An Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Workforce and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce

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1. Acknowledgements

During the Review, a number of key people within the Early Years Division of the Scottish Government were particularly helpful, knowledgeable and supportive of the process.

Kathryn Chisholm worked tirelessly to ensure that key people and stakeholders were invited to focus groups and meetings; and that visits to schools, settings and centres were relevant, representative of their particular type of setting, and well organised. She also supported the dissemination of two calls for evidence from the governmental hub which resulted in approximately 400 responses.

Kathryn Chisholm and Liz Paterson supported the ongoing planning of the timetable of visits and meetings conducted during the Review. They were always good humoured and positive when answering questions as they arose, and finding further information.

Shirley Laing and Susan Bolt helped the Review by chairing meetings and offering thoughtful feedback and further information. Stuart Robb and Katherine Tierney also informed the process, especially as the Review began to take shape and the first drafts were prepared. The whole team supported the Review's development, gave advice about accuracy and relevance, and sought additional advice from other Scottish Government departments and key stakeholder groups.

The Review was received positively at all levels within the Scottish Government and was informed by the time, information, support and feedback provided by senior officials. These included: Sir Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary, Scottish Government; Leslie Evans, Director General, Learning and Justice; Mike Foulis, Director, Children and Families; and Fiona Robertson, Director, Learning.

The Review was also enriched by meetings and discussions with the politicians leading on children and young people's policy: Mike Russell, then Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; Aileen Campbell, Minister for Children and Young People; and, Fiona McLeod, Acting Minister for Children and Young People.

The Review benefitted greatly from the very large number of people who engaged with the process during the year, answering questions and offering views. This provided a breadth and depth of information, and sharp insight into the unique perspectives of those who participated.

Above all, the Review was helped by the staff and children in the settings which were visited during the process. Staff gave their time to talk, answer questions, and provide tours of their premises; and children – whose presence highlighted the importance of the Review to ensure the best provision for them – showed how they engaged with, and enjoyed, the opportunities afforded to them and their families.

The Review is indebted to the Core Reference Group (CRG) of key stakeholders, and the practitioners and representatives from stakeholder institutions and bodies, for the rich information and views they provided, and the time they spent in focus groups and meetings and responding to the questionnaires on the hub – both individually and in groups.

In addition, the Review was strengthened by those who provided thoughtful feedback on the initial findings, themes and drafts. They contributed a wealth of information which contained detailed and unique views of the current thoughts, issues and concerns about the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforces within Scotland. The analysis of this information has informed the discussions, the directions of travel and the final recommendations.

The Review process involved much communication and collaboration – and listening to as many voices as possible. Although some views were understandably contrasting and conflicting, there was an encouraging large degree of consensus. The Review's title underscores, however, that this is an Independent Review. While those mentioned above have had genuine parts in the Review's development, Professor Iram Siraj, as chair of the Review, takes responsibility for the final content.

2. Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

2.1. ORGANISATIONS:

AHDS (Association of Head and Deputes Scotland)

A trade union for Headteachers, Deputes and Principal Teachers from nursery, primary and special schools in Scotland.

ADES (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland)

A network of the Directors of Education across Scotland's 32 local authorities. There is also a sub-group of ADES comprising those with a lead role in 0-5 services.

Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)

A third sector membership organisation, based in Inverness, committed to the support of families with young children and the development of quality care and education in a wide range of early years groups.

Care Inspectorate

The independent regulators of social care and social work services across Scotland. They regulate, inspect and support improvement of care, social work and child protection services for the benefit of the people who use them. This includes all day care of children services and child minders.

COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)

A representative body of Scottish local government that also acts as the employers' association on behalf of the 32 Scottish local authorities.

EYS (Early Years Scotland)

A national organisation which invests in Scotland's youngest children, pre-birth to 5. It delivers and supports high quality Early Learning and Childcare for children and families across Scotland. It was formerly known as the Scottish Pre-school Play Association (SPPA).

EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland)

Scotland's largest and oldest teaching organisation, supporting over 80% of teachers and lecturers in all sectors including Nursery, Primary, Secondary, Special Schools and in Further and Higher Education. It has been looking after the interests and welfare of teachers for over 160 years and promoting the highest standards in Scottish education.

Education Scotland

It has a remit to support quality and improvement in Scottish education and thereby secure the delivery of better learning experiences and outcomes for Scottish learners of all ages. Its remit includes inspection of all education services in Scotland, including all early years settings offering the funded pre-school entitlement.

GTCS (General Teaching Council Scotland)

The independent professional body which promotes and regulates the teaching profession in Scotland.

NDNA (National Day Nurseries Association)

A charity and membership association promoting quality childcare and early learning for children in nurseries across the UK.

SCMA (Scottish Childminding Association)

The umbrella body representing the childminding sector in Scotland (it is a membership organisation).

SDS (Skills Development Scotland)

The national skills body supporting the people and businesses of Scotland to develop and apply their skills. It was formed in 2008 as a non-departmental public body, bringing together careers, skills, training and funding services.

SOSCN (Scottish Out of School Care Network)

The umbrella body representing the Out of School Care sector in Scotland (it is a membership organisation).

SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority)

The national accreditation and awarding body in Scotland. In its accreditation role, it accredits vocational qualifications that are offered across Scotland, including Scottish Vocational Qualifications, and approves awarding bodies that wish to award them.

SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council)

It is responsible for regulating people who work in social services, including the day care of children workforce, and regulating their education and training. It is also the national hub for workforce development for the sector, and is the sector skills council for social service workforce development in Scotland.

STUC (Scottish Trades Union Congress)

It represents trade unions throughout Scotland; works to influence Scottish Government and UK Government policy, and to influence local government policy.

UNISON

A trade union that represents people who work in Scottish public services. Many childcare staff working in the local authority sector are members

GUS (Growing Up in Scotland)

A Scottish Government funded longitudinal study which is currently tracking two cohorts of children: one born in 2004/05, and the other in 2010/11.

EYC (Early Years Collaborative)

A national multi-agency quality improvement programme with partners from local government, including social services, health, education, policy and third sector professionals committed to ensuring that every baby, child, mother, father and family in Scotland has access to the best supports available.

RAFA (Raising Attainment for All)

A national improvement programme with over 200 schools using Improvement Methodology to improve attainment overall and to address the equity gap in attainment.

2.2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS

HNC (Higher National Certificate)

The HNC in Early Education and Childcare sits at Level 7 (Early Childhood Education and Care) on the SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework). The qualifications are available through colleges and training providers.

PDA (Professional Development Awards)

The PDA in Children and Young Peoples' Health and Wellbeing sits at Level 7 and 8, while the PDA in childhood practice sits at Levels 8 and 9. The qualifications are available through colleges and training providers.

SCQF (Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)

The SCQF is a method of comparing the range of Scottish qualifications. It covers programmes in school, college, university and the workplace. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework comprises 12 Levels ranging from Access at SCQF Level 1 to Doctorate at Level 12 and a system of credit points. The different levels indicate a particular qualification's level of difficulty, while the credit points show the quantity of learning involved in achieving the qualification. Each credit point represents an average of 10 hours' learning.

SVQs (Scottish Vocational Qualifications)

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are work-based qualifications. There are SVQs for most occupations in Scotland. SVQs are available at Levels 6, 7 and 9 in Social Services (Children and Young People). The qualifications are available through colleges and training providers.

3. Executive Summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this Review is laid out in the Terms of Reference. It is: 'to identify and make recommendations on how the skills, qualifications and training of staff working within the early learning and childcare and out of school care sectors, from birth to age 14, can contribute to improved outcomes for children, help to reduce social inequality and close the attainment gap, based on the evidence gathered in the course of the Review and wider research evidence.' (p2)

The Early Learning and Childcare workforce (ELC) and Out of School Care (OSC) workforce have long been recognised as diverse and disparate. In Scotland they include private providers, Gaelic medium settings, local authority schools and settings, voluntary groups and childminders (Scottish Government, 2014a). Within such diverse provision there are major differences in work environments, qualifications, recruitment, retention and staff progression routes.

The Scottish Government has recognised that these workforces are vital for the healthy development and wellbeing of children, and a great deal of work has already been completed in supporting aspects of professional identity, making relevant qualifications available and accessible, and ensuring the rights of the child (Scottish Government, 2014 a,b,c,d).

Most people within these workforces are skilled and dedicated, and Scotland has been proactive in ensuring this. The responses to this Review suggest, however, that it would be possible to enhance the workforces' abilities in providing consistently more high quality experiences for the children and young people with

whom they work. Strengthening the workforces in this way will support Scotland's aspiration for 'Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up' (Scottish Government, 2015). It will also support and develop the skills of their youngest and most vulnerable children, reduce the effects of poverty and disadvantage, and improve children's outcomes generally (see Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2012).

The OECD (2012), in a report designed to act as a guide for countries when considering improvement in the quality of their Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) settings, suggested that it is important to consider five main policy levers.

These are:
- Setting out goals and regulations
- Designing and implementing curriculum and standards
- Improving qualifications and working conditions
- Engaging communities and families
- Advancing data collection, research and monitoring

This Review has considered each of these levers, and has adapted aspects from them so that they better reflect the services, policies and provision within Scotland. It includes:

- A consideration of the relevant international and Scottish literature relating to supporting children's learning

- A description of the Scottish policy context including discussions regarding current goals, indicators and outcome measures

- An outline of the relevant curricula and guidance frameworks and registration processes

- A consideration of standards and monitoring processes

- An analysis of the qualifications, professional development and working conditions within the workforces

This Review is informed by:

- Evidence gathered during focus groups and discussions with practitioners and key stakeholder institutions and bodies

- Visits made to schools and ELC and OSC settings

- Information gathered though two online consultations

- Meetings with the Early Years Division and other Government officials

- Consultation with the Core Reference Group of stakeholders

In addition, it has considered, and built upon, previous research, developments and policies both within and beyond Scotland. These provide an evidence base against which comparisons have been made of current Scottish processes and practices related to the workforces.

The full complement of recommendations can be found in Table 1 towards the end of this section. Before turning, however, to the recommendations, please note the principles which underpinned the Review and the major themes which emerged during it.

The principle of children's entitlement to high quality education and care, and the role of ELC and OSC workforces in supporting and enhancing children's outcomes, was fundamental to the Review. This principle underpins all the recommendations – including those linked to policy development, qualifications, inspection and registration processes, recruitment and career progression. The importance of this principle was discussed within meetings and focus groups, and within the hub responses. It was made explicit during discussions about both effective practice and how qualifications, professional development, standards and monitoring procedures should work to ensure that the ELC and OSC workforces have the skills necessary to support and enhance children's learning and development.

The Growing Up In Scotland: Characteristics of pre-school provision and their association with child outcomes (Scottish Government 2014c) report identified the characteristics associated with child outcomes within the Care Inspectorate's theme of Care and Support. It concluded that as it was possible to identify these characteristics it must also be possible to make improvements here. That report suggested that: 'attending high quality pre-school provision will benefit children in terms of their vocabulary ability which may, in turn, help reduce known socioeconomic inequalities in this and other developmental

outcomes. However, it will not by itself eradicate these inequalities. As well as early childhood education and care, children's exposure to learning at home is important in helping them achieve better outcomes. Yet with almost universal attendance at statutory pre-school provision amongst eligible children in Scotland, these settings undoubtedly present an important opportunity to make a significant and long term difference to many children's lives.' (Scottish Government 2014c p7).

Developing high quality ELC and OSC workforces hinges on building effective workforces through their qualifications and professional development processes. Scotland has made some innovative and thoughtful developments here. It has instigated a roles and responsibilities framework with a suite of associated qualifications; and it has recognised the need for a coherent and integrated approach to the initial, further, work-based and ongoing qualifications and professional development for all staff.

This Review, however, points to concern amongst the workforces and key stakeholder institutions regarding the content of some qualifications and professional development. The content needs to be evidence-based and to reflect the specific needs of the workforces for whom they are designed. The qualifications need to include, at the appropriate levels, the skills, experiences and knowledge deemed particularly important to support children and young people's learning and development – as well as family support for early learning.

Further findings from this Review suggest that Scotland could extend and broaden the degree level qualifications, especially initial degrees on offer to the workforces, together with developing further opportunities for learning at postgraduate level.

Many responses to the Review related to the equity of access to high quality ELC and OSC provision. The distribution patterns of highly qualified staff and high quality provision vary across Scotland (Scottish Government, 2014c). This suggests that work remains to be done to ensure that high quality settings are available and accessible to all – particularly for families living within areas of disadvantage or very rural districts.

There are consistent reports that local authority nurseries (in particular, those that maintained a traditional nursery school model) provide a higher standard of quality than settings in partnership with local authorities. In addition, there are reports that some qualifications (and providers of those qualifications) are more 'fit for purpose' than others, and that some staff work under different conditions and requirements to others (HMIE, 2007a, 2009; Education Scotland, 2012a; Scottish Government, 2014c). Some of these differences appear to be linked to geographical location, with particular concerns for rural areas and areas of disadvantage. Strengthening the integration of services, standards, registration processes and professional development opportunities could serve to reduce some of these inequalities.

The equity of working conditions, including adequate and better remuneration and opportunities for advancement and recognition for all, was commonly discussed during the Review. Although there appears to have been some improvements here, related to the introduction of the new BA Childhood Practice, this continues to warrant attention to ensure that all staff are suitably remunerated and given opportunities for career advancement. Clear links between the status of the workforces and their pay, conditions and career prospects were strongly indicated by all concerned in the Review.

The Scottish Government has already made some major investments within the ELC and OSC workforces. It continues to see the sector as one which could support its policy direction of reducing poverty and the effects of disadvantage, and of supporting the country's future economic growth. The Review highlights the importance of promoting quality through both professional development and the further integration of all ELC and OSC services by local authorities. Further, the Review urges increasing public understanding and goodwill through promoting communication about the importance of Scottish policies and practices that enhance and support children's learning and development.

The entitlement to free ELC is likely to grow and to include younger and more vulnerable children. It is, therefore, imperative that provision is of the highest possible quality and suitable to meet the needs of younger and vulnerable children. This is in the children's best interests, but will also strengthen Scotland's future and

ensure a cost-benefit balance. Given the scope, ambition and direction of ELC and OSC, there is a strong probability that the workforce will need to be developed substantially in size and quality. The first recommendation, therefore, seeks to ensure that workforce reform is fit for purpose and achievable, and calls for the development of a strategic group to oversee a 15 year vision and development plan.

Table 1, overleaf, details the recommendations together with the section and page number where they are discussed within the main body of the Review. As the Review proposes a 15 year time span, the list of recommendations is long and some will require significant planning and some revisions to statutes and so on in order to be implemented. The recommendations are also subdivided into short (1–3 years), medium (2–6 years) and longer (5-15 years) term. The intention is that all recommendations are acted on immediately; the short, medium and long term subdivisions merely recognise that all cannot be realised immediately or at the same time. The recommendations may need to be adapted and extended over time, and this would be decided by the strategic group in collaboration with Scottish Government officials and Ministers overseeing the vision and development plan. This might include reducing the time-frame to 10 or 12 years.

3.1 Table 1: Recommendations of the Independent Review of the ELC workforce and the OSC Workforce

Section in Report	Recommendation	Page and subdivision Short (S) Medium (M) or Long (L)
Initial Implications of the Research Literature for Scotland	1) Given the scope, ambition and policy direction, with its strong Scottish identity; for ELC and Out of School Care, there is a strong probability that the workforce will need to continue to be developed substantially both in size and especially in terms of quality. In order to achieve the necessary workforce reform a reasonable time-frame should be set. **The Scottish Government to convene a strategic group to oversee a maximum 15 year vision and development plan for workforce reform. Specific subgroups to consider and implement changes across aspects of practice and provision such as those outlined in the following recommendations (2–31) could then be supported and steered by the strategic group.**	45 **S M L**
	2) **Share the international and Scottish research literature in this Review, which summarises relevant literature about effective practice in ELC and OSC, with interested partners, stakeholders and practitioners. Over time, this should be extended, monitored, evaluated and updated.**	45 **S**
	3) **Consider the specific needs of 2, 3 and 4 year olds in relation to their free entitlements (which could be extended to 30 hours in the future), to inform initial training courses, postgraduate courses and continued professional development in relation to both the children and their parents/carers.**	46 **M**

National Policy Context: Current Government initiatives supporting quality improvement	4) Currently a great many services, including representatives from health, social services, education and the third sector, are involved in Early Years Collaborative (EYC) initiatives and planning across the sector. In some areas, however, stakeholders may have been overlooked, for example representatives from ELC staff within local schools. **EYC to redress any omissions so that all could benefit.**	54
	5) Develop a national assessment framework system inclusive of the current Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) for ELC 0-6 which has the potential to be used by a range of early years professionals and is sensitive to the Scottish context regarding assessment. This should be accompanied by a recording system with the potential to follow the child and to support transitions.	56 **L**
	6) The pilot of Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) has involved schools and Local Authorities (LAs), but has not yet involved the OSC workforce, including childminders. **RAFA to involve ELC and OSC workforces in the future, as they would have an important contribution to make to children's wellbeing and their social and academic success.**	57 **S**
	7) The new Scottish College of Educational Leadership, in collaboration with SSSC, should consider: first, consultation with the ELC and OSC workforces to determine their specific requirements; and second, offer bespoke, focused leadership courses for them, including leadership for learning and family support, as part of the professional learning opportunities available through the Framework for Educational Leadership.	59 **S**

Scotland's curricula, guidance frameworks and registration processes	8)	There is a strong feeling within Scotland that the focus should be on early learning as well as childcare, and that the specific skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge necessary to support early years professionals in improving children's learning and development leading to enhanced children's outcomes within this age group 0-6 is not overlooked. **Include aspects of the Care and Support theme used by the Care Inspectorate (which links to the National Care Standards, 2009) in future inspections as well as in education, training and all qualifications designed to improve quality.**	63 **S**
	9)	**Further develop the evidence base of high quality practice relating to the OSC workforce within Scotland, including the production of an up-to-date version of the Schools Out (2003) Framework, which offers further guidance on effective practice.**	64 **L**
	10)	**Further discussion at a national level of, and strategic professional development around, the term ELC to support the understanding of the importance of highly qualified, knowledgeable and effective ELC and OSC practitioners.**	66 **M**
	11)	**Design and deliver compulsory training for primary head teachers on why ELC is important for Scotland's future, what effective early years pedagogy and practice looks like, and how this sets the foundations for future learning for Curriculum for Excellence.**	67 **S**
	12)	**SSSC, in collaboration with associate bodies and other stakeholders, to develop standards for/guidance on the core skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge that would be appropriate for 'practitioner' and 'support worker' roles within the ELC and OSC workforces to achieve.**	71 **S**
	13)	**Make induction or pre-registration training a requirement for registration to provide a childminding service under the Public Services Reform Act.**	72 **S**

	14) Include childminders on the same register with the same conditions as the majority of the ELC workforce (i.e. with SSSC), particularly community childminders; those commissioned to deliver the funded hours of ELC; and those providing specialist high quality services, and invest in and build upon these services.	72 **L**
	15) Support and develop the role of appropriately qualified teachers working within ELC settings, moving their professional relationships with the rest of the ELC in positive directions. If the role of the teacher working face-to-face with children under 5 years is to continue, there will need to be additional agreements regarding flexibility of working conditions (so that they suit working conditions in settings which are not schools) and better career opportunities and progression. **Scottish Government to take the lead in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT), and begin discussions and debate around teachers working in ELC.**	74 **L**
Standards and monitoring processes in Scotland: Inspections within ELC and Out of School Care	**16)** This recommendation relates to Recommendation 8 and the recurrent theme within Scotland of concern about a lack of focus on supporting the learning and development of young children. The recent Growing Up in Scotland report (Scottish Government 2014c) showed links between the Care and Support theme used within Care Inspections and children's outcomes. Analysis of the standards underpinning those inspections highlighted the content of section 4 of the current National Care Standards (2009) as fundamental to the Care and Support theme. **Retain the content of section 4 during any revision to the National Care Standards.**	77 **M**
	17) In order to better articulate the Scottish policy thrust that care and education are inseparable and cannot be viewed separately: **Formalise and simplify the current inspections position. Currently ELC settings can receive one shared inspection from two different bodies visiting together. In future, either a joint education and care inspection or one inspection conducted by one single inspectorate body for ELC should be standard.**	80 **L**

Qualifications, training and working conditions: Qualifications	**18)** **SQA and SSSC, together with associated bodies and stakeholders, to review the structure of all qualifications for ELC and OSC that they quality assure and accredit.** **The core units and assessments of the awards, as appropriate, should better reflect the main business of the settings in which the student learners work.** This should improve their ability to support learners in developing high quality relationships and interactions with children that promote wellbeing, and extend thinking and concept development.	85 **S**
	19) If children's outcomes are to be supported and enhanced, it is important to ensure that there are highly qualified and knowledgeable practitioners in all ELC settings who lead learning and sensitively support families in developing a stimulating home learning environment. Every strong profession has good initial, graduate entry route/s. **More new and creative, initial graduate degrees designed for practitioners leading learning in ELC should be developed.** This could arrest the decline in teachers working face-to-face with young children, and should not threaten the work-based childhood practice degree programme or discourage further and higher educational institutions from offering their initial degree programmes to work-based practitioners through more creative, flexible delivery options.	88 **S**
	20) **Introduce an early years specific teacher training in universities at both initial (0-6, with specialisms in 0-3 and 3-6) and postgraduate levels which are resourced and supported on a par with primary school courses.**	90 **S M L**
	21) **Offer conversion and upskilling courses (such as the well-known Froebel training) for current primary trained teachers who have the existing 3–12 teaching award, but who do not feel confident to teach younger children. These courses should be linked to available vacancies.**	90 **S M**
	22) **Universities and other Higher Education Institutions should consider the range of courses they offer for ELC: as well as offering initial graduate routes of high quality such as the one at Stirling University, they should increase Masters routes which include a strong research component.**	90 **S M**

Qualifications, training and working conditions: Quality Assurance	**23) SQA and SSSC to introduce further checks on the effectiveness of training, assessment and qualifications providers to ensure standards and comparability.** Emphasis should be placed on ensuring diversity of experiences within good and excellent settings and time given for reflection, planning and reading.	91 **S**
	24) Qualifications bodies should engage in more collaborative working, including increased communication, which would ensure better understanding of each other's course content, core training needs and would develop continuity and progression within and across courses, both initial and postgraduate. **A key stakeholder group should be established by the Scottish Government to facilitate such communication and advise on future directions: it should include representation from relevant bodies such as SSSC.**	91 **S**
Qualifications, training and working conditions: Status, Pay and Conditions	25) All practitioners should receive the living wage, or above, rather than the minimum wage. **Develop and recommend a national pay scale for ELC and OSC which should be adopted by all local authority provision and highly recommended to the third and private sector who serve funded children. This is likely to necessitate a review of funding of children's entitlement in ELC within the private and third sector.**	94 **M**
	26) Review remuneration over time for those who have worked to achieve their BA in Childhood Practice or those who, in the future, enter the profession with appropriate degree level qualifications.	95 **S M**
	27) Language is powerful in influencing people's attitudes and views. For this reason, **the term practitioner should be reviewed** as it is unlikely to be associated by a lay person with a professional or an expert in their sector. **The Early Years Division should consult the sector and find a more suitable term.**	95 **M**
Qualifications, training and working conditions: Inequality	**28) LAs should bring LA and partnership settings together to support planning and management of the ELC and OSC workforces in a more integrated way.**	96 **M**

Qualifications, training and working conditions: Recruitment	**29) Guidance needs to be prepared and disseminated to career service advisors, and those responsible in secondary schools for supporting young people with career choices, to ensure that they understand the importance of the work and rigours of the qualifications and day-to-day challenges in professions related to ELC and OSC.**	97 **S**
Qualifications, training and working conditions: Impact of education, training and qualifications	**30) Further evaluation and research is needed to consider the impact of OSC and childminding on children's outcomes in Scotland.** **In addition, further research considering the impact of ELC and OSC for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and/ or with additional learning needs is needed in Scotland.**	99 **L**
	31) Further research is needed to consider the inspection process and how this links to children's outcomes. This would support the further development of inspection indicators, as well as ensure that inspections support improvement and continue to inform future policy direction.	9S9 **L**

3.2. Concluding Comments

The current policy context in Scotland has focused strongly on the early years of children's lives, their family contexts and the importance of the best possible start in life. A free part-time place for all 3 and 4 year olds has become a reality in the early years. This provided 'universal' pre-school education, and led to calls for staffing increases; and then, in turn, to calls for ensuring not just access but also higher quality provision. Staff retention across the early years and out of school care workforces has been an abiding issue, often linked with unequal pay and conditions across the sectors.

