  - Other staff in setting
  - Parents
  - Children
  - Quality in setting?
  - Their own practice?

**F. Future and suggestions**

*AIM: to elicit respondent's suggestions on improvements needed for the GLF*

- What works well
  - Application
  - Availability and suitability of information
  - Training available
  - EYPS in setting

- What needs improvement/ limitations of GLF
  - Application
  - Availability and suitability of information
  - Training available
  - EYPS in setting
  
- Suggestions for improvements to design of GLF generally
  
- Any other comments re GLF

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