It is critical to focus on children's entitlement to high quality early learning and care. They and their families are central to what the workforce does and could do, and this is the main thrust of the Review. The current need to review the workforce is predicated on the belief that it is the prime agent for change and Scotland's main tool for ensuring that policy becomes practice.

There is evidence that improved training and higher qualifications benefit the workforce, and that a more developed workforce improves children's experiences and developmental processes and in the long term this benefits the economy (see Section 10). There is, however, still a lack of data in Scotland on the impact of those qualifications on children's outcomes. The workforce must be 'fit-for-purpose'; and its purpose is to improve children's wellbeing and learning outcomes, and to support parents and communities in raising their children as well as providing time to study or work.

This Review's proposals are radical and wide-ranging. They are inter-related and should be seen as an integrated set – and not separately. They build on the many existing strengths of the ELC and OSC sector within Scotland. They aim to support both a vision for the future and a coherent and manageable means for realising that vision.

The Review offers proposals for implementation which build on an existing Scottish tradition of collaborative and joint strategic planning; and this should serve to secure the sustained and active participation of key stakeholder bodies and institutions, as well as practitioners and the wider community.

Scotland should be proud of the ambition it has set as a country for children in the early years and later life. It is a vision worth pursuing. The realisation of the ambition is not without tension, however, as historically parts of the sector remain fragmented, has many stakeholders and has traditionally been under less policy scrutiny, and subject to lower levels of funding, than other sectors of public education.

The recommendations are embedded within three strong emergent themes emanating from Scottish Government legislation and policies to promote a more cohesive approach – and from the research evidence base and the Review's consultation process. These are:

- From the child's perspective, the integration of early learning and care is inseparable: this is now enshrined in many Government policy documents and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014). The Review recognises the strength of this integrated focus, but notes the uneven realisation of the aim and calls for a particular emphasis on appropriate, core training in early learning across the sector to improve children's outcomes and transitions.

- The nature of working with young children requires complex skills around supporting their development and working with carers/parents. The Review recognises the integrated working required of early learning and childcare and out of school care staff, and stresses the need for good data, well-educated and responsive staff and multi-agency working.

- While recognising and valuing the diversity of the workforce, the Review stresses the importance of, and calls for, greater coherence in career progression, better conditions and more advancement of the workforce through an entitlement to appropriate ongoing professional development, initial and higher qualifications; and greater parity of remuneration and service conditions.

Finally, the Review recognises that building the public's understanding and goodwill is vital. This can be achieved through the three themes outlined above, which are designed to enhance the quality of the workforces and promote the development and further integration of practices, services and so on.

Although the recommendations might be achieved earlier than the 15 year time-span suggested for the strategic group, experience suggests that implementing change takes considerable time and that reasonable time scales aid consultation, dialogue, trial and error, and fluctuating budgets over electoral cycles.

4. The Independent Review process

This section outlines the processes the Review followed to gather evidence and to validate findings and issues. It details the questions itemised in the Terms of Reference. It explains how the information was gathered and considered through the following: focus groups and discussions with key practitioners and key stakeholder institutions and bodies; visits to schools and settings; two online consultations; meetings with the Early Years Division and other Scottish Government officials; and consultation with the Core Reference Group of stakeholders.

This Review of the workforce took place from April 2014 to April 2015 and was commissioned by Aileen Campbell (Minister for Children and Young People) through the Early Years Division of the Scottish Government.

4.1. Key Questions for the Review are taken from the Terms of Reference for the Independent Review

- What are the key critical skills, knowledge and experience necessary to achieve high quality learning and care in early years and out of school care?

- How best to support staff who are undertaking different levels of qualifications including the higher level qualifications such as teacher training, early years specialism, and the BA Childhood Practice Award or similar?

- How to provide opportunities for training and up-skilling the teaching workforce in specific early years pedagogy to help improve the delivery of quality experiences for children?

- How to up-skill the whole workforce in early childhood pedagogy through relevant continuing professional development to help in the delivery of quality experiences for children?

- Is there scope for any further activity or support for the workforce to increase skills of those working with young children at all levels?

- How to increase the status of the early years workforce as a profession?

- How to increase levels of recruitment and retention of the best candidates to build careers within early learning and childcare, to grow a high quality workforce in future?

- How can staff, including heads and managers (teachers and childhood practitioners), with different skills, training and qualifications, best be deployed to ensure a high quality provision for young children?

- Is the existing training for all those working within the early years workforce and the out of school care workforce equipping them with the skills and knowledge to provide high quality early learning experiences for young children?

The Review incorporated a number of different methods of gathering information, materials and the views of individual practitioners and representatives from all key stakeholder organisations and institutions.

The Review visited a variety of settings which represented the types of provision found across the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) and Out of School Care (OSC) sectors. At these settings, practice

was observed and discussions held with the staff, children and young people. Early on, this gave the Review an indication of both the collaborative nature and the value that Scotland placed upon its ELC and OSC workforces. It also strengthened the issues and themes which emerged as these were well-informed by interested, experienced and insightful people from across Scotland. The strength of response to the Review by the sector, together with the Scottish Government's current policies and focus, potentially put it in a strong position to lead the way internationally in high quality ELC and OSC.

While engaged with gathering information, the Review became aware of the wealth of policy, materials and information available within Scotland relating particularly to ELC and OSC workforces (though there was less which was specific to OSC). Over time, it became clear that it would not be possible to capture it all in the time available and in a relatively short document. Equally, it would not be possible to include all that was heard, read or learnt, or to address all the smaller issues and ideas people discussed. Instead, the Review identifies the common themes and issues which emerged from the range of observations, information and suggestions gathered.

Throughout the Review, a collaborative approach and process was taken, including: visiting providers; holding group and individual meetings and focus groups; calling for evidence from practitioners and the main organisation stakeholders; consultation with the Core Reference Group (CRG); and the submission of draft outlines of the Review for comment before submitting the full Review.

Comments and discussion were welcomed around the themes as they emerged. Although there were varying views, the discussions were always informative and shaped the themes and the recommendations as they emerged, ensuring their relevance and validity. This collaborative approach also mirrored the nature of working witnessed in Scotland, which appears to be a particular strength across the Country. It is also an approach which has been promoted in the literature on effective leadership and transformational change. If change is to be successful, it requires the support and co-operation of the key services and organisations (OECD, 2012). While it is unlikely that everyone will agree with the final conclusions and recommendations, it is important that the process was transparent and seen as constructive, informed by Scottish and international research, and supportive of the 'bigger picture' for Scotland.

With the help and support of the Early Years Division, evidence was gathered using a number of methods, as described in the following sections.

4.2. Initial Exploration

At the outset, a series of informal meetings and discussions were held with a range of people (including representatives from key stakeholder organisations, institutions, the Scottish Government and practitioners within the ELC and OSC workforces). These identified strengths, concerns and issues – and their views and perceptions on possible future directions.

4.3. Research and Information Gathering

Scottish and international research was considered through both web-based searches and discussions with key people and organisations. Scottish researchers summarised their research findings and elaborated on key findings, challenges and issues.

4.4. In-depth Focus Group Meetings and Discussions

As the review progressed, meetings and discussions were undertaken with a wide range of professionals and practitioners across the sectors.

4.5. One-to-one Meetings, Exchanges and Contributions

Through face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, skype and email, a large number of interested individuals were engaged in a stimulating exchange of thoughts, ideas, policy issues and material.

4.6. Online Consultations

Two online consultations took place on the Scottish Government consultation hub. One was for key stakeholder institutions and organisations, and the other was for practitioners within the ELC and OSC settings (Appendices F and G detail the questions asked).

There were 84 responses from stakeholder institutions and bodies (including regulatory bodies, training and qualification providers, networks, local authorities and unions), and 269 from practitioners. 52 of these were from the OSC workforce, 25 from childminders and 185 from those working in ELC centres, schools or group provision – including 46 teachers working in ELC. There were seven responses from parents/carers and young people.

While the first call for evidence was designed for the stakeholder institutions and the second for practitioners, there was, in reality, a mixture of responses in both. In addition, a few responses were received separately.

4.7. Core Reference Group (CRG) Meetings

Towards the end of the process, a facilitated, intensive and interactive consultation was conducted with the CRG. Its output was captured formally and analysed.

4.8. Methods of Gathering information

- visits to centres and schools
- focus groups
- individual or small group discussions
- skype or telephone
- email enquiries

Questionnaires addressing the Review's key questions were published online on the Scottish Government Hub for organisations and individuals. The call for evidence received a strong response, as detailed below:

4.9. Stakeholder institutions:

- Trade Unions 4
- Further and Higher Education providers 10
- Regulatory bodies 4
- Private training and qualification providers 18
- Networks 20
- Local Authorities 28

Total 84

4.10. Workforces:

- Childminders 25
- Out of School Care 52
- Early learning and childcare centre staff 139
- Early years teachers 46
- Parents/carers 5
- Young people 2

Total 269

The hub responses were very helpful in identifying the strongest patterns and experiences within the early learning and childcare and out of school care sectors. They were analysed and the relevant information incorporated in the main text.

5. What does the Scottish and International research literature reveal about supporting young children's learning?

5.1. Introduction

This Section considers the international and Scottish research literature in the context of the Review's questions (see Section 3) in order to provide an evidence-base against which comparisons of current Scottish processes and practices related to the workforce could be made, and to support possible future directions.

Consideration is given, first, to the more generic evidence base around quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). This includes discussing the links between structural and process quality and children's learning outcomes, the relationship between them and how this impacts on quality. Further sections examine effective practice, the role of professional development and a gendered workforce, while others consider the specialist positions of childminders and OSC practitioners.

The term ECEC is commonly used within most European Countries. It is, however, no longer used in the Scottish policy context and has been replaced by the term Early Learning and Childcare (ELC). Further discussion of ELC can be found within the section Using policy to build understanding, a united identity and support professionalisation.

Within this Literature Review, the term ECEC is retained where research and reports are discussed that use this term. ECEC is commonly associated with practices and settings caring for children aged from birth to 5 years. Although some ECEC research has included childminders working with children of this age, this Review also has one section which

considers quality in relation to childminders specifically, recognising the extended age group with whom they work. It also has another section which looks at the OSC sector and its work with school age children.

Recent policy in Scotland, as in many other developed countries, has been informed by the growing body of evidence which suggests that supporting children's learning and wellbeing while they are very young can serve as a foundation for lifelong learning. It also can result in more equitable child outcomes, a reduction in poverty, increased intergenerational social mobility, and better social and economic development for society as a whole (OECD, 2012).

Evidence from around the world has shown that such benefits are dependent upon the quality of the experiences and opportunities offered to the young children (Sylva et al, 2004; OECD, 2012). This, in turn, relies heavily on the skills, dispositions and understandings of the adult workforce providing those experiences and opportunities (Geddes et al., 2010; Pianta, 2012; OECD, 2012; DfE, 2015).

Quality can be defined in a number of different ways, and different interpretations of quality will be considered throughout; but the evidence base is clear: children benefit when the adults around them interact with them in sensitive, responsive and stimulating ways. Further, where this type of care and experience are lacking, the benefits of early learning and education do not materialise and may even damage children's prospects (Melhuish, 2004;

Gambaro et al., 2014). If the goal is to support and enhance children's learning and development, what happens in the ECEC settings is crucial.

The benefits of ECEC are most marked for children who come from poorer and disadvantaged backgrounds (Ruhm and Waldfogel, 2012). There are a number of possible reasons for this. For example, children from higher income homes may be more likely to have access to books and educational toys, and to be taken on trips to parks, educational places of interest, museums and so on. This may stimulate their interests and thinking, and help them to make sense of the world. They may also be exposed to a more language rich environment, and have parents/carers who are able to give them more time because they are not stressed by financial pressures and/or cramped and unhealthy living conditions.

The early Home Learning Environment (HLE) has been recognised as a powerful predictor of future educational and career success (Sylva et al., 2004; Siraj and Mayo, 2014). An ECEC setting could offer children from disadvantaged backgrounds added advantages both while they are in the setting and through partnership work with parents to enhance the early HLE. Finally, although family characteristics are known to have a greater impact on children's outcomes than pre-school factors; the effect of attending pre-school on developmental progress can be greater than the effect of social disadvantage (Geddes et al., 2010).

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) education survey, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), also indicated the value in investment in ECEC. In nearly all OECD countries, 15 year olds who had attended pre-school provision for a year out-performed those who had not. Even after controlling for socio-economic status, one year of pre-school was associated with an improved test score of 33 points (OECD, 2011). Mostafa and Green (2012, in Gambaro et al., 2014) estimated, using the same database, that the UK would have been 12 places higher in the 2009 OECD PISA league table if it had had universal free pre-school provision in the early 1990s.

The evidence of high quality ECEC's impact is strong and international. Some of the most robust evidence comes from the longitudinal study Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE which later became EPPSE) project in England, in which children were observed and assessed while in a variety of pre-school group settings. And, following this, their progress was tracked through compulsory schooling. Children who attended pre-schools had higher cognitive and socio-behavioural outcomes at primary school entry than those who did not (Sylva et al., 2004). Follow-up studies found that positive pre-school effects were still apparent at the end of primary school (Sylva et al., 2008). Further, attendance at higher quality pre-schools continued to predict higher achievements in mathematics, science and socio-behavioural outcomes at 14 years of age (Sylva et al., 2012b) and at age 16 in their GCSE results (Sylva et al., 2014).

Investing in ECEC from a governmental perspective can offer solutions to a number of socio-economic issues,

especially for families living in disadvantage. First, when provision is offered flexibly with sufficient hours, it can support parents, particularly mothers, to work in the paid labour market. Second, children can gain from high quality education and care. Therefore, in the short term, ECEC could ameliorate the effects of poverty (and, potentially, gender inequality), and improve the life chances of the children by preparing them for their future lives in the long term (OECD, 2012). The second potential benefit – the improvements to children's learning and development – relies strongly on the quality of the provision, and is, therefore, more costly. This is why some governments have prioritised the quantity of provision over the quality of provision (West, 2006).

Much evidence, however, suggests that this is a false economy; investing in high quality ECEC is seen to support increased educational attainments, provide better employment prospects, and improve heath and general wellbeing – especially for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (UNICEF, 2008). It is also seen as more cost effective and yields better results than investing in compensatory programmes in later life – such as job training programmes for the unemployed (Carneiro and Heckman, 2003). Further, greater social equality produces multiple positive effects including better health outcomes for the population, greater social cohesion, lower crime rates, and greater levels of productivity and economic competitiveness (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009 in Cohen and Naumann, 2014). In the long term, investing in high quality ECEC is the cost-effective direction.

The following section considers quality and the constituents of quality. It details some robust research and then highlights some of the issues which are particularly pertinent to this Review – namely, what is known about early childhood education and care and children's outcomes.

Finally, it considers some specific aspects which relate to the transformational change towards which the Scottish Government is working: what constitutes effective practice, how professional development may support this and the specific positions of some of the workforces involved. Please note: the policy levers linked to some of the processes involved in achieving change – including monitoring, regulation and standards – are covered in other sections.

5.2. What is quality early learning and childcare?

Donabedian (1980, cited in Munton et al., 1995) divided the term 'quality' into three dimensions:

- structure
- process
- outcome

These dimensions have been used repeatedly and universally in the field of ECEC to assess the quality of provision (see Phillipsen et al 1997; Dunn, 1994; Holloway & Reichhart-Erickson, 1988).

Structure refers to 'the resources used in the provision of care, to the more stable aspects of the environment in which the care is produced' (Munton et al., 1995, p14). These are, for example, the adult: child ratio, group size, staff education and training, space and materials. Process refers to 'the activities which constitute provision' (Munton et al., 1995, p14). These include the less stable elements of provision such as staff-child interactions.

Outcomes are 'the consequences to health of care provision' (Munton et al., 1995, p4). In the context of ECEC, and in this Review, children's outcomes relate to the cognitive, social and emotional development of the children in childcare. These are the aspects of intellectual development such as oral and pre-reading skills, problem solving, ability to concentrate, and of socio-emotional development such as attachments, ability to share, make friendships and self-regulate their emotions.

Most international research to date, considering the quality of ECEC, looks at the relationship between these three dimensions. Structural variables are easy to identify in a setting as they are tangible and countable; while process variables often include an element of subjectivity (for example, when making judgements around adult-child interactions).

When comparing settings, to allow for comparisons across studies and to support objective observations, structure and process variables are usually measured using agreed observational rating scales. The most widely used observational rating scales is the family of Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales (ERS). Some of these are described in Table 2, together with some other quality measurement tools which have been designed to look at process quality in more detail.

The ERS are included because they have an international reputation for measuring important aspects of quality which relate to children's outcomes. In addition, there is robust evidence about their standardisation, reliability and validity which was gathered initially during their development and subsequently through their continued international use in research.

Table 2: Commonly used Environment Rating Scales when assessing the quality of the provision

Quality Measurement Tool	Brief description of aspects of quality covered	Provision in which it is designed to be
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales-Revised (ECERS-R) (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 2004)	Considers structural and some process quality with an emphasis on global aspects of quality. Includes: space and furnishings; personal care routines; language-reasoning; activities; interaction; program structure; parents and staff.	ECEC for children aged 2½ to 5 years
Early Childhood Environment Rating Scales-Extended (ECERS-E) (Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2010	Considers the curriculum and educational pedagogy. In the following areas: language and literacy; maths and number; science and the environment; diversity (meeting and planning for the needs of individuals and groups). ECEC for children aged 2½ to 5 years	ECEC for children aged 2½ to 5 years
Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale–Revised (ITERS-R) (Harms, Clifford & Cryer, 1990)	Considers structural and some process quality with an emphasis on global aspects of quality. It covers the same aspects as ECERS-R but with items relevant to a younger age group.	ECEC for children from birth to 2½ years
Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale- Revised (FCCERS-R) (Harms & Clifford, 1996)	Considers structural and some process quality with an emphasis on global aspects of quality. Includes: space and furnishings; basic care; language-reasoning; learning activities; social development; adult needs; supplementary items: provision for exceptional children.	Childminders with children from birth up to and including school age. (Note: items are delineated by age)
School-age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) (Harms, Vineberg Jacobs & Romano White,1996)	Considers structural and some process quality with an emphasis on global aspects of quality. Includes: space and furnishings; health and safety; activities; interactions; program structure; staff development; special needs supplementary items.	OSC settings with children aged 5–12 years

Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) (Arnett, 1989)	Considers process quality looking at the interactions between the adult and child(ren).The adult interactions are typically rated on dimensions such as: 1) positive interaction 2) punitiveness 3) detachment 4) permissiveness	ECEC for children from birth to school age
Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (Paro, Hamre, and Pianta, 2012)	Considers process quality including: positive climate; negative climate; teacher sensitivity; regard for child perspective; behaviour guidance; facilitation of learning and development; quality of feedback; language modelling.	ECEC and schools with different versions for different age ranges
Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing (SSTEW) Scale (Siraj, Kingston & Melhuish, 2015)	Considers aspects of process quality including: 1) Building trust, confidence and independence 2) Social and emotional wellbeing 3) Supporting and extending language and communication 4) Supporting learning and critical thinking 5) Assessing learning and language	ECEC for children aged 2-5 years.

As research into quality has progressed, discussion around the relative importance of these dimensions and how they impact upon one another has become dominant. It is recognised that structural quality is important because the characteristics it identifies (e.g. adult-child ratios, training and qualifications) impact on process quality.

Aspects of process quality, particularly interactions between adult and child, are increasingly recognised as the key to supporting children's outcomes. In Wales, for instance, during the pilot of the Foundation Phase, ratios were lowered across all provision for 3-5 year olds to 1:8, yet the quality of interactions and early literacy fell (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2006). This was largely because trained graduate teachers, who were expensive, were replaced with lower qualified or unqualified individuals in larger numbers who were paid less. So while improving adult:child ratios (a structural variable) could potentially improve quality it does not do this if the extra adults fail to provide the skilful adult-child interactions (process quality) necessary to support learning. This showed that structural and process quality are linked, and that policy around this has to be devised carefully – and implemented even more carefully.

5.3. Links between structural and process quality

Clear links have been shown between professional development, including qualifications, and quality. A growing evidence base demonstrates the importance of the structural aspect of qualifications of staff, including both the general level of the qualifications gained and their specific nature (National Research Council, 2001; Zaslow et al 2010; Rhodes and Huston 2012; OECD, 2012). Typically, studies report that both the levels of qualification which staff have achieved generally, and the relevance (content) of those qualifications to the sector, are highly associated with quality.

Unfortunately, this has led to some studies adopting only one of these two measures – the level or the relevance of qualifications and education. Phillipsen et al. (1997) measured process quality using ITERS, ECERS and the CIS (see Table 2), and reported that, in the pre-school rooms observed, the quality was higher when the adults working in the room had more education (education was measured using three distinctions; secondary school education, college education and degree). Other studies also found significant positive relationships between the level of formal education and quality (Blau, 2000, cited in Mathers et al 2011; de Kruif et al., 2000; Honig & Hirallal, 1998 cited in Tout et al (2005); and Howes et al, 1992).

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project was the first major longitudinal study in Europe which looked at children's development between the ages of 3 and 7 (Sylva et al., 2004). The researchers looked at a range of variables and their effects, one of which was qualifications. The findings showed a strong relationship between the qualifications (measured using the Levels 2 (NVQ) – 5 (QTS)) of the setting manager and staff and the quality of the setting.

Statistical analysis revealed a significant effect of the qualification level and the mean ECERS-R and ECERS-E scores: the higher the ECEC qualification, the higher the quality score. The number of trained staff also seemed to play an important role, with teachers in particular supporting higher quality. Further, the work of Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2006) showed that the higher the proportion of staff in the setting with a formal level of education, the higher the quality as measured by the ECERS-R, ECERS-E, & CIS.

In another piece of research, pre-school settings were evaluated to see how well they implemented the Foundation Stage Curriculum (DfEE, 2000) – the guidance framework for use with 3 to 5 year olds at that time in England. The settings which had made very good advances had some common characteristics, one of which was well-trained and qualified staff with a good understanding of child development and pedagogy (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2006).

Further, care-givers with more formal education and training had less authoritarian child-rearing beliefs and worked in settings rated as safe, clean and stimulating. Interestingly, a negative correlation was found with child care experience; less experience was related to more positive care giving (Vandell, 1996). The author, however, does not mention whether training was controlled for as a variable with this finding.

There appear to be some discrepancies concerning the type and content of qualifications and education. Some studies have found the specific content of the qualifications of the staff to be linked to the quality of the setting (Blau, 2000, cited in Mathers et al., 2011; Philips et al., 2000 cited in Tout et al., 2005; Howes et al., 1992.). Burchinal et al. (2002) analysed data from the Cost Quality and Outcomes study and found that training (a structural variable) contributed to environmental quality and the process quality of adult-child interaction. They looked at three types of training: in-service workshops, workshops in the community and workshops at professional meetings. Training typically focused on practice and supported practitioners/teachers in the implementation of policy within their settings. They also made some distinctions between training and formal education, and suggested that a degree in a childcare-related subject was the best predictor of quality. Although professional training did raise quality, it did not reach the same level as academic qualifications with a childcare focus.

Most studies considering qualifications look at the level of education and/or training, and whether it is higher or lower. Only a few consider whether there might be a minimum level of qualification needed to support good quality. The general consensus is that the higher staff's level of education, the higher the pedagogical quality – which in turn leads to better child outcomes (OECD, 2012). Studies focusing on whether staff members hold degrees – and many countries now recognise the importance of this level of education – found them to be less authoritarian, less detached, more engaged in positive interaction with the children (Arnett, 1989; Siraj-Blatchford, 2010), and staff with lower qualifications were associated with less favourable children's outcomes (Melhuish, 2004; Siraj-Blatchford, et al 2006; 2010).

Other studies, however, such as Early et al. (2007) emphasised that staff quality is a complex issue and that there is no simple relationship between staff level of education and quality within the setting or children's learning outcomes. They found contradictory relationships between child outcomes and staff qualifications, and concluded that increasing staff qualifications alone would not be sufficient to improve setting quality or maximise children's learning and development. They argued, as have many others since, that raising effectiveness in ECEC is likely to require a broad range of professional development activities and support for staff. In particular, qualifications and training need to impact on practice within the setting and on the opportunities and experiences offered there to the children. There also needs to be an emphasis placed on pedagogical practices. In short, staff need support to develop their competence in communicating and interacting with the children in a shared, meaningful and sustainable manner (Sheridan et al., 2009; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2003). Further discussion about the content and purpose of qualifications and training is considered below.

No single quality indicator is solely responsible for the quality of the setting – though some indicators are more important than others. Research which considered other structural variables, such as group size and adult: child ratio, unsurprisingly, found both to have significant positive effects on quality (Howes & Smith, 1995).

High staff turnover has long been recognised as an issue within ECEC, as it is associated with a lower quality service. In centres with high staff turnover rates, the adults and children are less likely to develop stable relationships, and nurturing and stimulating interactions are less likely to take place (Cassidy, Lower, Kintner-Duffy, Hegde, & Shim, 2011; Mims, Scott-little, Lower, Cassidy, & Hestenes, 2008). Goelman et al., (2006) considered predictors of quality in pre-school rooms and reported that the direct predictors of quality were: wages, education level and the number of staff in the room. The quality of the environment, in group care, was found to improve with every additional adult in the room, as this provided the opportunity for supervision, consultation and problem solving together. A general finding around structural quality was that those staff who experienced their working conditions as pleasant tended to engage in more caring and stimulating behaviour with their children (Huntsman, 2008; Burchinal et al., 2002). The context and conditions in which staff work are strongly related to stable, sensitive and stimulating interactions with children (OECD, 2012).

One further structural variable which warrants mention, as it is important to the Scottish context, is the amount of time children spend within ECEC settings during a week. Sylva et al. (2004) did not find a relationship between the amount of time children spent in group settings and their learning and developmental outcomes. They did, however, find that duration was important: children attending daily sessions 4-5 times per week yielded the same in outcomes as those who attended full-time, while those who attended just one or two days did not do as well. The Growing up in Scotland report (Scottish Government, 2014g), looking specifically at

Scottish provision, reported that the number of hours a child attended pre-school per week was not associated with the child's social or cognitive development at age 5. It is worth noting that neither of these studies included children under the age of 3 years.

Many interesting and valuable findings have emerged from the large and growing body of research examining quality. There is a distinct pattern of higher quality care being associated with a well-trained and qualified workforce, and a clear relationship between structural variables and process quality. Many of these relationships, however, are not simple, and there is the possibility that other variables are contributing to these effects. For example, Melhuish (2004) found that adult: child ratio combined with staff qualifications to produce larger effects in terms of quality. Also, staff with higher levels of education, training and salary combined with lower levels of staff turnover produced measures of higher quality care. The quality of a setting depends on many structural and process variables.

5.4. Quality and Child outcomes

The research base considering children's outcomes is somewhat smaller than the previous section due, possibly, to the longer time-span and greater expense in research terms involved in capturing such information. There are few studies which specifically take staff education and training as a variable to examine whether this has an influence on the child in later life. Some studies have included this measure along with a host of others (e.g. adult:child ratio, groups size) and developmental outcomes have been

considered. One study (Burchinal & Cryer, 2003) took both structural and process variables into account, including training, and found that measures of ECEC quality were positively associated with cognitive and social development up to school age.

Mathers & Sylva (2007) looked at developmental outcomes of children in the Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative. They found that the presence of a qualified teacher was the strongest predictor of children's behavioural outcomes. Children showed higher levels of cooperation, conformity and sociability.

Another large UK piece of research, the Millennium Cohort Study (Mathers, Sylva & Joshi, 2007) followed the lives of nearly 19,000 babies born in the UK between 2000 and 2002. Quality was assessed using ECERS-R, ECERS-E and CIS; results showed that the childcare qualifications of staff were a predictor of the quality of provision, especially related to language development, interactions and academic progress. The number of unqualified staff was also important and had a negative effect on quality.

An interesting study, comparing 3 year old children who had attended 'high quality day care' with those who had not, was conducted by Ackerman-Ross and Khanna (1989). In this case, no significant language performance differences were found between the two groups, suggesting that some effects of child care could be short-lived. More recent research, however, has shown that adults with a degree were more responsive to children, and that those children cared for by a member of staff with a child related degree had higher scores on a receptive language

comprehension test (The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised PPVTR) (Howes, 1997). Clearly, more research needs to be conducted in this area to clarify the child outcomes in relation to language development.

Holloway and Reichhart-Erikson (1988) were interested in looking at children's reasoning in social issues, in their interaction with peers, and their solitary free-play behaviour. To measure process quality, the Early Childhood Observation Instrument (ECOI, Bredekamp, 1985) was used. The results show that higher quality settings (as measured by the ECOI) allowed children to engage in more focused solitary free-play, suggesting a relationship between quality and children's behaviour.

The research to date demonstrates clear influences on the quality of early childhood learning, with an inter-play of many factors. The qualifications of staff working in this field seem to have an impact on the interactions between the adult and child, on the responsiveness and warmth shown by the adult, and on the child's social and language development. Many countries, including Scotland, have invested in developing and boosting the qualifications, education and professional development of ECEC staff, as part of a long-term strategy to improve the quality of experiences and opportunities the children receive – with the ultimate aim of providing better child care and learning for future generations.

5.5. Quality and under 3s

OECD (2012) suggested that, for very young babies and toddlers, the importance of practitioners having specialised and practical training is greater if pedagogic quality and improved social and cognitive outcomes are to be assured. Given that the first three years of life are often cited as the best and most cost effective time to reduce inequalities, and where developing cognitive and behavioural patterns profoundly affect ability to learn later, this seems particularly pertinent (UNICEF 2008; Sylva et al., 2010).

Scotland's current commitment to extending ELC provision in the future means it is likely that existing provision for under 3s, including the new entitlement for eligible 2 year olds in Scotland, will increase within all ELC provision, including childminders and private settings. The current inequalities across the workforce makes this concerning: consider, for example, the recent Growing Up in Scotland report (Scottish Government 2014c), which found the quality in private nurseries to be lower than in local authority settings – and the current lack of requirements for qualifications and continued professional development for childminders (see the section Registration with Care Inspectorate).

While it is clear that there are potentially major advantages for the 3 and 4 year olds who attend high quality ECEC settings, and especially for those from areas of disadvantage, little research looks specifically at the effects for younger children. There is, however, a wide range of literature which looks at the results of maternal working on children under the age of 1 year. It is fairly consistent in reporting negative effects on their health, cognitive and socio-behavioural development, especially when the mother is working full time (Gambaro et al., 2014). Although the effects vary according to the

quality of the alternative care, the quality of the maternal care, and the difference the income makes for the family (see Waldfogel, 2006).

Studies considering the effects of ECEC for children aged 1-2 years show mixed results and are, as yet, inconclusive. For some children, particularly boys, long hours in group care is associated with negative social and behavioural outcomes, while other studies show neutral effects or even small gains in cognitive outcomes (see Langlois and Liben 2003; Waldfogel 2006). Sylva et al. (2012a) found little evidence of a medium-term effect for disadvantaged children at the age of 11 who had started pre-school at 2 rather than 3 years.

A Sure Start mapping exercise in Scotland evaluating the effect of pre-school provision for vulnerable 2 year olds in a pilot programme, demonstrated no significant differences between the intervention and control groups (Geddes et al., 2010). On the other hand, Felfe and Lalive (2011), in Germany, reported that centre-based care for 0-3 year olds was associated with small developmental gains for the average child and larger benefits for children living with disadvantaged families. Geddes et al. (2010) suggested that starting 'school' between 2 and 3 years of age gave the greatest academic benefit compared with children who started earlier or later – and that negative behavioural effects are greater the younger the start.

5.6. The relationship between a higher qualified workforce and provision

In this section, consideration is given to the impact of qualifications and continued professional development on practice within settings. Before further discussion, it is important to clarify what the terms mean within this Review.

'Qualifications' typically refer to the type of formal education delivered by a specialist educational institution or body. It may mean that learners studying for their qualifications will need to travel to, or at least engage with, such institutions and they gain a nationally recognised and standardised award on completing their studies successfully.

Initial teacher training, such as a BA Education degree which allows registration with the GTCS, and other BA degrees, PDAs and SVQs which allow registration with SSSC, are included here. In contrast, 'continued professional development' is typically engaged with following, or alongside, qualifications by staff who are studying for, or who have already achieved, the initial award relevant to their current role. It may include some certification, but is not necessarily recognised nationally or internationally.

In the EPPE study (Sylva et al., 2003) the relationship between higher staff qualifications and higher quality of provision was identified as an indicator of quality provision. Staffing is a fundamental factor in the quality of the setting, and having higher quality staff has been found to have a positive impact on the quality of a setting (Campbell-Barr, 2009). Improving the quality of early years services and outcomes for children requires a highly skilled workforce – one which offers reflective practice, sound decision making and personalised care (Cooke and Lawton, 2008). It is important to recognise that the

quality of education and care does not depend on physical resources such as buildings and schools, and that the most important ingredient for quality provision is the quality of the practitioners who work with the children and families (Abbott and Rodger, 1994). According to Fukkink and Lont (2007) there is ample evidence that training early years staff improves children's learning and wellbeing. They say: 'the training of caregivers is a cornerstone for quality in early care. Caregivers with high educational levels provide better personal care...are more sensitive...are more involved with children...and have more knowledge of developmentally appropriate practice... Furthermore, more educated early educators offer richer learning experiences...provide more language stimulation...and stimulate the social and physical skills of children more often than other educators.' (p294).

5.7. What makes effective qualifications and professional development?

Fukkink and Lont (2007) reviewed studies published between 1980-2005 considering training and professional development, and suggested the need for caution when considering the success of projects. They reported that results 'were significantly smaller for settings with no fixed curriculum content, delivery of training at multiple sites....results were also smaller when tests were used which did not align with the content of the training...' (p294). They noted, however, that it was not the qualification per se which effected the quality; rather, it was the staff's ability to create a high quality pedagogic environment which made the difference for children. The critical element is the way in which staff involved children,

stimulated interactions with and between children, and used diverse scaffolding strategies (OECD, 2012). With this in mind, three questions were considered in the rest of this section:

- What skills and attributes should effective ELC and OSC staff possess to enhance quality and support children's learning and development?
- What does effective professional development look like?
- How are the early learning and childcare practitioner's professional identity and confidence affecting the provision for children and their outcomes?

i. What skills and attributes should effective ELC and OSC staff possess to enhance quality and support children's learning and development?

While reviewing the literature on important skills and traits of staff in facilitating high quality services and children's outcomes in ECEC, OECD (2012) produced the following list:

- Good understanding of child development and learning;
- Ability to develop children's perspectives;
- Ability to praise, comfort, question and be responsive to children;
- Leadership skills, problem solving and development of targeted lesson plans;
- Good vocabulary and an ability to elicit children's ideas (p146)

Further, the Scottish Government's (2014a) *Building the Ambition: National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act*

2014, outlined the skills and qualities seen within staff in high quality settings as identified in the EPPE study (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002; Sylva et al., 2004) and endorsed by the recent Growing Up in Scotland report (Scottish Government, 2014g). They were:

- The quality of adult-child verbal interactions – this is also called shared sustained thinking. It is when the adult and child work together to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate an activity. It is when the practitioner asks the I wonder if we... type of question.

- Initiation of activities – the extent to which staff members extend child-initiated interactions is important and includes interventions to extend the child's thinking. It is allowing children to take the lead and not providing adult directed activities which have little meaning for children.

- Knowledge and understanding of the curriculum – practitioners' knowledge of the curriculum is vital. It is about taking on board the relevance and breadth of the curriculum and providing experiences which are developmentally appropriate.

- Knowledge about how young children learn – the knowledge of child development underpins sound practice. The most effective pedagogy combines both 'teaching' (in its widest sense) and providing freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities.

- Adult skills to support children – qualified staff in the most effective settings provide children with curriculum related activities and they encourage children to engage in challenging play.

- There were more intellectual gains for children in centres that encouraged high levels of parent engagement in their children's learning – the most effective settings share child-related information between parents and staff. Parents are often involved in decision making about their child's learning programme (p75).

These lists demonstrate the importance of the adult's pedagogical approach that is their role in the setting. OECD (2012) stated that staff qualifications, initial education and continued professional development can contribute to enhancing 'pedagogical quality, which is – ultimately – highly associated with better child outcomes. It is not the qualification per se that has the impact on child outcomes but the ability of better qualified staff members to create a high quality pedagogic environment. Key elements of high quality are the ways in which staff involve children, stimulate interaction within and between children, and use diverse scaffolding strategies' (p143).

Increasingly, the complex nature of the role of the adult in ELC and OSC is being recognised. Evidence supports moving away from historically inaccurate views of the workforces; namely, the ideas that the knowledge and skills required by practitioners/teachers is merely common-sense and that mothers could teach young children equally as well, or that play is simply the work of children and the adults (mostly women) need only to provide resources for play and supervise children's experiences.

Effective practitioners/teachers in ECEC need to be able both to engage children in meaningful activities that promote their

conceptual understanding of the world, and to construct positive adult-child relationships (Howes et al., 2008; Pianta et al., 2007). Positive relationships provide children with a secure and safe base for exploring the interpersonal and the intellectual aspects of ELC. Effective practitioners/teachers combine positive relationships with meaningful activities so that they can integrate explicit instruction with sensitive warm interaction. They also provide responsive individualised feedback and intentional engagement while maintaining a setting that is orderly and predictable, but not overly structured or formal (Howes and Tsao, 2012). For the OSC workforce, many of these attributes are equally important if the children are to feel safe and happy to play and explore within their settings.

Supporting children's learning and development in an early years setting is particularly complex and challenging because of the huge disparity in achievements of the young children (aged 2–5 years) who attend them. Siraj and Kingston (2014) noted that, in settings with large intakes from areas of deprivation in Wales, children started at the early years setting with less vocabulary and language, poor social-emotional development and lacking independence and self-help skills, such as toileting. Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2005), while considering early years provision, again in Wales, found that the quality of teaching and learning in maintained schools (where qualified teachers worked) was higher than in the non-maintained settings (where there were few staff with appropriate qualifications). In the maintained schools, the teachers were more likely to nurture both children's intellectual development and their social-emotional wellbeing.

The professional development and support given to teachers in Wales appeared to support their understanding of child development and developmentally appropriate practice better than the training given to other staff. This diversity of age and achievements among the children is even more apparent when considering the age ranges of children attending childminding services, private and third sector provisions, and OSC provision. It suggests that the understanding of child development among the different professionals, and the related understanding of appropriate practice, is equally pertinent – but that it needs to be more extensive and cover a greater age range.

High quality initial qualifications in aligned and relevant areas of study, such as child development and early education, increased the likelihood that practitioners/ teachers were successful in enhancing the educational, socio-emotional and healthy development of children (Sylva et al., 2004; OCED, 2012). When trained on matters relating to development and care, staff could better develop a child's perspective (Sommer et al., 2010) and support learning through play (Pramling Samuelson and Asplund Carlsson, 2008). They could also problem-solve and develop appropriate and targeted planned activities for the children – while also augmenting their oral and early literacy development through their own improved vocabulary (NIEER, 2004). Staff with a higher specialised education engaged in more positive adult: child interactions – including praise, comforting, questioning and being responsive to children (Howes et al., 2003). While highly qualified staff undoubtedly make a difference to the

quality of a setting, it does not seem necessary or achievable in many countries for all staff to possess those high qualifications. OECD (2012) suggested that, while not all staff need those higher qualifications, those with lower levels of education should work alongside staff with higher qualifications.

Specialised qualifications and continued professional development do not, on their own, guarantee greater effectiveness (Hyson et al., 2009 in OECD 2012). The quality of the trainers/educators and the programme itself are also important if they are to impact on practice. Elliott (2006) reported the need for good initial staff preparation and greater consistency across initial professional preparation programmes. There is also a need for high quality ongoing professional development, as well-trained practitioners/teachers need to ensure that the effects of their initial qualification and studies do not 'fade out' (Fukkink and Lont, 2007).

Ongoing professional development can ensure that any identified gaps in knowledge and skills, which become apparent in practice after initial training, are filled, and that practitioners/teachers are kept up to date. This is particularly important in ECEC where there is a growing body of research and discussions on 'what works'. The recent shift in emphasis to a more developmental perspective illustrates this point well (OECD, 2012). The Scottish context, where Froebel training supplemented teacher training, is a case in point.

ii. What does effective professional development look like?

Before discussing the current literature on effective professional development, it is important to consider what is known to be lacking and what is needed in today's ECEC workforce at an international level – as this is likely to have resonance within Scotland. Unfortunately, large scale studies of ECEC suggest too few adults have the necessary skills to provide optimal learning support and emotional support for young children's intellectual growth (Howes et al., 2008), particularly in the curriculum areas of science, mathematics and numeracy. This is important as Duncan et al. (2007) suggested that meaningful instruction in numeracy and science is a very good predictor of future academic success. The importance of good foundations in language development and literacy to support later learning is also well documented (Sylva et al, 2004; Coghlan, 2009).

Practitioners/teachers need guidance on supporting speaking and listening skills, emergent literacy, numeracy and science, linking learning to interests, and allowing children to understand the purpose and function of their learning. They need guidance on how best to support language, literacy, numeracy, exploration and science, and physical development – through both independent and focused learning activities. They also need to understand how to organise the environment to provide numerous opportunities for children to practice their newly learnt skills at an appropriate level. In addition, they need to feel confident to teach aspects of literacy, numeracy and science at the appropriate levels and to support parents/carers in developing their

children's literacy, numeracy and scientific exploration in the home learning environment (Siraj and Kingston 2014).

Further researchers, such as Raver et al. (2008), are beginning to recognise that the kind of effective adult-child interactions which are expected in effective settings are the kind of interactions in which many practitioners/teachers have never participated themselves – either as practitioners /teachers, or as children within their families, or in the settings and classrooms they attended as children and young people. This recognition has led to the development of professional development programmes which include a mixture of the academic skills and knowledge necessary to assess children's interests and achievements, and to inform planning, etc., together with relationship-building between the student on the course and the tutors running them. Typically, such professional development involves modelling, providing exemplars of sensitive and responsive interactions, and providing support for challenging behaviour – and the results have been good (Erickson and Kurz-Reimer 1999; Toth et al., 2011).

This is challenging for a country like Scotland, where some ELC and OSC settings are geographically remote. If, however, improving the quality of the adult-child interactions is a key goal, it suggests that distance learning is less likely to be effective – as relationship-building between tutor and student would be difficult to achieve. The current model used to disseminate the ideas within *Building the Ambition* (Scottish Government, 2014a) is designed specifically to overcome difficulties of access to professional development for all practitioners/teachers.

Professional development is being disseminated through a mixture of local authority trained facilitators, national partners such as Education Scotland, and third sector organisations such as SCMA and NDNA. Research comparing professional development with a focus on relationship-building, rather than written elements or those that are mostly web-based, has shown that the former approach leads to better gains in terms of increased adult-child positive interactions and children's gains in literacy, language and social and physical behaviours (Downer et al., 2009; Mashburn et al., 2010; Pianta et al., 2008; Archer & Siraj, 2015).

In Scotland, Stephen (2012), while examining the place of theory in professional development, pointed to the need for emphasis here. Theoretical understandings of children's learning and development were often marginalised within and limited to qualifications, and often only to initial qualifications. This led to the inability of practitioners within Scotland to answer 'why' questions in relation to their practice – and to them acting predominantly as providers and facilitators (Stephen and Brown 2004). While this is not unusual, and similar findings have been reported internationally (for example Pramling-Samuelsson and Fleer, 2009), it is concerning in the light of new research and the importance of practice, including intentional engagement with children and their learning, if enhancing the achievements of all children is desired. Further, it is especially important for those living in areas of disadvantage and/or with learning difficulties.

Stephen (2012), put forward a strong argument to move practitioners forward from their current over-reliance 'on consensual notions of practice and tacit understandings' (p236) of theory in pre-school education. A lack of such understandings left practitioners unable to defend their own practices, incapable of considering contradictions and alternatives or engaging in critical thinking, and ill-equipped to evaluate 'policy change and challenge, resulting in naive or inadequately conceptualised amendments to practitioners' methods (Stephen et al. 2010)' (p236). Without an underpinning knowledge of the theories, histories, constructions and beliefs which underlie pre-school practice, practitioners were unlikely to respond appropriately to new ideas or develop them themselves, which is fundamental to a professional workforce (Stephen, 2012). Audain and Shoolbread (forthcoming) suggested that this was equally important for the OSC and childminding workforces.

Howes and Tsao (2012) suggested that the lack of an established pathway for early childhood practitioner/teacher preparation is one major issue contributing to the international dearth of effective practitioners/teachers. There is little standardisation of content across degrees (both initial teacher training and specific ECEC degrees) which has led to them being poor predictors of effective practice, as defined above (Early et al., 2007). An additional reason for the lack of correspondence between formal qualifications and effective practice is the accompanying finding that young children spend relatively small proportions of their days engaged in learning activities, and even smaller proportions of their days

working with an adult (Chien et al., 2010; Phillips et at., 2009). Fortunately, there is a growing body of evidence which identifies effective literacy and language practices and, to a lesser extent, numeracy and science teaching practices associated with gains in children's learning (See Howes at al., 2012; Pianta, 2012; OECD, 2012).

Zaslow et al., (2010) conducted a literature review entitled 'Toward the Identification of Features of Effective Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators'. In it they identified six strategies that they suggested could serve as a starting point when considering education and professional development that is likely to impact on ECEC practitioners'/teachers' knowledge, practice and children's outcomes.

First, there should be specific and articulated objectives for education and professional development. The meta-analysis of studies conducted by Fukkink and Lont (2007) showed that when training was specific, rather than open in content, the effects on practice were greater. In particular, they found training that was 'specialised caregiver training with a focus on interaction skills with children' (p27) made the largest differences to practice and to children's outcomes. QUINCE research team (2009) suggested the use of observational quality measures (as outlined earlier, see Table 2) to support the development of the specific and articulated objectives for professional development, with care given to choosing the measure(s) that reflected the areas of practice and the children's outcomes in which improvement was sought. Zaslow et al. (2010) discussed the curriculum areas of language, literacy and early

mathematics and the importance of equipping practitioners/teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop these curricula, and how to approach and implement them appropriately with young children (National Reading Panel, 2000; Pianta, 2012).

Second, there should be a focus on practice with attention given to linking ECEC knowledge with practice. Zaslow et al. (2012) found stronger and more long lasting effects where professional development coursework or training was combined with opportunities for practitioners/teachers to use newly learnt knowledge, understandings, approaches etc. within ECEC settings. Basically, they suggested that all professional development should not only consider strengthening early educator knowledge, but should also focus directly and explicitly on practice. Dickinson and Brady (2006) outlined their view of effective timings between training on instructional approaches with opportunities to apply them shortly afterwards. Zaslow et al. (2010) discussed the value of individualised professional development and, while they recognised that not all individualised professional development showed positive effects on practice, they suggested there was promising evidence for such approaches.

Third, there should be collective participation of practitioners/teachers from the same settings or schools in professional development. Such joint participation, Zaslow et al. (2010) suggested, would help to support a professional culture and ensure the sustainability of new techniques and skills. Professional development which includes

the managers and supervisors helps to ensure that settings' staff do not receive contradictory messages about which practices to implement or emphasise. Also, including practitioners working across age phases can support continuity and progression in children's experiences (Burchinal, Hyson and Zaslow, 2008; Bierman et al., 2008).

Fourth, the intensity and duration of the professional development should be matched to the content being conveyed. The length of time that a professional development exercise lasts would depend on the goals of the activity. If, for example, the goal of the education and professional development is to convey the theory and practice designed to support various aspects of language skills (e.g. dialogic reading, focused stimulation, rich extended instruction, inferential questioning, self-questioning, clue words – see Sittner Bridges et al., 2012). This requires considerably longer than a session designed to model and support interactive book reading. Zaslow et al. (2010) noted, however, that, generally, single workshops of professional development are not as successful, even if they are narrowly targeted, as more lengthy extensive professional development and education models (Donovan, Bransford and Pellegrino, 1999; Raikes et al., 2006).

Fifth, the practitioners/teachers should be prepared and able to conduct individual child assessments that they subsequently analyse to monitor progress and plan for future learning. Knowledge of the 'observation, assessment and planning cycle' of learning and teaching supports the practitioners/teachers in understanding their children's outcomes, and how their

children are progressing in relation to them. It also supports planning for both the group and the individual child (Garet et al., 2008; Gettinger and Stoiber, 2007).

Sixth, the professional development should be appropriate for the workforce and organisational context in which they work. It should include guidance and research provided by experts and professional organisations specific to the area of the participants and be aligned with the relevant standards for practice. Specialised professional development is associated with better child outcomes and improved staff competences to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities (OECD, 2012). The effectiveness of professional development approaches is associated with differences according to such features as the organisational context – as well as the standards of practice and their particular monitoring and supervision structures (Vu, Jeon and Howes, 2008; Fulgini et al., 2009). Professional development should focus on the frameworks and guidance materials relevant to the workforce (Zaslow et al., 2010), so some materials will be specific to the individual workforce. For ELC practitioners working with 3 and 4 year olds in Scotland, it would be likely to include the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) and for OSC practitioners the study of The Playwork Principles.

Other discussions regarding the content of qualifications and continued professional development are beginning to emerge around ECEC practitioners' relatively new but extremely important role of enhancing the learning and development of children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. As such, they are subject to working in

increasingly complex social environments and encounter a multiplicity of family backgrounds and experiences.

Training in intercultural approaches, approaches to second languages, working with children with special needs, working with children at risk, and focusing on language acquisition are among the topics identified as important in the future (Eurydice, 2009).

Practitioners/teachers will need to be supported in their understanding of poverty and its effects, and on the power of supporting the home learning environment. Both EPPE (Sylva, et al., 2004) and the Growing Up in Scotland study (Scottish Centre for Social Research, 2009) demonstrated the importance of the early home learning environment. Both studies suggested that the home learning environment is more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation, education or income. Activities (educational games, visits, events, reading etc.) have an influence on children's cognitive development and can moderate, but not eradicate, the effects of disadvantage. The Scottish Centre for Social Research (2009) reported that the extent and range of activities in which children partake is more important than specific or expensive pursuits.

iii. How does the professional identity and confidence of early learning and childcare practitioners affect the provision for children and their outcomes?

While the importance of ELC and OSC staff qualifications and continued professional development lies mainly in the process quality it produces, it is important to note

that structural quality impacts here too. Fives (2003) noted the importance of staff believing in their ability to organise and execute the courses of action necessary to support and nurture the children in their care. How practitioners see themselves and promote themselves will undoubtedly affect public opinion. Practitioners working in the early years in settings other than schools, who are not qualified as teachers, are typically seen with less regard, and this is reflected in their low pay (Osgood, 2004). The ECEC workforce has been recognised as an under-qualified, under-paid group of working-class women, and the training for many has been minimal (Vincent and Braun, 2010).

In Scotland, work has already started to redress some of the inequalities in qualifications and training. Most notable has been the introduction of graduate managed ELC and OSC services (apart from childminding services). The new BA Childhood Practice and PDA SCQF Level 9 Childhood Practice, developed from the Standard for Childhood Practice (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007) has begun the process of professionalising and developing a group identity for the workforce.

There have been a number of identified aims for these new qualifications:

- To improve leadership within the sector:

  'The Standard is an important step in ensuring managers in early education and child care sector have the necessary leadership skills to take forward excellent practice in centres that children and families use' (SSSC, 2008, p1). Recent research (Siraj and Hallet, 2014; OECD, 2012) noted the importance of leadership within the early years to support improvement.

- To support the status and retention of staff

  These structural aspects of quality were discussed earlier

- To professionalise the ELC workforce

Davis et al. (2014) noted practitioners' perceptions during and after studying for the awards. The ECEC staff reported increased confidence, leadership and management abilities and the ability to develop others as teams. They reported greater skills of reflection and a better understanding of how theory connects to practice. They also reported positive impact on their practice, particularly in participatory approaches in day-to-day practice. Finally, they asserted they had a joint identity and that Childhood Practice had become a profession in its own right. The OSC workforce did not report such positive outcomes, and called for a greater focus on aspects that were particularly important to their sector. The sample of OSC practitioners, however, was small so it is not clear whether this was a representative view.

No research to date has been able to evidence what impact these new qualifications might be having on children's outcomes. Education Scotland (2012b) matched inspections undertaken by Education Scotland to the qualifications of staff within the settings, but their research was inconclusive. While they found an association between degree level qualifications generally and higher inspection ratings, they stated that 'Given the information is held only for 336 centres inspected, it is too early to identify a conclusive correlation between staff who are GTCS registered and staff who have the BA Childhood Practice Award' (p10).

Further research specifically considering children's outcomes, as defined in this Review, would be useful – especially in the light of the Growing Up in Scotland findings (Scottish Government, 2014c), which reported no correlation between Education Scotland inspections and children's socio-emotional and cognitive outcomes. They did caution that this may be a flawed finding due to the low numbers of inspections. These reports are revisited later.

5.8. A gendered workforce

Historically, the early years workforce is gender and social class specific, comprising predominately white and often working-class women, undertaking the role of caring for children under 5 years of age (Kay, 2005). Traditionally the occupation of childcare is associated with the role of mothering, the characteristics of nurturing and caring, and a tenuous understanding of child development.

Due to the nature of this relationship, caring for children is traditionally associated with women's work (Vincent and Braun, 2010). Gender is inextricably tied in within the early years workforce (McGillvray, 2008); the workforce in England is, for example, comprised of approximately ninety-eight percent women, few practitioners from ethnic minorities, fewer with disabilities, with the majority of practitioners holding a qualification at or below NVQ Level 3 (Kay, 2005).

While the OSC workforce within Scotland includes more men and a slightly more diverse workforce (responses to the out of school worker survey 2013 included responses from 14% males and people with registered disabilities and of different ethnic backgrounds) the largest proportion of the workforce is female. Most work is part-time and low-paid, with many supplementing their income with another job, particularly at the support worker level (Scottish Out of School Care Network, 2013).

5.9. Qualified Teachers in Early Years

A strong body of research demonstrates the importance of higher qualified staff impacting on the quality of provision. The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project (Sylva et al., 2004) showed that there was higher quality provision in those pre-school settings with a qualified graduate teacher. The quality of the learning environment increased with early years leaders' qualifications, and there were improved educational outcomes at Key Stage 1 when children's pre-school experiences combined care and learning experiences (Sylva et al, 2010).

In ECEC centres where there is a culture of integrated working, there needs to be a strong teacher presence to provide a pedagogical lead and support for other practitioners (Whalley, 2009, House of Commons 130-11: 11). The Childhood Practitioner role, although important in Scotland, does not replace the teacher role. Although they learn about Curriculum for Excellence, the focus of their qualification is more on aspects of leadership, management, collaborative working and the skills necessary to support quality improvement processes – rather than on the curriculum and the pedagogy and practice of teaching and learning. This appears to be well recognised within Scotland: Scott, (SSSC, 2015) speaking as SSSC spokesperson about the new BA Childhood Practice online on the SSSC workforce solutions site, stated that it is '…not about the pedagogy of teaching or the praxis of teaching'. Training with a focus on education, children's learning and working with families to support their children at home is necessary (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, House of Commons130-11:23). Further discussion around the current training for teachers, and whether it is fit for purpose, is in the section Qualified Teachers in ELC.

5.10. Childminders

Childminding is a unique and important part of the ECEC system. A childminder is the preferred choice of many parents for reasons including:

- A preference for a small, home-like setting

- A desire to have the same person look after their child for the whole childcare day

- An appreciation of the opportunity provided for children to interact with those of different ages

- A perception that childminding is better suited to their child's temperament (Britner & Phillips, 1995; Doherty, 2003)

- The low adult to child ratios, with one-to-one for children under the age of 1 year in Scotland

Additionally, childminders can often provide a more flexible service to suit parents; for example, parents who work shifts require evening and weekend care. In addition, in the more remote and rural areas of Scotland, childminding is often the only viable option for parents.

Childminding has unique aspects which are worth noting:

- The family home is shared by the provider's family

- The provider is usually self-employed

- The job involves multiple roles including running the business, practitioner, mother of some of the children present

- Care for children across a broad age range from birth to 14 years or so: caring for children aged birth to 5 years, before they start school, for school aged children before and after school and during school holidays

There is a developing evidence base regarding the quality of the care and education childminders offer, including characteristics of the provider (with their training and qualifications, and use of support networks as strong indicators) and the caring environment (with the adult-child ratios and children's ages linked to quality). Most of these structural aspects of quality have been considered in relation to ECEC generally and apply here. The network indicator is relatively new, and

research suggests that childminders who belong to networks tend to be more sensitive and responsive to the children's needs and score higher on environment rating scales (Bromer, Van Haitsma, Daley & Modigliani, 2008; Doherty et al., 2006). The quality of the networks is key. Networks which are staffed with trained co-ordinators who regularly communicate with providers, visit their homes, provide training, and give formal feedback support quality well (Bromer, Van Haitsma, Daley & Modigliani, 2008).

A particularly interesting scheme, community childminders and working for families services, offered through the Scottish Childminding Association (SCMA) has been established across Scotland. This is designed to support the recruitment, retention and quality of childminders and also to support quick responses and offers of childminding placements for parents/carers with challenging family circumstances, such as mental or physical ill-health and/or those in need of guidance and support with parenting and childcare routines. Such placements are typically part-time over a period of six months and avoid the need for families to be referred for social work assessments to access help for their needs which might be low-level and short-term. The scheme builds on existing good joint working practices between the childcare, education, social work and health visitor services. Stephen and Minty (2012) conducted a short review of this work and concluded that a community childminding placement:

- Helps to develop resilience in children and parents.
- Offers a service that is accessible, flexible and in proportion to needs.

- Gives the home-based, small group and 1:1 care that many parents prefer for young children, particularly those under 3 years old.
- Is universally available on the basis of recognised need – a key characteristic of a service designed for early intervention.
- Is delivered in a simple and streamlined manner but gives access to warm and supportive relationships for adults and children.
- Helps families to help themselves and their children.
- Supports local employment directly and indirectly.
- Contributes to family and community wellbeing. (p3&4).

Stephen and Minty (2012) pointed to the need for excellent multi-agency working and flexible approaches to decision making and administration, and noted the need for sustainable funding in order for the service to flourish. Importantly, they recognised the high quality of childminders needed to ensure such successes, and the need for specialised and ongoing professional development.

5.11. Out of School Care (OSC)

While robust research in this sector is limited in comparison to the ECEC sector, there is a growing evidence base and research is beginning to analyse what high quality OSC provisions contribute to children's health, wellbeing and academic success. In the past, and to some extent still today, there is a reliance on comparative data from aligned sectors such as school education, youth development and ECEC (Palmer et al., 2009). While there is overlap, it is recognised that further, specific and more rigorous research is required.

Huang et al. (2008) undertook a literature review considering quality in after-school provision in the USA. Similar to other authors (for example Munton et al., 2001 in the UK), they noted the complexity and accompanying difficulty in making true comparisons across provision – due to the diversity of programmes within the after-school/playwork/OSC sector. Even the sector labels, for example after-school, playwork and out of school, can include different provision. Programmes which have been included in research under such headings vary in multiple ways – including differences in goals, approaches and desired outcomes, as well as with the children and young people they serve (who may vary by age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, vulnerability and so on).

Within Scotland, the definition of OSC services include services which provide care for school aged children:

- Before school starts in the morning (breakfast clubs)

- After the end of the school day (after-school clubs)

- During school holidays (play schemes or all-day care)

Some services are available at other times, for example, during in-service teaching days and at weekends. Some services are only for older children or young people and may not be called 'care' (Scottish Executive, 2003 p9). The Scottish Executive (2003) reported the benefits of OSC as multiple, stating that there was evidence that Out of School Care and study had positive effects, particularly for disadvantaged children. They saw them as integral to their childcare strategy, and contributing to the tackling of child

poverty by enabling parents to go out to work and lift their families from poverty.

'Most services in Scotland, providing play, including free and spontaneous play, as set out in the Playwork Principles (Playwork Principles Scrutiny Group) are also concerned with children's care, development and learning' (Audain and Shoolbread, forthcoming).

A few recurrent themes have emerged from within the current international database. OSC settings are recognised as providing specific benefits in a number of ways:

- They provide children with the opportunity to play (SkillsActive, 2011)

- They provide children with safety through adult supervision before and after school hours, a time where research reports high rates of juvenile victimisation and crime (Snyder and Sickmund, 1995; Huang et al., 2008; Afterschool Alliance 2008)

- They support the children's social skills development and wellbeing (Fashola, 1998; Huang et al., 2008; Little et al. 2008)

- They can enhance children's intellectual achievements and children's school-work related habits through enrichment activities and tutoring (Fashola, 1998; Huang et al., 2008; Little et al., 2008)

High quality OSC can bring all these benefits to children – and provide them with additional opportunities to acquire new skills and broaden their educational experiences generally (Huang et al, 2008).

While these benefits are noted, the quality of the provision is the determining factor – as research suggests that they are

not realised by all settings. Little et al., (2008) related the variability of success, as measured by the outcomes most closely related to children's learning and development, to factors such as the level of supervision and structure of the programme, the quality of staff training and the degree to which the activities were matched with the programme's specific goals and objectives and then suitably evaluated. Bodilly and Beckett (2005) indicated that variability in quality and outcome was linked to other aspects of structural quality, including who participated in the programme (the age and other personal characteristics of the children/young people), the length of time they spent in the programme, frequency of attendance, programme content (specific activities, mentoring and support strategies). Other studies noted the importance of the adult:child ratio, age appropriate activities and the accessibility of the provision (Beckett et al., 2001).

One interesting finding related specifically to children's outcomes (as defined in this report) was that settings successful in one domain also appeared to be successful in the other. That is, successful settings were likely to impact on socio-emotional development, wellbeing and learning/school related performance (for school aged children).

Palmer et al., 2009 conducted a meta-analysis of the major research available at that time and suggested six domains were important to quality:

• Supportive relationships
• Intentional activities linked to children's achievements and any goals set for them

• Strong community partnerships (for example with parents/carers/schools/other local groups)
• Promotion of children and young people's active engagement
• Physical safety
• Continuous quality improvement

The similarity between the areas identified here and within the earlier ECEC literature is striking.

5.12. Full Day Care

Little current literature considers the impact of full day care, either in one centre or from a mix of providers (see Stephen, 2002; Geddes et al., 2010). In the US, Early Head Start was one of the few large-scale programmes which took into account the programme approach that the family had been offered (centre-based, mixed or home-based) and differing implementation patterns in their evaluation. The Early Head Start programme included parent support and day care. They found that children accessing their groups showed improvements in cognitive and language development, better social-emotional development, higher emotional engagement with the parent in play, and higher sustained attention with play objects. They also displayed less aggressive behaviour than children who had not attended their groups. They reported the best results where families and children attended either the centre based or home based provision rather than mixed provision.

There is a debate about full versus half-day. As mentioned earlier, the EPPE study (Sylva et al. 2004) reported that, in high quality settings, a full-day is as good as a half-day – so long as the children attended 4-5 daily sessions per week; and that those who attended only one or two days did not do as well. The US National Center for Educational Statistics suggested that a full-day for highest risk, and a half-day for medium and low risk children, was best.

Geddes et al. (2010) recommended that Scotland should consider full-day programmes for children who are particularly disadvantaged, because they would gain cognitively from more intensive pre-school. They also suggested that high-quality full day care did not show strongly the negative behavioural consequences associated with the additional hours. Further, they recommended half-day programmes as sufficient for children of middle or higher socio-economic status or income. They concluded that such children benefited from 15 to 30 hour weeks, but that the cognitive benefits diminished with more than 30 hours and negative social-emotional effects then intensified.

5.13. Initial implications of the Research Literature for Scotland

Geddes et al. (2010) suggested it was important that Scottish public policies and programmes should be based on what has been shown to be effective elsewhere, and, following this, any changes should be evaluated rigorously wherever they are implemented for the first time. Effective evidence should be considered from countries which have similar inequalities and levels of poverty as Scotland, and it was suggested that studies in the USA and England may therefore be more pertinent than studies from countries of the OECD with less pronounced inequalities such as Sweden and Norway.

Quality appears to be highest in those settings which integrate care and education, where education and social development are viewed equally, and in traditional nursery schools (as opposed to day care and playgroups) (Sylva et al., 2004; Geddes et al., 2010). It is important to remember that high quality pre-school experiences enhance all-round development in children, whilst poor quality may lead to worse outcomes than no pre-school. Disadvantaged children particularly benefit from high quality pre-schools – especially if the children attending are from mixed social backgrounds. This has implications for the positioning of centres in deprived areas. Staff with higher qualifications, a trained early childhood teacher as the manager, and good teacher-child relationships, are also indicators of good quality (Geddes et al., 2010).

While there is a large evidence base, particularly in the USA, which relates to studies where ECEC has been targeted at children and families living in areas of disadvantage or with children with identified development learning needs, care needs to be taken not to limit policies solely here. The Marmot Inequality Review (2010) stated, 'focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently. To reduce the steepness of the social gradient in health, actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. We call this 'proportionate universalism' (p9).

Geddes at al., (2010) recommended that Scotland reflect this evidence in their policy development, and outlined a 'progressive universal programme' and progressive interventions from pregnancy to five years of age (see p 62). In tandem with this, they suggested that Scotland invest in rigorous and robust evaluations of any changes made. Cost-benefit research comparing and calculating the average improvement in the children's learning and development linked to the level of intervention offered (both in terms of parenting support and ELC) would help inform future directions.

As this research literature suggests, whilst ECEC and OSC cannot eliminate disadvantage due to social backgrounds, it can lessen some of its effects, reduce social exclusion, and improve children's and families' lives. The ELC and the OSC sectors are important drivers for Scotland's national vision of transformational change and for Scotland's aspiration 'to be the best place in the world to grow up' (Scottish Government, 2015a). The complexity of the work, however, coupled with Scotland's wish to increase entitlements to high-quality provision, suggest that this is likely to be a long process. UNESCO (2004) considered transformational change and quality improvements of this type across the world and concluded that they require not only a strong lead from government with a robust long term vision, but also a sufficiently motivated and well-supported staff. Further, they noted that the impact of policy may not be apparent until several years after its implementation, and that one policy can never be viewed in isolation to others.

Many individual practitioners and stakeholder institutions who responded to the Review recognised both the complexity and time likely to be involved in workforce reform within Scotland.

'From our experience of involvement in the development of policy on qualifications for other elements of local authority workforce, we know that it takes time to change and develop qualifications…' (COSLA in their initial response to the call for evidence)

'Time is also needed to develop the workforce, with the increase to 600 hours..' (Head of Nursery School response to first call for evidence)

'…to offer a workforce with this range of skills and experience… (to meet the OSC needs of the families/carers and children with learning disabilities and complex needs)… there needs to be thought given to recruitment, training, career development and retention of workers.' (The Learning Disability Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Scotland Network response to the first call for evidence)

The scope of this Review is far reaching, and the recommendations involve different services, stakeholders, institutions and both the ELC and OSC workforces. The process of implementing the recommendations will require careful planning and negotiation – if they are to be fully realised. Among other aspects, there will need to be more graduate level initial qualifications and opportunities for ongoing professional and career development. While Scotland has begun addressing these issues, some issues remain unresolved. A further expansion in the workforces will also require more time

– if quality is not to be sacrificed. The need for additional time and planning will become more apparent in the discussions in the following sections.

Establishing a strategic group with the relevant agencies and staff with clear objectives and Terms of Reference associated with the recommendations of the Review, with an implementation period of 15 years, should ensure that change and improvements take place in a timely manner. The strategic group may also establish a development group or groups to take forward specific recommendations or objectives. This is the approach that was taken successfully in Scotland when the BA Childhood Practice degree was developed by the Childhood Practice Development Group (CPDG) convened by SSSC. Using a similar process for the continued improvements that Scotland wishes to follow seems judicious, given the complexity and diversity of the tasks involved.

The Scottish Government would be in a good position to lead the group, to ensure that key stakeholders and decision makers are engaged, that there are good communication and dissemination mechanisms in place, and that the group is as representative as possible.

This first recommendation has been written with the full Review findings in mind and not just the research literature, but it needs to sit early in the Review to contextualise the other recommendations within the timeframe.

Recommendation

1) Given the scope, ambition and policy direction, with its strong Scottish identity; for ELC and Out of School Care, there is a strong probability that the workforce will need to continue to be developed substantially both in size and especially in terms of quality. In order to achieve the necessary workforce reform a reasonable timeframe should be set.

The Scottish Government to convene a strategic group to oversee a maximum 15 year vision and development plan for workforce reform. Specific subgroups to consider and implement changes across aspects of practice and provision, such as those outlined in the following recommendations (2–31), could then be supported and steered by the strategic group.

This research literature was compiled to serve as an evidence base against which comparisons of current Scottish processes and practices related to the workforce could be made. It includes information supporting the understanding of quality in ELC and OSC, and indicates the changes which could be made to structural and process quality that support quality improvement.

A suggestion for the further use of such research literature came in many conversations during the Review process, as well as within the hub responses. Both practitioners and stakeholder institutions suggested that an evidence-based summary of the research literature relating to quality within ELC and OSC could support practitioners' engagement in improvement planning – and inform qualifications and professional development and so on. They suggested that it should be made available for all those interested in quality improvement within the ELC and OSC sectors. The Scottish Government's Early Years Division could then extend and amend it as their experiences and research informs.

Recommendation

2) Share the international and Scottish research literature in this Review, which summarises relevant literature about effective practice in ELC and OSC, with interested partners, stakeholders and practitioners. Over time, this should be extended, monitored, evaluated and updated.

Several stakeholder bodies and individual practitioners raised concerns, through responses to the consultations, about the levels of knowledge of practitioners – particularly those working with the youngest children – and about the importance of ensuring high quality work with the most vulnerable children.

For example, the Care Inspectorate wrote: 'In general the levels of staff knowledge, training and support tend to be better for the 3-5 age range and the statutory sector than for the 0-3 age range and the private sector' and 'The implementation of the expansion in childcare hours to vulnerable 2s means an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the variability of development in children for the first three years of their life is critical in ensuring improved outcomes and a reducing inequality. Early child development in social, emotional, language and cognitive areas is significant.' (Care Inspectorate Response to the call for evidence).

In addition to training and professional development with a focus on education and children's learning at and beyond these ages, practitioners will need to be supported in working with families to support their children at home (see Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, House of Commons130-11:23). Geddes at al., (2010) noted that improvement in children's learning and development is linked to the level of intervention offered, both in terms of early learning and childcare provision and parenting support (see research literature).

Feedback from a Core Reference Group member suggested that: '…If we are to make the most of this opportunity (referring to the increases in entitlements to ELC)…there needs to be a new and significant emphasis on how to work effectively with children and parents as part of initial and ongoing professional development programmes.'

The Scottish and international research literature points to the critical importance of understanding and supporting the youngest children. Scotland has been innovative in its consideration of children pre-birth to 3 and in its aspirations to provide universal services for younger and younger children. The *Early Years Framework*, (Scottish Government and COSLA, 2008), for example, called for a renewed focus on the 0–3 year age group as the period of a child's development which shapes future outcomes. It is, therefore, imperative to ensure that the ELC workforce is ready and able to meet predicted increased demands, especially with younger children, with high quality provision. The workforce needs to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and understandings necessary to support very young children and their parents/carers. Both these aspects of practice need to be strong, especially if the goal is to close the gap of disadvantage. Geddes et al. (2010) noted that this combined, two generational approach, makes the most impact on children's outcomes.

Supporting parents' confidence in nurturing and enriching the environment and experiences that they provide for their children at home is possibly more important than supporting the parents back to work. Although initial investments to ensure this will be high, the returns over the long term can be much greater. Impacts on child development, school achievement, delinquency and crime prevention, and life success have been demonstrated, with the greatest effects seen in those at the highest social risk (Geddes et al., 2010).

Recommendation

3) Consider the specific needs of 2, 3 and 4 year olds in relation to their free entitlements (which could be extended to 30 hours in the future), to inform initial training courses, postgraduate courses and continued professional development in relation to both the children and their parents/carers.

6. National policy context: Scotland's vision and plans for transformational change

This section refers to the Scottish Government's broad national vision for transformational change which, for children and young people, is underpinned by their desire for 'Scotland to be the best place in the world to grow up' (Scottish Government, 2015a). Later sections refer to specific policy areas considered pertinent to the Review. This section includes an outline of the National Performance Framework, strategic objectives and national outcomes leading onto a discussion of the relevant frameworks for early years and OSC – including early years outcomes, indicators and stretch aims. It also details the Scottish Government's work designed to engage communities and families and their processes of data collection, monitoring and improvement. Finally, it considers the policies and frameworks which impact particularly on ELC and OSC workforces and looks at future policy direction.

6.1. National Vision

The Scottish Government has set itself welcome aspirational goals for improvement within the ELC and OSC sectors – and for improvements generally within the country. The Scottish Government is committed to transformational change through a clearly laid out plan which details purpose, illustrates how this purpose can be enacted, and identifies a number of measurements to track progress over time.

The plan includes legislation, policies, frameworks and guidance which are linked together, and still evolving, to form a coherent vision for the future of the country. The National Performance Framework (2007) is vital to this plan. It states that the Purpose of government is:

'to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth' (Scottish Government, 2015b).

To support this Purpose, the Scottish Government outlined five strategic objectives: Wealthier and Fairer; Smarter; Healthier; Safer and Stronger; and Greener (Scottish Government, 2015c). These are exemplified further by sixteen National Outcomes towards which all Government policy works. For example, the Early Years Division of Government, which commissioned this Independent Review, works towards three of these National Outcomes: no. 4, 'our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'; no. 5, 'our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed'; and no. 8, 'we have improved the life chances for the children, young people and families at risk'.

In order to track progress towards these National Outcomes and to further refine them, the Scottish Government identified a number of indicators. These describe what the Government wants to achieve over the following ten years. They cover key areas of health, justice, environment, economy and education, and allow progress to be measured over time. While not all the indicators, and accompanying outcome measures, are relevant to ELC and OSC, many are. They include: 'improve the skill profile of the population'; 'increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports'; 'improve levels of educational attainment'; 'increase the proportion of young people in learning, training or work'; 'improve children's

services'; 'reduce the proportion of individuals living in poverty'; and 'reduce children's deprivation'. Clearly, there is an appetite to improve quality as well as to expand provision.

6.2. Focus on Children and Young People

The focus on children and young people, their rights and wellbeing, has been, and continues to be, strong within the Scottish Government. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 is the most recent piece of legislation to enshrine in law some of the identified processes and services designed to support the Government's vision. Amongst other areas, it includes provision regarding the rights of children and young people ensuring that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) continues to be secured and improved upon. It confers more rights to the Children and Young People's Commissioner to investigate service providers and ensure that children and young people's rights, interests and views are taken into account when decisions that affect them are being made.

The Act also coined the term 'Early Learning and Childcare' (ELC) stating that it replaces all previous terminology related to pre-school provision and early education. It refers to different types of settings such as '... private providers, Gaelic medium settings, local authority settings, voluntary groups and childminding' (Scottish Government, 2014b, p 3). The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines ELC as a service consisting of education and care suitable for pre-school children which has '...regard to the importance of interactions and other experiences which support learning and

development in a caring and nurturing setting' (Scottish Government, 2014b, part 6: 42). The Act refers to all of Scotland's children and young people's services, requiring local authorities to consult with parents about the ELC and OSC which would meet their needs.

The Act introduced new entitlements to ELC for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds. ELC is recognised as an important driver for the National Outcomes, and it was noted that the existing entitlements for 3 and 4 year olds, at the time of developing the Act, were insufficient to address the growing numbers of families who needed extended hours to support them while working or to meet the needs of younger children aged 0-3 years. The Act sought to address such anomalies and to benefit children and families in a much more cohesive way. As a first step, the hours and flexibility of funded places for 3 and 4 year olds were increased; and the entitlement to 600 hours of funded provision was extended to vulnerable 2 year olds.

The delivery of ELC, OSC and indeed all children and young people's services across Scotland are underpinned by Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) (Scottish Government, 2008 and 2012). GIRFEC provides a framework for all services for children and young people; it ensures that they are child-centred and promotes a national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people. The approach puts the best interests of the child at the heart of decision making; encourages an holistic approach to the wellbeing of a child; promotes working with children, young people and their families on ways to improve wellbeing; advocates preventative

work and early intervention to support children, young people and their families; and, promotes the idea that professionals must work together in the best interests of the child. In order to do this, eight indicators of wellbeing are used: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These are often referred to as SHANARRI, and are considered the basic requirements for all children and young people in order to grow and develop.

6.3. Focus on Early Years

Specific to the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to ELC, a number of important frameworks have driven, and continue to drive, social policy. Three social policies aimed at reducing social inequality were launched in 2008. Particularly pertinent to this Review is the *Early Years Framework* (EYF) (Scottish Government and COSLA, 2008) which was evidence-based and outlined the importance of a child's earliest years in laying the foundation for the future – including their health, social development, educational attainment and employability. The EYF, in conjunction with two other policies, were set to tackle and transform Scotland's social and health inequalities: *Equally Well* (Scottish Government 2008b) and *Achieving Our Potential* (Scottish Government 2008c). More recently, the Scottish Government's *Child Poverty Strategy* (Scottish Government, 2014d) specifically mentions the particular importance of improving children's outcomes in the early years.
The EYF supported at least 11 of the National Outcomes and was an important milestone in partnership working as the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)

worked together to develop it. It included a 10 year strategic plan which focused on ensuring that children achieve positive outcomes (in relation to the policy indicators and outcome measures detailed by Scottish Government, 2015d). The EYF recognised that the early years service landscape was fragmented in terms of service delivery and workforce in Scotland. There was concern that services often failed to take the contribution of parents, families and communities into account when considering outcomes. It recognised the need for a fundamental shift and reconceptualisation of the influences on young children within children and young people's services generally. It promoted the ideas of putting quality at the heart of service delivery and the EYF as a mechanism to support this.

The EYF set out a wide-ranging vision of the best start in life for children based largely on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The vision was underpinned by Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) and provided a common language across all children and young people's services. The Framework adopted a rights based approach which is current and evident across Scotland today. Many of its principles are relevant to this Review, but one seems particularly pertinent and relates to the workforce: 'Children and families are supported by a workforce which is highly skilled, well trained, appropriately rewarded, well supported, highly valued by all and with attractive career paths' (p13). The EYF included 10 key elements of transformational change to be actioned at a local level by all those working with, or having an impact on, children from pre-birth to age 8:

- A coherent approach
- Helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves
- Breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years
- A focus on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities
- Using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention
- Putting quality at the heart of service delivery
- Services which meet the needs of children and families
- Improving outcomes and children's quality of life through play
- Simplifying and streamlining delivery
- More effective collaboration (Scottish Government and COSLA, 2008 p4)

The implementation of the EYF is ongoing and relies on the redrawn relationship between national and local government agreed through the Concordat (Scottish Government, 2007), Single Outcome Agreements (SOA), and the previously mentioned National Outcomes and National Indicators outlined in the National Performance Framework (Scottish Government, 2007).

This partnership between national and local government set out the vision for improved outcomes for children in later life, while the 32 individual Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) already established across Scotland planned for

and oversaw the implementation of the changes. The CPPs include personnel from social services, health, education, police and third sector professionals – essentially all those seen as the relevant public, private, voluntary and community bodies in the area. The SOAs, agreed in 2009, outline the outcomes towards which each CPP is working. Each outcome is individual and represents each CPP's unique set of agreed priorities. The EYF stresses that change should be demonstrated by the improvement in outcomes for children, rather than by the implementation of individual elements of the change process itself. It does not, however, specify those outcomes at the local level. While this approach demonstrates the collegial and collaborative culture which underpins the new relationship, there are some issues associated with the resulting outcomes. According to the Children's Voluntary Sector Policy Officer's Network, (2010) the National Outcomes appear to be set at too global a level for CPPs to use, and the National and Local Outcomes are disjointed, too broad and unspecific.

In 2009, a Scottish Government-led group, the EYF Data and Indicators Group (DIG), was brought together to develop an outcomes framework specifically for early years. They defined a range of 35 indicators which could be used to measure early years outcomes (Scottish Government 2015e). The indicators were designed to be helpful but not restrictive, and were neither mandatory nor prescriptive. They were devised to be used as a tool for the CPPs to support them in measuring progress and in achieving better outcomes for children in their local communities.

A number of these early years outcomes/ indicators appear to be pertinent to the definition of children's outcomes used internationally within ECEC and also within this Review. For example:

- 15. Percentage of children scoring at or above the mean for their age on the British Ability Scales (BAS).

- 16. Percentage of children displaying age appropriate communication skills.

- 17. Early Home Learning Environment – a) % of pre-school children who have been read to on 4 or more days in the past week; b) % of pre-school children who have done activities involving painting or drawing on 4 or more days in the past week; c) % of pre-school children who have played at recognising letters, words, shapes or numbers in last week.

- 18. Percentage of children who are physically, emotionally, behaviourally and cognitively ready for school at primary 1.

- 19. Achievement in literacy and numeracy by P3/P4 – a) % of pupils demonstrating 'well-established' or better reading skills at the expected level for their stage; b) % of pupils writing at the expected level or above for their stage; c) % of pupils demonstrating 'well-established or better' skills at the expected level in mathematics.

- 20. Percentage of parents who rate a range of play activities as 'very important'.

DIG chose their 35 outcomes because they were linked closely to the values and policy contexts within Scotland, and also because local partners were currently collecting data in these areas (or could choose to do so in the future). During an analysis of outcomes in Scotland, Children's Voluntary Sector Policy Officer's Network (2010) suggested that whilst early years indicators were more consistently presented than other topics in the SOAs, references were over-reliant on existing data sets, and tended to focus on measurement of 'deficits, rather than the more positive elements of early years (such as play, pro-social behaviour or parent/child interaction' (p.11).

The indicators outlined above, which link directly to children's socio-emotional and cognitive development, were measured through the Growing Up in Scotland (GUS) cohort studies. It is important to note that these studies were national and the outcomes measured were generalised from a randomly chosen group of children across Scotland (Scottish Government, 2014c). It was, therefore, not clear how these measures would/could be used at a local level by CPPs. Further, as the last cohort of children included in the GUS studies have now reached school age, no similar national data will be available in the future and so they are unlikely to continue to act as indicators.

There is a potential issue for the Scottish Government around how to monitor the impact of ELC nationally without any national measurements being made within early years. Geddes et al (2010) pointed to the need to develop a system to monitor what they called 'the more proximal effects of early childhood interventions especially in relation to cognitive-language and social-emotional development' (pXI).

6.4. Current Government initiatives supporting Quality Improvement

In recent years, the Scottish Government's commitment to developing a universal approach to prevention, with early intervention as key in tackling significant inequalities in Scottish society, has become embedded. The Scottish Government's shared vision is to make 'Scotland the best place in the world to grow up' by improving outcomes and reducing inequalities for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed (Scottish Government, 2015a).

The Early Years Taskforce (EYTF) was established in partnership with the Scottish Government, Local Government, the National Health Service, the Police and the Third Sector in 2011. It is co-chaired by the Minister for Children and Young People and COSLA. The role of the EYTF is to take forward a significant change programme, which aims to accelerate the conversion of the high level principles set out in the Early Years Framework into practical action. The EYTF has the following aims:

• Deliver tangible improvement in outcomes and reduce inequalities for Scotland's vulnerable children

• Put Scotland squarely on course to shifting the balance of public services towards early intervention and prevention by 2016

• Sustain this change to 2018 and beyond

The EYTF was tasked with oversight of the £274.25 million Early Years Change Fund, a partnership fund with contributions from the Scottish Government, local government and Health. The Early Years Change Fund was the starting point to ensure investment was targeted where it could make the biggest impact, by supporting prevention and early intervention. The contributions from local government and Health end this year; the Scottish Government has, however, pledged to continue supporting the fund until 2015-2016 with £8.5 million, and no end date for the Taskforce has been set.

The members of the EYTF represent local authority, health, learning, justice, political, business and third sector interests across services for children, parents, carers and families. Since 2012, the EYTF has worked together with the Early Years Collaborative (EYC) to support the CPPs: i.e. the local communities of multi-agency workers who come together to identify and plan for change within their communities. There is a champion from the EYTF in each of the four EYC work streams (see Table 3). The champion's role is to support CPPs, to understand the barriers they face, and to use the EYTF's extensive network to help remove those barriers.

The Early Years Collaborative (EYC) is a multi-agency, quality improvement programme, with partners from local government, including social services, health, education, police and third sector professionals committed to ensuring that every baby, child, mother, father and family in Scotland has access to the best supports available. The EYC includes four workstreams each with their own Stretch Aim. The workstreams and associated Stretch Aims are outlined overleaf in Table 3:

Table 3: Workstreams and Stretch Aims for the EYC

Workstream	Stretch Aim
1. Conception to 1 year	Positive pregnancies which result in the birth of more healthy babies by end 2015, through a reduction of 15% in the rates of stillbirths and infant mortality.
2. One year to 30 months	85% of all children reached all of the expected developmental milestones at the time of the child's 27–30 month child health review, by end-2016
3. 30 months to start of school	90% of all children reached all of the expected developmental milestones at the time the child starts primary school, by end-2017
4. Start of school to 8 years	90% of all children in each Community Planning Partnership area will have reached all of the expected developmental milestones and learning outcomes by the end of primary 4, by end-2021

The 32 CPPs, in conjunction with the EYC, have recently started to work together towards these Stretch Aims using the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Breakthrough Series Collaborative Model and the Model for Improvement. Using this approach, each CPP defines their aims and what they are trying to accomplish, how they will know that a change is an improvement, how they will measure this, including what data they will collect, and finally how they will implement the change. This is a cycle of Plan, Do, Study and Act. GIRFEC underpins and runs through all this work, ensuring that the child or young person and their best interests are central. Each plan is unique and reflects the individuality of the CPP.

While it is still too early to see the impact of this work, some evidence is beginning to form, in particular in relation to workstream 1, where a downward trend in stillbirths has been seen since 2004. What is clear is that demonstrating achievement of the Stretch Aims is reliant upon a comprehensive and universal measurement system. Strides are being made here too and a baseline position was established for workstream 2 in 2013-14 (this information was provided by the Scottish Government's Information Services Division in 2014).

Discussion and research online undertaken during the Review showed a great deal of enthusiasm and motivation for EYC meetings and conferences. Little was included, however, in the consultation hub responses from individual stakeholders, and in the feedback from outside meetings which considered their role directly. This is probably because it is too soon to make any real judgements. Searching the hub responses did provide a handful of relevant comments.

One network, the Childhood Practice Providers Group, when asked how staff could be deployed to ensure high quality provision for children, asked for more educational involvement, specifically in relation to '…schools in the work of the early years collaborative' (Hub

response from Childhood Practice Providers Group, first call). While this may not be representative of all CPPs, as the quote below illustrates, it does seem important to ensure that all local services and stakeholders are involved in early years planning initiatives.

A response from another respondent to the hub suggested greater sharing of the EYC work would support the way ELC is perceived: 'The work of the Early Years Collaborative being shared with parents and the general public' (Hub response from a Teacher working in ELC, second call) The EYC undoubtedly has an important role to play in quality improvement and supporting the awareness of the important role of ELC. Eventually it will provide feedback on impact, once the measurement base related to the Stretch Aims is established. The EYC brings together multi-agency teams from local communities which should support sharing, understanding and professional development. It also should ensure that planning for change reflects the needs of the locality as each CPP has its own unique focus. It is, therefore, important to ensure the inclusion of all relevant people across the whole of Scotland within the EYC.

Recommendation

4) Currently a great many services, including representatives from health, social services, education and the third sector, are involved in Early Years Collaborative (EYC) initiatives and planning across the sector. In some areas, however, stakeholders may have been overlooked, for example representatives from ELC staff within local schools. EYC to redress any omissions so that all could benefit.

At present there does not appear to be a clear distinction between local and national outcomes and how these might be measured. While the CPPs will work towards aspects of the Stretch Aims, the Stretch Aims themselves appear to be National Outcomes and further are reliant on accurate measurements of successful births and children's milestones (which may require further definition) during their early years. A national database is currently available in relation to the first two Stretch Aims. With regards to Stretch Aim 2, information is gathered nationally from checks made, usually by health visitors, at 27-30 months. Health visitors report on children's achievements in relation to nine developmental domains, however, it is not clear which measurement tools are used to make these judgements or whether they are reliable and consistent across the Country. Further, in order for Stretch Aim 2 to be achievable, it would necessitate an additional assessment and the early identification of children at risk of not reaching their milestones. Geddes et al (2010) described the Hall4 system of

screening children from 6 to 8 weeks old within Scotland. They found, however, that only half the children at risk in the area of Glasgow were identified as such by the time they were 4 months old.

The data currently available on children's socio-emotional and cognitive development relating specifically to Scotland (now that the last GUS cohort has moved on to school) is likely to be insufficient to assess accurately the status of early child development, either overall or across different socio-economic groups or regional populations, or indeed to monitor all of the Stretch Aims as outlined by the EYC. While this is not surprising, as UNICEF (2007) reported that this is a problem within most rich countries, the deadlines by which such information is needed is approaching fast.

Geddes et al. (2010) recognised the need for a consistent and reliable measure of child development, and recommended that the Early Development Instrument (EDI) designed to measure children's readiness to learn at school was adopted across the country. EDI consists of 104 questions grouped into five scales: physical health and wellbeing; social knowledge and competence; emotional health/maturity; language and cognitive development; and general knowledge and communication skills. Typically it is completed by the teachers in the child's first year of schooling once they have had had the chance to settle in (usually roughly four months after starting school).

Analysis of the results of the EDI could provide data on the impact of interventions as well as indicate the level of vulnerable children in each school and

could also be used to report on populations of children or communities. The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research & Policy (Ingram, 2014) began piloting a Scottish version of EDI across East Lothian (from 2011 to now). This was ongoing at the time of publication. Although the project is not yet complete, Marks Woolson et al. (2012) concluded that the teachers found the tool easy to use in its adapted form (SEDI), that it displayed adequate psychometric and discriminatory properties for Scotland's purposes, and that it could be used across Scotland. Stretch Aims 3 and 4 would necessitate the use of a universal assessment tool looking at child development (such as SEDI) at the start of primary and another one at the end of primary 4.

The Review is aware that there are a number of other different frameworks designed to track children's progress across Scotland.

One local authority representative wrote in a consultation response:

'LAs have a range of frameworks which follow the child and track progress from pre-birth …and specific LAs have individual children's profiles'
(Response to first call for evidence)

While the unique planning, interventions and changes undertaken within CPPs support collaboration, innovation and motivation and may ensure that each plan is suitable for each locality, it could prove difficult to track their impact on children's outcomes. Individually designed assessments and profiles are unlikely to have the underpinning research that determines how they are linked to children's outcomes. Geddes et al. (2010)

conducted an analysis of effective international interventions and also plotted the interventions that were being used across Scotland at that time. They pointed to the need for more robust evaluative designs of interventions, including across Scotland. Designing and evaluating improvement within ECEC to support the Stretch Aims would require extensive knowledge, not only of the evidence base for effective early years pedagogy and practice, including assessment methods which reliably measure children's outcomes, but also knowledge and understanding of data collection, analysis and interpretation.

Designing a robust intervention study, and then accurately measuring the effects and interpreting the results, is complex and may be beyond the reach of all or any CPPs. Geddes et al. (2010) noted that while the decentralisation that accompanied the Concordat was welcomed, allowing individual CPPs to choose their own indicators would make comparisons across the country or getting the full picture of Scotland's performance difficult. They also suggested that having enough staff in each of the areas trained in data collection and analysis would be problematic.

A national monitoring and assessment system for ELC for children aged 0 to 6 years, which considers children's socio-emotional and cognitive development at appropriate stages of development, to inform the first three Stretch Aims of EYC, would be useful. This could then be linked to further monitoring and assessment systems for children at older ages. Not only would this allow for national comparisons, but it could also avoid the use of potentially unhelpful tools

and the potential bias associated with the current system where it appears that the practitioners are both implementing and monitoring changes themselves.

One potential danger of national systems of data collection relates to the insidious and often inappropriate comparisons of settings/schools that could be made, as found in England with the league tables. This, however, seems unlikely to occur in Scotland, where collaboration and joint working are a strong part of the culture. One way to avoid this would be to engage in random sampling approaches as with literacy and numeracy sampling across Scotland (The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), Scottish Government, 2015a).

In the context of discussions with the Core Reference Group on the developing recommendations, a Further Education representative wrote with regards to having a national assessment framework: 'This would support qualification development, students could learn to work with standardised recording systems'.

Recommendation

5) Develop a national assessment framework system inclusive of the current Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) for ELC 0-6, which has the potential to be used by a range of early years professionals and is sensitive to the Scottish context regarding assessment. This should be accompanied by a recording system with the potential to follow the child and to support transitions

6.5. Focus on children of school age

While many of the aforementioned policies are also relevant to school aged provision, it is important to consider Raising Attainment for All, the 'sister' to the EYC, as this will impact on the OSC workforce, including childminders. The Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) programme was launched in June 2014. Twelve Local Authorities and over 150 schools across Scotland committed to becoming part of a learning community which supported the implementation of an improvement methodology and enabled shared learning across the Country. The improvement methodology promotes iterative testing of interventions and scaling, and spreading tried and tested interventions as they emerge. The iterative testing includes an evaluation cycle i.e. Plan, Do, Study, Act. This work aims to support consistent improvement in attainment and achievement through the development of a collaborative learning system. The Local Authorities and schools are working together and sharing experiences with the aim of driving forward improvement and making a real difference where it is most needed. The aims are:

• Improved educational outcomes for all learners – consistently over an agreed period, promoting greater depth and breadth of attainment and achievement and improving the educational outcomes of all our children and young people.

• Equity in educational outcomes – consistently over an agreed period, to make progress in eroding the deeply embedded correlation found in the majority of Scottish schools between a child's relative point of social deprivation/affluence and their educational attainment.

• Higher public confidence in education.

The Raising Attainment for All programme, like the EYC, has four stretch aims linked to the ages of children. They are:

• To ensure that 85% of children within each school cluster have successfully experienced and achieved CfE Second Level Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing outcomes in preparation for Secondary School by 2016.

• To ensure that 85% of children within each school cluster have successfully experienced and achieved CfE Third Level Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing outcomes in preparation for the Senior Phase by 2019.

• To ensure that 95% of young people within each school cluster go on to positive participation destinations on leaving school by 2018. Increasing to

100% the number of young people who have access to an appropriate, industry-recognised vocational qualification whilst at school by 2018. Increasing to 95% the number of young people who leave school with at least SCQF Level 4 in Literacy and Numeracy by 2018. And reducing by 50% the difference in average tariff score between the most and least deprived communities by 2018.

- To provide the leadership for improvement, both nationally and locally, across the Raising Attainment for All Programme (RAFA).

Improving children's literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing has been linked to OSC and parents/carers support. So achieving these aims is likely to involve practitioners, parents, carers and so on outside schools, as well as within them. It is unclear whether colleagues from OSC will be encouraged to join the RAFA programmes; if this, however, has not already been done, it could be a useful way forward. It is interesting to note that much of the data needed to inform the Stretch Aims is already collected within schools though random sampling across Scotland (e.g. The Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy (SSLN), Scottish Government, 2015a).

People who commented on the RAFA programme were generally very positive and welcomed '…the RAFA Programme… [and some suggested extending its reach would be useful]… but believed that RAFA funding and focus should include ELC and OSC settings' (Network response to the Review).

Recommendation

6) The pilot of Raising Attainment for All (RAFA) has involved schools and Local Authorities (LAs), but has not yet involved the OSC workforce, including childminders. RAFA to involve ELC and OSC workforces in the future, as they would have an important contribution to make to children's wellbeing and their social and academic success.

6.6. Quality and Outcomes

Consideration will be given in this section to the standard of quality, as measured by inspections and associated research, in Scotland. While there has been an ongoing debate over the past decade or so on the relative merit of qualified teachers and/or practitioners with relevant ELC degrees, there has been a marked trend in Scotland towards the professionalisation of the non-teaching workforce.

There have been a number of important reports that have led to the development of qualifications for ELC practitioners and associated policies which have informed the direction that Scotland has taken. An HMIE report (2007a) highlighted the quality of leadership as key to ensuring positive outcomes for children in all centres. This suggested that staff needed a high level of understanding and knowledge of pedagogy and child development in order to lead the learning and to model high quality interactions with young children, taking into account their stages of development. Their analyses appeared very much in-line with previous discussions regarding high quality provision which supports children's outcomes in this Review (see the research literature).

'The interaction of staff with young children is fundamental in providing them with the support they need to become confident individuals eager to explore and investigate their learning environment. Well-judged intervention by adults, knowledgeable about a child and their stages of development, is critical in extending and enhancing learning' (HMIE, 2007a, p8). The report clearly articulated the contribution that qualified teachers, at that time, made to children's learning in terms of their understanding of the curriculum, how children learn and the pedagogy and practice that supports this, including their particular knowledge and skills in observation, assessment and planning.

The report (HMIE, 2007a) also articulated the need for strong and effective leadership in children's learning and highlighted the following common characteristics of leaders and key staff which they said would support high quality:

- Very effective leadership skills with an ability to manage the expertise of the nursery team to support children's learning.
- An ability to develop skills of other staff who were less qualified.
- An ability to access and use expertise from a range of professionals.
- A knowledge of how to organise and provide supportive environments which helped children enjoy learning and be engaged and stimulated by it.
- An ability to facilitate and enable children to make choices and be independent.
- A strong commitment to being reflective practitioners who are constantly striving to improve.

(HMIE 2007a, p 16)

In the sections considering curricula and guidance frameworks, and later when consideration is given to qualifications, it is possible to track the path of how leadership and management has continued to be seen as important and promoted within ELC.

Both within the discussions undertaken in the course of the Review, and in the responses to the hub calls for evidence, the importance of knowledge and skills in effective leadership, management and quality assurance was acknowledged, including the importance of critical reflection and evaluation if high quality learning and care is to be achieved. Many responses to the hub consultation placed aspects of leadership within the sections discussing initial and ongoing professional development.

'High standards and high expectations within the provision. Good management, staff sharing the vision of the manager. Clear planning shared with all. Effective monitoring of day-to-day activities.' (ELC practitioner's response to hub second call)

It was interesting to note that several people who mentioned leadership in their responses to the hub also made a distinction between leadership for learning and general management skills. This was also the case in discussions with other stakeholders during the Review; for example, with representatives of the nursery head teachers and staff seconded from Education Scotland. They recognised that the new BA Childhood Practice and other similar degrees were supporting management and celebrated that; they showed concern, however, that typically the practitioners who achieved a degree were either already managers or moved into management positions very quickly. Their time tended to be occupied with the general administrative duties which general management entails rather than in face-to-face interactions or modelling good practice with the children and young people.

Rodd (2012), while describing the key elements of effective leadership, suggested that they should include: the ability to develop a vision and team culture, set goals and achievements, monitor and communicate achievements and facilitate the development of others. Fundamental to such leadership is knowledge, experience and understanding of effective pedagogy and practice within the setting.

When asked how staff should be deployed to ensure high quality, several responses pointed to the importance of highly qualified and knowledgeable staff leading learning. See below:

'By ensuring that the highly qualified people remain working with children. At present, in general, the higher the qualification, the more removed the practitioner is likely to be from the actual day-to-day working with children. This may reflect financial rewards, particularly within the private sector.' (University providing degrees for ELC, response to first call for evidence)

Leadership is considered to be fundamental to improvement within Scotland across the children and young people sector, and as such is a strong focus for both the EYC and for the Raising Attainment for All Programme (see earlier). In addition, SSSC has been consulting and working with the sector on leadership issues for many years. The Scottish College for Educational Leadership (SCEL) has recently been established, with an agreed reach of all teachers (and not just aspiring school leaders) and early years leaders and practitioners who hold the Childhood Practice Award. This could be timely in supporting further progress here for ELC and OSC.

Making the difference: *The impact of staff qualifications on children's learning in early years* (Education Scotland, 2012b) is one of the more recent reports looking at quality in the ELC workforce. This report considered 'the impact of staff qualifications in centres on the level of performance using the five quality indicators' (used by Education Scotland during inspections) in settings where they also 'noted whether the staff had a degree in education or in childcare' (p2). This report has been misunderstood by some, and reported as showing that the new BA Childhood Practice degree was producing practitioners delivering higher quality practice than teachers. The report, however, did not say this; instead, it explained that is was not possible to say anything specific about the impact of staff with different qualifications (qualified teachers degrees and/or BA Childhood Practice degrees/awards) and/or whether one or the other supported quality better.

The report explained that it was not possible to make true comparisons between centres which had staff with different degrees due to the low numbers in the sample and due to the fact that having a teacher present meant different things for different settings. Having a teacher could equate to a full-time teacher in the classroom or a peripatetic teacher. Peripatetic teachers supported settings for different amounts of time and in different ways. Some had direct contact with children while others did not. What it did confirm was that most ELC centres achieved satisfactory or above in all five Quality Indicators and that within these centres most had high percentages of either teachers or staff with BA Childhood Practice or both qualifications.

Taking the first steps: Is Childhood Practice working? (Davis et al., 2014) was commissioned by SSSC to consider how the BA Childhood Practice was being received and what impact it might be making. The report gave some very positive information about how the BA Childhood Practice was perceived by those who are currently studying for it or have studied it, including their increased confidence, leadership skills and sense of identity and professionalism. Unfortunately, it was unable to make comparisons between this qualification and any others and it did not consider children's outcomes as defined in the research literature.

The children's outcomes it considered were variable and included 'improved wellbeing and opportunities' (p6), 'things that change for the children and families' (p12) and '… service users and staff should determine outcomes' (p13) and finally outcomes that are defined by children 'that they aspire to be fulfilled by children's services' (p48). While these are all useful and important outcomes which fit well with current Scottish policy, this Review was tasked with the consideration of 'improved outcomes for children, help to reduce social inequality and close the attainment gap' (Terms of Reference for Review, p2) which were not considered in the report by Davis et al.

One very robustly designed research study which has considered quality and children's outcomes in the way defined in this Review and in the research literature was conducted by Growing Up in Scotland (GUS). In a large-scale ongoing longitudinal research project, GUS is tracking the lives of several cohorts of Scottish children from the early years, through childhood and beyond. *Growing Up In Scotland: Characteristics of pre-school provision and their association with child outcomes* (Scottish Government 2014c) collected data on children's outcomes (see Introduction and the indicators developed by DIG for CPPs) and combined those with administrative and inspection data provided by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. The combined information provided a detailed understanding of the characteristics of pre-school provision in Scotland and how it is experienced by children who live in different areas and have different social background characteristics. It is interesting to note here that the vast majority of 3

and 4 years olds entitled to free ELC are registered for it (98.5% Scottish Government statistical bulletin, 2014e).

This GUS report (Scottish Government 2014c) used some of the initial data collected in the longitudinal study to explore the association between the characteristics of the pre-school setting a child attended and their cognitive and social development between ages 3 and 5. There were a number of pertinent findings.

First, there remains a great deal of variation in pre-school settings in Scotland. 58% of parents reported that their child attended a local authority primary school nursery class, 20% attended another type of LA pre-school setting (such as a stand-alone nursery or family centre), 14% attended a private provider and 8% a voluntary provider. Such settings varied in size, age range catered for, but, most importantly, quality. Those children attending private settings were found to be significantly less likely to experience higher quality provision. Just 16% of children attending a private pre-school setting had a provider who scored five or six against all four Care Inspectorate quality themes – compared with 37% who attended a LA primary school nursery class.

Second, children with different socio-economic characteristics showed some small differences in the type of pre-school provision they attended and the number of hours for which they attended. For example, whilst nursery classes in LA primary schools were the dominant provider for children in all income groups, they were less likely to be attended by children in the highest income quintile

than by those in the lowest income quintile (67% compared with 47%). In contrast, use of private settings increased with income – just 7% of children from households in the lowest income group attended a private provider compared with 24% of children from households in the highest income group. These differences largely reflected the different childcare needs of couple families with both parents employed. Whilst differences in type were noted, no significant systematic differences in the quality of pre-school settings that more and less advantaged children attended were found.

GUS used subtests of the British Ability Scales Second Edition (BASII) to measure language development and problem-solving skills, and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (Goodman, 1997) to measure social, emotional and behavioural development. They found that children in more advantaged circumstances – whether measured by household income, parental level of education or socio-economic classification – had higher average cognitive ability on both measures at ages 3 and 5 than children in more disadvantaged circumstances.

While the vast majority of children were not reported to have any social, emotional or behavioural difficulties at ages 4, 5 and 6, they did find some links between the number of children reported to have moderate or severe difficulties and increasing levels of disadvantage. At the beginning of their statutory pre-school entitlement, on average, children who attended LA primary school nursery classes were more likely to have higher social development difficulties and lower cognitive ability than children who

attended private providers. This was, most likely, due to the increased number of children from more advantaged backgrounds attending private settings (Scottish Government, 2014c).

One very important finding for this Review was that the quality of the settings (as generically measured by the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland) did not appear to impact differently on children's social and cognitive development. That is, settings rated highly did not have a significantly different impact on children's cognitive or social development than those with mixed quality ratings. Also, those settings rated highly did not appear to be catering consistently for either children with better or poorer developmental status on entry.

This suggests that the overall quality ratings, as measured through inspections in Scotland, do not all link to quality which impacts on children's outcomes in terms of their socio-emotional and cognitive development. This is not a particularly surprising finding as Mathers et al. (2012) found very low correlations between Ofsted inspection ratings and Environmental Rating Scales scores which do show strong associations with children's outcomes (see research literature) in England.

It was only when GUS analysed the various pre-school characteristics individually (that is by type of provision, quality of provision, length of time the children attended the setting, size of the pre-school, previous attendance at an ELC setting) that one measure showed an impact. The Care Inspectorate's theme of 'Care and Support' was found to be

associated with improved children's outcomes. After 'controlling for differences in children's backgrounds, attending a pre-school setting with a higher care and support grade was statistically significantly associated with better vocabulary ability at age five. This association held after controlling for all other pre-school characteristics and differences in children's social background and demographic characteristics. This meant that children who attended providers with a higher care and support grade were more likely to show higher vocabulary skills by age five, irrespective of their skills at age three and their social characteristics. Furthermore, the positive effects of attending a provider with a higher care and support grade appeared to be similar for children with different social backgrounds and who attended different provider types. In other words, more disadvantaged children did not appear to benefit more from settings which had higher care and support scores and attending a private setting with a high care and support grade was not any more beneficial than attending a similarly graded primary school nursery class.' (Scottish Government. 2014c p7).

This separate analysis also suggested that the length of time that a child spent at an ELC setting did not have any significant impact on socio-emotional and cognitive development. See the research literature for a deeper discussion of this.

GUS concluded that if it is possible to measure characteristics associated with child outcomes, then it is also possible to make improvements here. They suggested that 'attending high quality pre-school provision will benefit children in terms of their vocabulary ability which may, in turn,

help reduce known socioeconomic inequalities in this and other developmental outcomes. However, it will not by itself eradicate these inequalities. As well as early childhood education and care, children's exposure to learning at home is important in helping them achieve better outcomes. Yet with almost universal attendance at statutory pre-school provision amongst eligible children in Scotland, these settings undoubtedly present an important opportunity to make a significant and long term difference to many children's lives.' (Scottish Government 2014c p7).

6.7. Conclusion

It has long been recognised that 'quality' is a contested term and that it means different things to different people (such as for children, parents, staff, local and national government). Further, it can be defined at different levels (such as at structural and system levels, or at process or programme levels). Views of quality and the perspectives taken will undoubtedly be reflected in the policy and culture within communities and countries. This section of the report outlined recent policy developments in Scotland in relation to ELC and the OSC sectors and this Review. It detailed the Scottish Government's plans and goals for improvement and their vision for supporting a consistent and co-ordinated approach to development. Finally, it considered the standards of quality and associated research.

Within their policies, the Scottish Government has a unifying view of child-centred services, social and pedagogical approaches, and gives guidance for practitioners, teachers, parents and allied services. As such, they illustrate Scotland's

particular view of quality for children and young people and the services offered to them. Consideration suggests that fundamental to their view of quality are children's rights and the respect given to those. Closely aligned to these is collaboration between professionals, parents/carers and the children and young people themselves.

The Scottish Government has aspirations to provide families with flexible high quality settings which support working parents/carers and provide for younger children, especially those considered in need. These aspects of quality relate strongly to the structures and systems available within the country and the views of quality often closely aligned to parents/carers – many of whom see flexibility and the length of time children spend in early learning and childcare as important so that they can work.

In Scotland, at the process or programme level, there is a great deal of value placed on approaches and experiences which demonstrate and promote children's rights and autonomy in a caring and supportive environment. It is through this set of values, principles and practices that, in Scotland, children's experiences and opportunities within their ELC and OSC settings are supported. More recent research points to the importance of intentional and relational pedagogies, both internationally and within Scotland, if children's learning and development and children's outcomes, in terms of their cognitive and social-emotional development, are to be enhanced.

While the responses from the Review suggested that the culture of children's

rights and collaborative and inclusive working is becoming embedded within Scotland, many practitioners and stakeholder institutions felt that, given this firm foundation, the time was right to focus on relational and intentional pedagogy. More recent policy (e.g. *Building the Ambition*, Scottish Government, 2014a) also suggests that, as Scotland moves into its next phase of improvement, a stronger focus on those aspects of pedagogy and practice known to impact on children's outcomes would be welcomed.

'Positive outcomes depend on the quality of relationships and interactions between young children and the adults caring for them, both within families and in settings outwith their home.'
(The Care Inspectorate, Response to the hub first call)

This direction, relating to pedagogy and practice known to impact on children's outcomes, is likely to be linked to the more practice based guidance policies as demonstrated by the *Building the Ambition* (Scottish Government, 2014a) framework and Education Scotland's work across Scotland as the primary providers of improvement; as well as to the development of appropriate qualifications and professional development, which are discussed in more detail in the section considering qualifications. This refocusing of activities, policies and services within ELC is a recurrent theme within this Review and is detailed in recommendation 8 below and 15. It is highlighted throughout.

Consideration of the recent research and in particular the GUS report (Scottish Government, 2014c) confirms this direction. The Care Inspectorate's Care

and Support theme, which was found to be associated with children's outcomes, focuses on the behaviours, interactions and experiences of the children within the settings. It allows for consideration of the individual child and how the setting is providing for their individual needs. In addition, the Care Inspectorate's inspections are underpinned by the National Care Standards (Donnelley, 2009) where the focus on interactions, understanding child development and assessing and planning for individual learning is very clear (see the section The Care Inspectorate). The Care Inspectorate are aware of the power of this particular theme as they always inspect against it even though they rotate other themes routinely.

Within the discussions and focus groups, and also in responses to the hub, over half the respondents suggested that a strong focus within the workforces should be early years pedagogy.

'Greater emphasis on early learning and the accompanying pedagogy would be useful and a greater focus on the nature of genuine multi-agency working as set out by the GIRFEC agenda would be welcome.' (GTCS response to the hub first call)

'We believe, as we have stated, that greater depth and less diversity in skill sets should characterise the early years workforce. Deployment should, however, include direct work with children, engagement with and support for parents, offering a range of effective developmental and learning experiences, and paying specific attention to closing the attainment and development gap for the poorest and most vulnerable children.' (An early years network in Scotland response to first call for evidence)

Recommendation

8) There is a strong feeling within Scotland that the focus should be on early learning as well as childcare, and that the specific skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge necessary to support early years professionals in improving children's learning and development leading to enhanced children's outcomes within this age group 0-6 are not overlooked.

Include aspects of the Care and Support theme used by the Care Inspectorate (which links to the National Care Standards, 2009) in future inspections as well as in education, training and all qualifications designed to improve quality.

7. Scotland's curricula, guidance frameworks and registration processes

In this section, consideration is given to current guidance and curricula frameworks towards which the ELC workforce and the OSC workforce is working. The professional standards and registration process across both workforces are then outlined and discussed, together with key issues and challenges.

7.1. ELC and OSC frameworks supporting practice

Scotland has produced a number of important practice guidance frameworks for ELC and OSC in Scotland. These have included *School's Out: Framework for the Development of Out-of-School Care* (Scottish Executive, 2003), *Pre-Birth to Three* (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010) and the *Early Level (ages 3-6) of Curriculum for Excellence 3–18* (Education Scotland, 2015b) and, more recently, *Building The Ambition* (Scottish Government, 2014a), which was designed to build on earlier frameworks, support the policy direction of ELC as contained in the Children and Young People Act (Scotland) 2014, and give further information and practical guidance on the experiences and interactions necessary to support children's development from birth until entry to school.

The School's Out Framework (2003) for the development of OSC is not like the other frameworks included in this section which typically concentrate on ensuring high quality practice within early years settings and look specifically at aspects of the curriculum/activities and the adult's role in supporting learning and development. In terms of guidance for good practice, it includes case studies and children and young people's views on what they believe good OSC settings provide. It also considers OSC across Scotland, celebrating what was there at the time and promoting high quality settings as supporting children and families. Finally, it identifies needs and future directions: in particular, it points towards the need to ensure that vulnerable high quality OSC settings are supported to stay open, and it recognises the need for more settings suitable for older children (from 11 to 14 years), as well as the need for more settings suitable for supporting children in need and with additional support needs. While more up-to-date information is available (e.g. Scottish Out of School Care Network, 2013; and *The Play Strategy*, Scottish Government, 2013) a document looking specifically at quality practices in OSC might be useful to support Scotland's vision.

Recommendation

9) Further develop the evidence base of high quality practice relating to the OSC workforce within Scotland, including the production of an up-to-date version of the *Schools Out* (2003) Framework, which offers further guidance on effective practice.

Pre-Birth to Three, Positive Outcomes for Children and Families (Learning and Teaching Scotland, 2010) is based on four principles of practice: the rights of the child; relationships; responsive care; and respect. This evidence-based framework gives practitioners guidance on aspects of practice such as the role of the adult, attachments, transitions; observation assessment and planning; partnership working; health and wellbeing; literacy and numeracy; environments and play. It is supported by web-based information designed to illustrate and support high quality practice with babies and young children. It is designed to link to, and underpin, the early level of the Curriculum for Excellence.

The guidance for the early level of the Curriculum for Excellence spans from three years until the end of primary 1 – the first year of school. It is designed in this way to promote continuity and progression of learning across ELC and the school sector. This framework promotes: the importance of active experiential learning; a holistic approach to learning; smooth transitions; and learning through play. Both the *Pre-Birth to Three, Positive Outcomes for Children and Families* and the early level Curriculum for Excellence frameworks would provide an excellent foundation for young children's learning and development if they were implemented as intended.

Building the Ambition (Scottish Government, 2014a) gives insight into the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, unpicking and explaining Scotland's vision and some of the new terminology and service directions. It explains recent key changes in policy and legislation, outlines recent research, and shares and defines

important aspects of practice – including what is meant by play, attachment, pedagogy and quality. It also supports practice and pedagogy through its descriptions of the key developmental characteristics of babies, toddlers and young children – and the experiences, adults and environments that would support them. It looks particularly at experiences, adult roles and environments in relation to play and learning – and across the developmental areas of 1) wellbeing, 2) communication and 3) curiosity, inquiry and creativity.

7.2. Using policy to build understanding, a united identity and support professionalisation

Before moving away from discussions regarding current guidance frameworks within Scotland, it is important to discuss the term ELC. The change in terminology and introduction of the unique term ELC reflects the commitment in Scotland to changing and improving both attitudes towards ELC, and the conditions under which it operates. *Building the Ambition* (Scottish Government, 2014a) outlined the rationale for the new term ELC.

This included: first, the idea of removing the artificial dichotomy between education and care; 'most staff working with young children would not see themselves as purely offering "pre-school education" without offering "childcare" and vice versa' (p9); second, the removal of the practice of seeing education as provided only for a short period within full day care or sessions longer than two and a half hours to ensure 'the same high quality interactions and experiences throughout the sessions' (p9); third, the removal of the historical link with the term pre-school

education and the view that this refers only to the year before the child enters primary school; fourth, to extend the term 'childcare' so that it no longer equated purely with dealing with physical needs such as washing, feeding, nurturing.

ELC is, therefore, a much broader term which suggests that learning and childcare are indivisible and should be seamless. Problems around the understanding of what constitutes early education and care are not exclusive to Scotland, indeed it mirrors the journeys of many other European countries (see OECD, 2006) which have chosen to use the term Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC).

The term ELC workforce signifies a move away from some of the older terms such as 'minding', 'nursing' and 'care' which suggest a one way relationship between adult and child. Interestingly, in their responses to the second call for evidence on the consultation hub, many childminders commented on how they were perceived by the general public and felt that their name could be misleading. A large number (21/25) felt that they were not recognised for the quality or professionalism of the service they provided. Only 4/25 alluded to any recent changes in attitudes towards them, and they suggested that such changes were due to the hard work of services such as SCMA, the Care Inspectorate and the Scottish Government.

Over half of the childminders, however, used the term 'babysitter', or a variant thereof, to describe the way that the general public perceived their role. A few suggested that an appropriate alternative name for them might be 'early childhood educators', but none included the term ELC in their hub responses. Similarly, the OSC workforce still appeared to see themselves as separate from, and different to, their early years colleagues. They also suggested that their professionalism was not recognised by the general public. A slightly different and more optimistic view was found among the staff working within early years centre provision, where several felt there had been a recent shift in understanding by the parents/carers with whom they worked. They attributed this to the qualifications they had achieved, with the BA Childhood Practice being cited by many. Clearly this term is part of a new language for Scotland, and Scotland is still in a transitional stage and will need time for it to embed.

Defining and discussing ELC is important, as the myth that anyone can care for children and support their learning and development needs dispelling. Such discussion could support a move away from the historically inaccurate view of young children's learning being solely the responsibility of their parents/carers and seen merely as the natural 'work' of their mothers/carers (see research literature). This misunderstanding of the vital role that highly qualified experienced and knowledgeable ELC and OSC practitioners can play in supporting and extending children's learning and development, and closing the gap of disadvantage, is not necessarily confined to the general public. While they were in the minority, a few childminders and OSC workers did not necessarily recognise or value their contribution to children's learning and development. See below:

'OSC is neither educational nor a Social Work environment striving towards outcomes. It is simply a place where children are safe and should be able to

switch off from the pressures of the day and have fun.'

(OSC practitioner's response to the second call for evidence)

While others recognized the fundamental differences between an OSC environment and a school or early years centre, they also recognised that children can and do learn in safe unpressurised environments while they are having fun, and saw this as an important part of their role.

Generally, a number of practitioners and stakeholder institutions suggested that there should be greater understanding of the valuable impact ELC and OSC could have:

'Further work is required to communicate the pivotal role of the Early Years workforce and the impact that early education "in the round" has on the life chances of young people. There is a requirement to educate further the full range of stakeholders regarding the contribution made by Early Years staff to the health, wellbeing, learning and life chances of the future nation'
(GTCS response to the first call for evidence).

Recommendation

10) Further discussion at a national level of, and strategic professional development around, the term ELC to support the understanding of the importance of highly qualified, knowledgeable and effective ELC and OSC practitioners.

Some other responses to the hub and discussions suggested that some of the key stakeholders, for example, some primary head teachers, were also not aware of the value of ELC and also possibly did not understand what effective ELC practice should look like. On occasion, this led to them mistakenly imposing formal and didactic approaches to the teaching and learning of their youngest children within their schools. This is especially concerning where primary schools have nursery classes, but is relevant to all primary schools as they all include primary 1 classes.

Further, staff working within ELC in some primary schools were not afforded the same opportunities of promotion or career progression as the other staff. While this did appear to be a genuine issue, it is worth noting that there were also exceptions where Head Teachers celebrated the work of their nursery staff, and the teachers working in ELC were promoted, for example to depute roles, in the hope that the pedagogy and practice within early years would spread across the school.

'Teachers or Head Teachers with a responsibility for early years, need to have the experience of working in this holistic way, with the child at the centre to ensure that their practice is appropriate for early years settings. The early years need to be managed by someone with the direct experience of good practice in the classroom within the early years. This has a huge impact on all staff working within an establishment, and the depth of knowledge needed to develop the practice.' (Head Teacher response to first call)

Recommendation

11) Design and deliver compulsory training for primary head teachers on why ELC is important for Scotland's future, what effective early years pedagogy and practice looks like, and how this sets the foundations for future learning for Curriculum for Excellence.

7.3. The ELC and OSC workforces

Consideration of the international literature shows that there is some confusion generally over terminology when discussing the adults who care for children other than their parents/main carers. There are both informal and formal childcare arrangements which parents/main carers use to support them into work and/or for respite or to allow them to pursue leisure activities. The term ELC was coined as a way of supporting the professionalisation of the formal workforce and forging a group identity (Scottish Government, 2014b). The term ELC includes all of the adults working within local authority settings, nursery schools and classes as well as third sector settings.

The last National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce (Scottish Executive, 2006), defined the ELC workforce as those working in early learning and childcare, out of school and play work and childminders (they did not include qualified early years teachers in their Review but they did recognise them as part of the workforce). This section of the report will consider these members of the workforce and the processes of registration (including the professional standards they need to achieve) which allow them to work within their respective workplaces.

7.4. Registration with SSSC

In Scotland, there has been recognition in recent years of the importance of standardising and establishing a clear career, including having a registration process with associated qualifications and training pathways, for ELC and OSC workers. In particular, this has led to the establishment of a regulatory body which could oversee and support the workforce. The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) was created in 2001 under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 by the Scottish Executive with a remit of protecting service users, raising standards, and strengthening and supporting the professionalisation of the workforce. They work towards the following principles:

- Promote high standards of conduct and practice among social service workers and their education and training

- Maintain a register of social workers, social service workers and social work students

- Remove people from the SSSC register

- Approve a variety of courses for people who wish to work in the social services sector

- Provide grants and allowances for social service workers' training

SSSC produces the Code of Practice for Social Service workers and employers. The Code of Practice was developed together with their relevant partners in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. They opened their register of Social Service Workers (Register) in 2003 which now includes the following:

- Social work students

- Care Inspectorate officers

- Workers in residential child care services

- Managers in adult day care services

- Workers in care homes services for adults

- Workers in day care of children's services

- Workers in school hostels, residential special schools and independent boarding schools

- Workers in housing support service

- Workers in care at home services (SSSC, 2014)

Currently, over 189,000 people are working in the social service sector – with 88,000 registered. As the list above details, this includes people working in social work, social care and a number of different settings, including those working in care home services for adults, children and young people; those working with adults, children and young people in their own communities; and those working in out of school clubs or early years settings such as nurseries. ELC and OSC workers are registered under the section: workers in day care of children's services, which currently includes around 30,000 people and excludes qualified teachers (see section on qualified teachers) and childminders (see section on Care Inspectorate). Childminders are individually registered with, and inspected by, the Care Inspectorate and not the SSSC. They are seen, however, as an important part of the ELC workforce and were included in the National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce (Scottish Executive, 2006), the results of which had far reaching effects on policy in Scotland.

The National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce (Scottish Executive, 2006) recommended the implementation

of a roles and responsibilities framework for all early years staff (except teachers and childminders) and OSC workers. This framework identified three levels of worker and their associated roles within their setting: support worker, practitioner and lead practitioner/manager of service. Each of these roles and levels were linked to the registration processes conducted by Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

'Support workers are workers who have delegated responsibility for providing care and support to children.

'Practitioners are workers who identify and meet the care, support and learning needs of children and contribute to the development and quality assurance of informal learning activities and/or curriculum. They may also be responsible for the supervision of other workers.

'Managers/lead practitioners are workers who hold responsibilities for the overall development, management and quality assurance of service provision including the supervision of staff and the management of resources.'
(Donnelley, 2009 p42)

The defined roles were generic across the early years and OSC workforces, each with accompanying knowledge and skills which would be developed through the appropriate set of qualifications. These roles were then aligned to the The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), which is explored in more detail in the section considering qualifications. Workers at each level are expected to gain the appropriate qualifications or be working towards them in order to satisfy registration. So support workers are

expected to achieve a qualification at SCQF Level 6 (SVQ2); practitioners are expected to achieve appropriate qualifications at SCQF Level 7 (SVQ3/HNC); and managers/ lead practitioners at SCQF Level 9 (an ordinary degree or work-based equivalent).

The SSSC also undertakes the functions of the Sector Skills Council, Skills for Care and Development, which includes workforce planning and development with employers for other groups of workers, including childminders. This national body has an important role in ensuring the regulation, training and education of the early years workforce and seeks to promote continued education and training. Given that SSSC has this important role in the training and education of childminders, it seems unusual that they do not register them.

7.5. The Standard for Childhood Practice

The Scottish subject benchmark statement, The Standard for Childhood Practice (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007) outlined the skills, knowledge etc. identified as being vital for the manager/lead practitioner role, when working with children aged birth to 16 years in a wide age range of different settings. It was designed to act as a benchmark for the qualifications that were subsequently developed within higher education and that would entitle a practitioner to register as a manager/lead practitioner with SSSC.

As a result, it needed to reflect a large number of different standards:

- The National Occupational Standards for Children's Care, Learning and Development

- The National Occupational Standards for Playwork

- The Roles and Responsibilities Framework developed as part of the National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce in Scotland
- The Early Years Professional National Standards of the Children's Workforce Development Council
- The National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care
- The National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership

  (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007, p4)

In addition, the Standard for Childhood Practice sat within a policy context and was linked to other strategic developments across the Scottish Government including *National Priorities in Education; A Curriculum for Excellence; A Smart, Successful Scotland; Closing the Opportunity Gap;* and C*hoosing our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy.*

The Standard for Childhood Practice followed a similar pattern to the professional standards developed for teachers and social workers, and comprised a set of attributes and capabilities divided into the three elements of: Professional Values and Personal Commitment; Personal Knowledge and Understanding; and Professional Skills and Abilities. Then, within each of these, there were expected features which clarified and illustrated aspects of the learner's performance that the programme/qualification should be designed to achieve. The Standard for Childhood Practice was necessarily generic in its approach and coverage due to the age

range and diversity of settings for which it was designed.

In the *National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce*, there was discussion around developing a 'pedagogue' role, someone who may be able to work with children and adults across a range of settings including in the early years and with school aged children. Such a person would be able to 'work with the whole child with the emphasis on living beside children and working through situations and relationships, recognising that learning and care are inseparable. Their work is based around children's upbringing; how children develop their identity and relationships as part of their community and wider society' (Scottish Executive, 2006, p50).

While this may support collaboration, understanding of differing roles across the children and young people sector, and the retention of qualified staff, it is interesting to note that the practitioners appeared to identify strongly with what they perceived as their own workforces (Out of School Care, childminders and early years practitioners) in the Review. While there were many common skills identified as important for them, they also identified their own particular expertise, challenges and needs (see section on qualifications).

Analysis of the Standard for Childhood Practice suggests that the values and commitment aspects of the Standard would be appropriate for all caring professions; and the emphasis on children and young people's rights, including the importance of giving them a voice, the collaborative working, the depth of reflection and the skills of evaluation would no doubt be

valuable for all sectors working with children and young people. In addition, the Standard contains elements identified within the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Donnelley, 2009) and drawn from the discourse on effective early years pedagogy in the research literature (see the section What does the Scottish and International Research literature reveal about supporting young children's learning? and OECD, 2012; Scottish Government 2014c).

Those features of process quality and effective pedagogy which research suggests will have a direct impact on children's learning outcomes, and which support practitioners in engaging children in meaningful activities that could promote their conceptual understanding in language, early literacy, early numeracy and early science and exploration and constructing positive adult-child relationships, are also present. The Standard for Childhood Practice is extensive and covers both generic and specific aspects (including 24 main elements, each with between four and eight expected features). While this is a strength, the sheer number of attributes and capabilities may lead some people to focus on some elements more than others (see the section Current degree level qualifications).

The Standard for Childhood Practice was designed specifically to inform qualifications at SCQF Level 9 and degree level practitioners. It is, however, also the Standard that all providers of qualifications within ELC and OSC look towards to ensure that their qualifications

are fit for purpose. Earlier qualifications need to evidence how they map into the Standard for Childhood Practice if they are to be acknowledged as prior learning credit for the BA Childhood Practice/PDA Level 9. It would therefore be useful to give some additional guidance, standards or benchmarks which are specifically suited to earlier levels of qualifications.

Early Years Scotland suggested while discussing the Standard for Childhood Practice 'Early Years Scotland considers this (benchmark) model to be effective and would suggest that a similar approach is taken to identifying and agreeing a benchmark statement for Level 7. This would clearly need to be developed in line with the national occupational standards (NOS)' (Early Years Scotland response to the first call for evidence).

Recommendation

12) SSSC, in collaboration with associate bodies and other stakeholders, to develop standards for/guidance on the core skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge that would be appropriate for 'practitioner' and 'support worker' roles within the ELC and OSC workforces to achieve.

7.6. Registration with Care Inspectorate

While childminders were included within the 2006 review, discussed above, and the roles and linked qualifications were deemed to be appropriate for them to follow, there was also recognition of their unique position. Childminders are often the sole worker in their setting and, as such, may take on all the roles (manager/lead practitioner, practitioner and support worker) at some point. It is also perhaps more difficult for them to attend training and education and to study for qualifications as sole workers. They were, therefore, not required to gain the qualifications allied to the roles for registration purposes or to register with SSSC.

Currently, childminders are registered with the Care Inspectorate and are inspected by the Care Inspectorate using an inspection process adapted from those used for other ELC and OSC settings. As such, childminders do not have any requirements to undertake qualifications in order to register, and are not even required to undertake a short initial training – as is typically the case in other countries (OECD, 2012). Interestingly, reduced requirements for childminders are a problem for many countries (OECD, 2012). This anomaly across ELC and OSC within Scotland may lead to some fragmentation of the workforce and to a more diverse workforce in terms of quality.

The need for change is recognised by the childminders themselves, and by SCMA and their members, who advocate making induction or pre-registration training a requirement for registration. This current lack of training could be a particular concern in Scotland as choice of childcare is limited mostly to childminders in more rural areas, with very few OSC settings. Also, the demand for childminders is likely to increase when entitlements to childcare are increased, with childminders more likely to offer services to the youngest and most vulnerable children in Scotland.

In childminders' responses to the second call for evidence on the government hub, concern was raised about the importance of initial training. There were a considerable number of childminders, especially amongst those who had qualifications themselves or who were studying for them, who suggested that adequate training was important for high quality services. In addition, several suggested that pre-registration training should be compulsory and cover all aspects of the work. They felt this would

support commitment to, and an understanding of, the role as well as supporting high standards. Interestingly, SCMA report that those childminders who attended induction training are also more likely to attend follow-on training in the future.

Further, several childminders suggested that they would welcome the opportunity to register with SSSC, as they felt this would support their professionalism and give some recognition for the qualifications they had undertaken. See below:

'Childminders who have achieved SVQ 2/3 or above being able to register with SSSC so that they are recognised as a valued member of the early years workforce therefore opening up pathways within early years.' (Childminder, response to the second call for evidence)

And although these childminders specifically talked about the wish to receive recognition from the Government, their sentiments were similar. See below:

'It would be wonderful if the good work we do could be recognised by the Government.' (Childminder, response to the first call for evidence)

'...would like to see government value the professionalism and the care and commitment given by childminders.' (Childminder, response to the second call for evidence)

This evidence suggests that further consideration of the unifying definition of the ELC profession and associated roles and responsibilities framework may be useful, to further promote the integration of the workforce and ensure the inclusion of all staff.

Recommendation

13) Make induction or pre-registration training a requirement for registration to provide a childminding service under the Public Services Reform Act.

14) Include childminders on the same register with the same conditions as the majority of the ELC workforce (i.e. with SSSC), particularly community childminders; those commissioned to deliver the funded hours of ELC; and those providing specialist high quality services, and invest in and build upon these services.

7.7. Registration with the General Teaching Council (GTCS)

The General Teaching Council Scotland (GTCS) is the registration body for teachers in Scotland and was established in 1965 under the Teaching Council (Scotland) Act 1965. It became independent in 2012 and was the first independent professional regulatory body for teachers. It sets the Guidelines for Programmes of Initial Teacher Education in Scotland (GTCS, 2013), accredits all initial teacher education courses in Scotland and sets the standard for Provisional Registration (GTCS, 2012). The GTCS also sets the standard for full registration (GTCS, 2012) which is awarded to newly qualified teachers who have successfully completed a period of probation. Currently, every successful initial teacher education graduate is offered a guaranteed year of teaching in which to achieve the Standard for Full Registration (GTCS, 2012).

7.8. The Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR) and The Standard for Full Registration (SFR)

The Standard for Provisional Registration (SPR) is the Standard which every student successfully completing a programme of Initial Teacher Education in a university in Scotland must meet in order to function as a Probationer teacher. It is strongly influenced by the Scottish cultural and social policy context. Like the Standard for Childhood Practice, it is subdivided into Professional Knowledge and Understanding; Professional Skills and Abilities and Professional Values and Personal Commitment. It is underpinned by the values associated with the rights of the child, and with collaborative working with colleagues, other agencies and with various members of the community. It also promotes a strong commitment to career-long professional learning and reflective teaching. In addition, there is a strong focus on the curriculum, communication, assessment, planning and progression. These areas and themes are also found in the Standard for Full Registration (SFR) for Teachers in Scotland.

Consideration of the SPR and SFR reveals that they cover similar ground to the Standard for Childhood Practice, but with a particular focus on aspects considered important to enhance children's learning and developments identified and discussed in the research literature. Across Scotland, however, there has been a move away from employing teachers in ELC on a full-time basis, and it is no longer enshrined in law that children who are not yet of mandatory school age need to have access to a teacher on a day-to-day basis. Given this move, it is important that the Scottish Government ensures this focus is still present within ELC settings (see section on Qualifications).

As discussed earlier, there is a recurrent theme within this Review and a real concern that the specific skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge necessary to support and enhance children's learning and development within this age group birth-6 is being overlooked. Many responses and discussions have included the notion of re-focusing within ELC to early learning and development (see recommendation 8). It is therefore of concern that numbers of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers are reducing.

Several responses to the hub and discussions within the Review pointed to the reduction in teachers and offered some possible reasons.

'...the workforce includes a diminishing number of teachers, linked to the cost of teachers and the Scottish Government devolving responsibility for deciding whether children have teacher contact time to local authorities'
(Early Years Network response to first call)

They also made connections to the inflexibility of working conditions which would become even more evident if the entitlements to ELC are increased – in line with the Scottish Government's pledge to significantly increase funded provision in future.

While discussing the reduction in teachers, the Early Years Network suggested this may be '...possibly because the 600 hours, no longer fits with teacher contracts.' (Early Years Network response to the hub second call)

And COSLA also noted the importance of flexibility:

'COSLA believes that to ensure those outcomes are achieved for all children, it is vital to have a suitably qualified mixed workforce. Moreover, we have always held the view that flexibility is vital and it is the responsibility of councils to decide the most appropriate mix of staff for early years settings and who to employ in order to achieve positive outcomes for children in their council areas.'
(COSLA initial response to the call for evidence)

They pointed to the importance of a suitably qualified mixed workforce which

is also discussed in the research literature. With regards to the mixed workforce, one member of the Core Reference Group during the development of the Review, considered the unique and important role teachers play within ELC: 'if we lose the single professional that bridges pre-school and school (the GTCS registered teacher) we may find a separation of the early childhood sector from the school sector, and this is at a time when in Scotland we at last have a curriculum that spans the sectors... we have the potential for continuity and risk losing it. Transitions research shows the strengths of tightly coupled systems for improved child outcomes'.

There appears to be some tension here, as teachers' registration, pay and conditions are very different to other staff working within the ELC sector. On occasion, the Review discussed these tensions with teachers – and many of the responses to the hub also touched upon this debate. Existing teachers in the workforce were particularly concerned about their current and reducing numbers and status within ELC. Interestingly, some teachers appeared open to flexible working conditions, while others felt strongly that the national agreement was part of their professional teacher identity and entitlement.

However, discussion with relevant bodies and the teachers themselves made it clear that many teachers working in the Scottish educational system already have different terms and conditions to the majority of teachers.

An open debate here, including a discussion on the flexibility in working conditions, seems important if teachers are to remain working in ELC with daily contact with the children and families/carers.

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> **Recommendation**
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> 15) Support and develop the role of appropriately qualified teachers working within ELC settings, moving their professional relationships with the rest of the ELC in positive directions. If the role of the teacher working face-to-face with children under 5 years is to continue, there will need to be additional agreements regarding flexibility of working conditions (so that they suit working conditions in settings which are not schools) and better career opportunities and progression.
>
> Scottish Government to take the lead in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT), and begin discussions and debate around teachers working in ELC.

7.9. Conclusion

While it does appear to be an anomaly for members of the same workforce to be registered by different bodies, especially when collaboration and the professionalisation of the workforce are considered, it reflects the different backgrounds of the staff and their training. Registration is closely linked to the professional standards of the role, and to other practical aspects such as pay and conditions of service. While, ideally, staff working together in ELC and OSC establishments should be brought together to promote collaboration and to provide a unified and flexible service for the children and families they serve this is not always possible or desirable.

The Review did not want to suggest a change that would disadvantage staff and a large part of the process was dedicated to listening to the staff themselves. This is why the suggestions for the two groups of staff whose registration processes are different to the majority of the workforce, who are registered with SSSC, are different. While childminders themselves called for a change, the teachers did not. In addition, it is clear that aspects of practice which cause concern, such as inflexibility in working conditions for qualified teachers, can be negotiated separately to registration. Whereas, registration with a large organisation, such as SSSC, who supports qualification development and champions the people registered with them – recognising their professionalism, lobbying for better pay and conditions and so on – could support childminders.

8. Standards and monitoring processes in Scotland

In this section, the monitoring or inspection processes for ELC and OSC settings within Scotland are discussed, together with the Standards that underpin those processes. Only the main underpinning Standards are discussed, as the other professional Standards, benchmarks and wider policy context and frameworks within Scotland are outlined in other sections of the Report – although these will, of course, also impact on the inspection processes.

8.1. Inspections within ELC and OSC

ELC currently has two inspection systems and institutions: The Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. They focus on different people working within ELC and on different aspects of provision. The Care Inspectorate's inspections are underpinned by the National Care Standards (Donnelly, 2009) and Education Scotland's by the National Quality Indicators from Child at the Centre 2 (HMIE 2007b).

8.2. The Care Inspectorate

The Care Inspectorate regulates a wide range of services which provide early learning and childcare, including local authority and private nurseries, playgroups, childminders, childcare agencies, OSC and children/family centres. Any service that cares for children for more than two hours per day and five days per year is regulated by the Care Inspectorate. In 2012, 10,099 childcare services registered with them (Childcare Statistics, 2013).

The Care Inspectors look at how ELC and OSC services support the health and wellbeing of children through regulation and supported improvement activities.

Their functions include registration, inspection, investigation of complaints and taking enforcement action where required in terms of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010, Scottish Statutory Instruments and the National Care Standards for Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (Donnelley, 2009). The Standards set out that children and young people should: receive support and care from staff who are competent and confident and have gone through a careful selection procedure (Standard 12); be confident that the service will evaluate what it does and make improvements (Standard 13); and be confident that the service is well-managed and demonstrates effective leadership (Standard 14). These input Standards are inspected against the outcomes for children and the difference that makes to their learning and care experience.

As indicated earlier, the National Care Standards: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16 (last revised by Donnelley, 2009) are wide reaching and comprehensive. They cover important universal skills, attributes, dispositions and knowledge which are important for all staff working within this age range; they also focus on aspects which link to the evidence base of high quality ECEC (see International and Scottish research literature). The attributes in standard 4 (overleaf) seem particularly pertinent to this Review, and they were highlighted by the majority of responses to the questionnaires, and during focus group discussions, as essential for both ELC and OSC workforces.

Engaging young children Standard 4

Each child or young person will be supported by staff who interact effectively and enthusiastically with him or her.

1 You can expect staff to have a good understanding of the stages of children and young people's development and learning.

2 Children and young people receive support and care from staff who understand the significance of high quality interaction. This develops the quality of all activities, including play and leisure.

3 You can be confident that staff will interact with children and young people in a way that builds confidence, extends learning and encourages and values their contributions.

4 You can be confident that the staff will:

- Regularly assess the development and learning of each child and young person

- Use this assessment information to plan the next steps in the child or young person's development and learning

- Share this information with the child or young person and, as appropriate, with parents and carers and others professionally involved in the child or young person's development

(Donnelley, 2009, p16)

The Care Inspectorate have a strong focus on understanding the experiences of children and families, and the ways in which the practitioners/teachers can improve outcomes for them based on their rights, needs and choices. They inspect the settings using four themes:

- Quality of Care & Support
- Quality of Environment
- Quality of Staffing
- Quality of Management & Leadership

It is interesting to note the link between the Care and Support theme to children's outcomes discussed in more detail in Quality and Outcomes section found by the recent Growing Up in Scotland study (Scottish Government, 2014c).

The Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (Requirements for Care Services) Regulations 2011 (regulation 4) sets out that a provider must 'make proper provision for the health, welfare and safety of service users'. The regulations also state that a provider 'must ensure that at all times suitably qualified and competent persons are working in the care service and receive training appropriate to the work they are to perform' (SSI 210 regulation 9).

As well as registering, inspecting and grading these services, the Care Inspectorate have a duty to investigate complaints and take enforcement action when there is a serious risk to children's health and wellbeing. Enforcement action can be a condition notice, improvement notice or emergency cancellation. They also have an important role in helping to support improvement in services – giving advice, signposting good practice and highlighting services that they grade as 'excellent' during inspections. In addition, they have recently launched an online resource called The Hub, which provides 'one-stop-shop' access to a range of resources to support improvement through using and sharing intelligence and research-led practice.

Between April 2013 and 31st March 2014, the Care Inspectorate inspected 1,902 day care of children services. This represented 50.5% of the services registered with them on 31st March 2014. In the same period, they inspected 1,746 childminders – which represented 28.5% of the services registered. They also investigated 353 complaints against day care of children services and 168 against childminders.

Finally, it is important to note that the current National Care Standards (2009) (which inform inspections and qualifications) are under review. The international and Scottish research evidence, and the research detailed in the Quality and Outcomes section of this report, suggest that the level of detail re the pedagogy of learning and teaching and in particular section 4 of the current National Care Standards should be retained if the aspirations of supporting children's outcomes (in terms of their social, emotional and cognitive development) through the quality of ELC settings is to be realised.

Many practitioners' responses to the hub showed that they recognised the importance of a true understanding of early years pedagogy and practice as indicated earlier as well as below:

'Staff need support within their teams for reflection and discussion of pedagogy, staff with a deep understanding of the pedagogy and the critical higher order thinking skills to truly support their colleagues.'
(ELC practitioner response to the second call for evidence)

'Provide support and guidance within the workplace and time for reflection, planning and preparation. Value the early years' pedagogy and ensure new developments come from this understanding.'
(Teacher in ELC response to the second call for evidence)

It was also considered fundamental to quality by many stakeholder institutions. Early Years Scotland described the following content as important to include in qualifications and professional development:

'The content would be evidence-based and informed by local and national needs and policy priorities, including a stronger focus on areas such as: prevention and early intervention, pedagogical approaches, bonding and attachment, parental involvement and engagement, Curriculum for Excellence, GIRFEC, Early Years Collaborative improvement methodology, The Children and Young People Act, the role of technology, language and literacy, pre-birth to three, brain development. and so forth…The key skills, values, knowledge and experience could connect theory and practice clearly and meaningfully so that learners see and understand the relevance for the role.'
(Early Years Scotland's response to the first call for evidence)

Others called for a change in focus to ensure that aspects of early years teaching and learning were not lost, as they felt the emphasis had been more general and emphasised aspects of practice such as management rather than pedagogy.

'It may be time to redress this balance by focusing much more specifically and explicitly on pedagogy and the critical role of the practitioner and how they plan, scaffold, interact, promote shared thinking and learning, encourage and support parental engagement and involvement, observe, record, assess, evaluate and so forth.'
(University provider response to the first call)

Recommendation

16) This recommendation relates to Recommendation 8 and the recurrent theme within Scotland of concern about a lack of focus on supporting the learning and development of young children. The recent Growing Up in Scotland report (Scottish Government 2014c) showed links between the Care and Support theme used within Care Inspections and children's outcomes. Analysis of the standards underpinning those inspections highlighted the content of section 4 of the current National Care Standards (2009) as fundamental to the Care and Support theme.

Retain the content of section 4 during any revision to the National Care Standards.

8.3. Education Scotland

In February 2011, the Scottish Government formed Education Scotland, a new national body designed to support quality and improvement in Scottish Education. It brought together Learning and Teaching Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), the National Continuing Professional Development Team and Scottish Government's Positive Behaviour Team. Education Scotland's remit includes:

- Leading and supporting successful implementation of the curriculum

- Building the capacity of educational providers and practitioner to improve their own performance

- Promoting high quality professional learning and leadership

- Stimulating creativity and innovation

- Providing independent evaluation of the quality of educational programmes

- Providing evidence based advice to inform national policy

Within the ELC sector, Education Scotland inspects private, voluntary and local authority provisions. Local authority provisions include primary schools with nursery classes.

Education Scotland evaluate settings against five quality indicators (QIs) linked to the Child at the Centre used by HMI during inspections (HMIE, 2007b)
The quality indicators (QIs) are:

- Improvements in performance

- Learners experiences

- Meeting learning needs

- The curriculum

- Improvement through self-evaluation

Each QI can be graded as: unsatisfactory; weak; satisfactory; good; very good; or excellent.

The Child at the Centre 2 framework is a guide to self-evaluation for ECEC settings, and its core quality indicators are used during the inspection process to evaluate the settings and schools. It both supports the process of self-evaluation and provides a framework of quality indicators against which settings can judge their progress and plan for improvement. The framework of quality indicators is focused on ECEC and is comprehensive. It covers the statutory requirements and duties of ECEC settings, aspects of health, safety and wellbeing for children, partnership with parents, aspects of leadership and management, development of policy and planning – together with one section (section 5) dedicated to the provision of early education. Education Scotland supports this self-evaluation process in a number of ways including offering training, seconding staff on a rolling basis to act as associate assessors, and publishing a website which provides information, video clips and opportunities to share experiences and projects.

Conducting inspections is only one aspect of Education Scotland's role. Education Scotland has a very wide improvement brief and feeds into the national policy direction, yet, annually conduct a very limited number of inspections. Between September 2013 and June 2014 it undertook 189 inspections. This is a small percentage of the ELC settings providing education – which in September 2014 was estimated to be 2,449 centres (Scottish Government, 2014f). The settings inspected were chosen using a stratified

random sample process which is linked to the National Performance Framework. Previously, settings which achieved a positive inspection were not revisited by Education Scotland, but, more recently, 8–10 % are revisited in an 'impact' visit about one year after the inspection to ascertain improvements made as a result of inspection and the difference this has made to the children and their families.

The improvement strand of Education Scotland is currently supporting CPPs and staff to enhance their pedagogical skills.

8.4. Shared Inspections

Previous to August 2013, an ELC setting could be inspected by both organisations separately. Now, however, they visit together and complete a shared inspection. The aim is to provide a more coherent set of messages for the setting and stakeholders. This approach is being developed to minimise unnecessary scrutiny and provide external assurance to stakeholders about the quality of provision and information about what they need to do to improve. It has not yet been evaluated in terms of how effective its use of time and resources is.

Reconsidering the current inspection process may help to ensure that all inspectors are familiar and confident with early years pedagogy and practice, and that the focus of the inspections reflects current knowledge about what works for young children. The Review suggested that there might be a capacity issue in recruiting sufficient numbers of experts in early years across both inspectorate teams. The section on Quality and Outcomes considered some of the reports and research allied to inspections and both

inspection teams are working to review their inspection processes. While sharing an inspection will undoubtedly be considered an improvement for ELC providers, further joining together seems appropriate given Scotland's wish to consider education and care as seamless (see section: Using policy to build understanding, a united identity and support professionalisation).

As the inspections are being reviewed an interesting suggestion from one university provider is worth noting:

'More specific emphasis on evidence-based approaches may also be stressed through inspection processes as this would help practitioners to accept that this is valued and therefore to adopt such approaches and develop more 'practitioner as researcher' habits.'
(University provider response to first call)

Recommendation

17) In order to better articulate the Scottish policy thrust that care and education are inseparable and cannot be viewed separately:

Formalise and simplify the current inspections position. Currently ELC settings can receive one shared inspection from two different bodies visiting together. In future, either a joint education and care inspection or one inspection conducted by one single inspectorate body for ELC should be standard.

9. Qualifications, training and working conditions with links to research evidence

The last twenty years have seen an increase in the number, and a reduction in the age, of children who spend a significant amount of time in the care of an adult other than their parents/carers – which is most commonly within ELC and OSC settings in Scotland. As already discussed, there is a growing body of evidence which suggests that the first few years of life build the foundations for good health, intellectual development and social competence, so the adults who provide this out-of-home support play a central role in children's development, probably second only to family.

Although many members of the ECEC and Out of School Care workforces internationally are dedicated and skilled, large numbers of them are poorly trained and badly paid. This is an issue that the Scottish Government has begun to consider in detail, recognising that such variability within the workforce can have serious effects on the quality of learning and care available. In an effort to support the professionalisation and upskilling of these workforces, the key national bodies in Scotland have identified and defined a number of roles and responsibilities which are linked to an associated progression of qualifications (SSSC, 2015 and the section Registration with SSSC). This section of the Review considers some of the key qualifications available within Scotland, their development and how they might impact on children's outcomes.

9.1. The Common Core

The strong inclusive nature and commitment to collaborative working within Scotland is illustrated within the relatively recently developed Common Core (Scottish Government, 2012). The Common Core is innovative and describes the essential skills, knowledge, understandings and values that all people working with children and young people and their families, whether paid or unpaid, should have. The Common Core is relevant to all those working with children, young people and families in health, education, social services, justice, community services, cultural and creative industries, the voluntary and private sectors. The Common Core relates to two contexts: relationships with children, young people and families; and relationships between workers. These contexts are to be met through the implementation of four principles: non-discrimination; best interests of the child; right to life, survival and development; and the obligations to consider children's views and a series of essential characteristics.

The Common Core links to other Scottish policy (e.g.GIRFEC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As such, the following common values are promoted:

- Promote the wellbeing of individual children and young people
- Keep children and young people safe
- Put the child at the centre
- Take a whole child approach
- Build on strengths and promote resilience
- Promote opportunities and value diversity
- Provide additional help that is appropriate, proportionate and timely
- Support informed choice
- Work in partnership with families

- Respect confidentiality and share information
- Promote the same values across all working relationships
- Make the most of bringing together each worker's expertise
- Co-ordinate help
- Build a competent workforce to promote children and young people's wellbeing

All education, training and qualifications within Scotland have been tasked with needing to address the Common Core (Scottish Government, 2012). It is interesting to note that the majority of responses to the hub illustrated how well this policy has been embedded in the Scottish workforce. The majority of responses included a discussion of the importance of values and rights.

9.2. Qualifications

As part of their role within Scotland, 'the SSSC has worked closely with a range of stakeholders to support registration by collaborating on the development of a range of qualifications and resources for the early years and childcare workforce' (SSSC response to the first call for evidence). They have supported the development of qualifications which allow the registration of support workers, practitioners and managers/lead practitioners.

This means that support workers are expected to achieve a qualification at SCQF Level 6 (SVQ2), practitioners are expected to achieve appropriate qualifications at SCQF Level 7 (SVQ3/HNC) and managers/lead practitioners at SCQF Level 9 (an ordinary degree or work-based equivalent).

Table 4: A sample of the current qualifications and associated levels accredited by Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) (SQA, 2015).

Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs)	
SCQF Level	**Qualification Name**
6	SVQ 2 Social Services (children and young people)
7	SVQ 3 Social Services (children and young people)
9	SVQ 4 Social Services (children and young people)
6	SVQ 2 Playwork
7	SVQ 3 Playwork
9	SVQ 4 Playwork

Professional Development Awards (PDAs)	
SCQF Level	Qualification Name
7	PDA Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing
8	PDA Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing
8	PDA Childhood Practice
9	PDA Childhood Practice

Accreditation of these qualifications is completed by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), who were given this remit through the amendment by the Scottish Qualifications Act 2002 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1996. The accreditation and development of degrees such as the BA Childhood Practice are completed by Universities. These are discussed in more detail later.

The SQA has two main roles: accrediting and awarding qualifications. SQA accredits all ELC qualifications apart from the degrees, and approves and quality assures the awarding bodies and their qualifications.

SQA Awarding Body:

• Devises and develops qualifications

• Validates qualifications (makes sure they are well written and meet the needs of learners and tutors)

• Reviews qualifications to ensure they are up to date

• Quality-assures education and training establishments which offer SQA qualifications

• Issues certificates to candidates (SQA, 2015)

Currently, there are approximately 80 childcare training agencies throughout Scotland which are accredited to provide, assess and validate SQA approved qualifications. Consideration should be given to the development of a national register for training agencies, with a robust registration process and a training framework – as the quality assurance of these agencies is under question (discussed in more depth later).

The SVQs in Social Services (Children and Young People) Levels 3 and 4 form part of a suite of complementary frameworks that were developed with the sector by SSSC. Level 3 is designed as a Modern Apprenticeship, while Level 4 offers the more advanced Technical Apprenticeship. Modern Apprenticeships offer those aged over 16 paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs at craft, technician and management level. The levels build one upon each other supporting career progression. Modern Apprenticeships are recognised as supporting *Scotland's Education for All: Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce agenda* (Scottish Government, 2014g).

While Modern Apprenticeships are recognised as offering clear career pathways and the possibility of 'earning while learning', the money attached to an apprenticeship is often very low. Further, recent studies have highlighted that those undertaking apprenticeship programmes in ELC receive lower rates of remuneration than their counterparts undertaking Modern Apprenticeships in sectors such as engineering.

Hub consultation responses have suggested there may also be other issues to consider; for example, the very low wage while in training can be followed by difficulties in gaining employment with a full salary. Some training providers also suggested that the Level 2 qualification, which is not part of the suite, supported new recruits and prepared them better for learning at Level 3.

The SVQs in Social Services (Children and Young People) were developed for those working in day care services and OSC as well as residential care. In addition, they were planned to link with the frameworks for Social Services Health and Care to provide for additional flexibility in both employment and careers.

As such, the four mandatory units at each level are necessarily generic. They cover similar areas and aspects at different levels:

- Supporting, promoting and maintaining effective communication

- Supporting, promoting and leading health, safety and security in the work place

- Supporting, promoting and leading the safeguarding of children and young people

- Developing their own practice through planning, reflection and learning

Within the SVQs, each of these mandatory units are covered at every level, with increasing responsibility and complexity built into higher levels. Then, depending on the level, these are supplemented by between two to four optional units. The optional units cover the areas of study specific to ELC and OSC, including those which are found in the research literature to link with effective practice. It is not possible, however, to determine which optional units will be chosen by any learner and how they link together. It also appears to be possible that an area of study might be missed due to the amount of choice; e.g. in SVQ 4 there are 28 optional units from which the learner selects only four.

Given the mix of learners studying the awards, a qualification with core units is practical; and it also supports many of the values outlined in the Common Core as well as supporting Scotland's Youth Employment Strategy. Concern was raised, however, during discussions, focus groups and within questionnaire responses, as to some possible negative consequences of this approach.

First, some people said the presence of core units suggests that those units cover the most important areas for the workforce. Second, many maintained that the current core units omit the most important areas for study. This view warrants further consideration as the research literature also suggests that this might be the case. It is also worth noting that 'knowledge and understanding of child development' was the area most cited as important for both the ELC and OSC workforces when describing essential elements of initial courses and continued

professional development. And, third, others argued that the core unit approach may lead to important areas of study being neglected or poorly covered – or studied at only a very low level by students who felt that they had already covered the material, found aspects particularly challenging, or who had a particular area of interest.

Responses to the hub showed concern over the content of the mandatory SVQ units:

'The mandatory SVQ units for the Trainee scheme do not include Child Development, and in fact there is no pure Child Development unit. The mandatory units are Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Effective Communication and Reflective Practices.'
(Early Education Edinburgh and the Lothians Branch response to the first call for evidence)

There is no intention in this report to detail all the qualifications currently available within Scotland to the workforces. There is a comprehensive list of the main ELC and OSC qualifications suitable for registration with SSSC and all of the teacher qualifications suitable for registration with GTCS available in the report *Learning about Play* compiled by Audain and Shoolbread (forthcoming). It is, however, worth mentioning that qualifications vary not only in level and content, but also in approach. The PDA, for example, is predominately a taught qualification which covers the knowledge required by learners for a range of job roles. While the SVQs are assessments of learners' competence to perform the job role in the workplace, they are not a taught programme.

The research literature included a discussion about effective qualifications and professional development, and itemised current thinking on effective professional development. It also suggested that the skills of interaction needed to enhance learning and development are rare in early years settings because they are complex. If this is to improve, the research literature advocated the need for modelling and supporting effective adult – child interactions and focusing on pedagogy – presumably by someone who already has those skills: this may have to involve an individual external to the setting where the student learner is working.

In discussions during the Review, ELC and OSC workforces recognised the specific expertise required within their work and appreciated the degree of skill and knowledge required in working across age ranges – especially in child development. Practitioners were generally positive about the courses and qualifications they had undertaken – especially when they were designed for their specific workforce and led by mentors and tutors experienced within their sector. There were, however, many who pointed to the need to consider further aspects of practice, and how these are supported, mentored and assessed within all the different work settings across the full range of qualifications.

In the hub responses, an ELC head teacher wrote about the BA Childhood Practice qualification offered in her area '…does not have any assessments in their place of work or any assessment post qualifying. Some are being offered as online courses. This does not offer students the same learning from discussion of practice with fellow students…'

She then expressed disappointment that '…highly motivated staff are pursuing these opportunities but the structure of the course does not allow sufficient reflective practice within the workplace and implementation of projects that develop the practice or introduce new thinking and pedagogy. Assignments alone cannot be a measure of skill development… All courses need to consider the quality of assessed placements and supervision post qualification, to ensure the theoretical input is linked to and reflected on in practice.' (Head Teacher of ELC setting response to second call)

Subsequent responses extended this idea to other working contexts. See for example:

'Out of school staff are often nursery qualified and have interchangeable jobs at crèches etc. There are few staff that really understand primary school children well enough to provide high quality afterschool provision. The SSSC should require play-work qualifications for this sector.' (Third sector network response to first call)

And:

'We believe that the best support to any staff who are undertaking training irrespective of the level of qualification they are undertaking, is to ensure that the training they receive contains the material necessary to understand what constitutes good, healthy and equitable development in early childhood, to develop the capacity to promote this, and to be able to form the trusted relationships with children and their parents and carers necessary to ensure that parents and practitioners are working together to achieve the best outcomes for children.' (National Network organisation for the children's sector in Scotland response to the first call for evidence)

Recommendation

18) SQA and SSSC, together with associated bodies and stakeholders, to review the structure of all qualifications for ELC and OSC that they quality assure and accredit.

The core units and assessments of the awards, as appropriate, should better reflect the main business of the settings in which the student learners work. This should improve their ability to support learners in developing high quality relationships and interactions with children which promote wellbeing, and extend thinking and concept development.

9.3. Current degree level qualifications

One of the roles, responsibilities and associated qualifications outlined earlier is the manager/lead practitioner role (in the National Review, Scottish Executive, 2006). At this level, ELC and OSC practitioners need to be either working towards or already holding a relevant Level 9 qualification. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including within further education colleges and higher education institutions.

As part of the development of the manager/lead practitioner role, and the appropriate degree level qualification, the Standard for Childhood Practice (The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2007) was devised as a benchmark. This was informed and underpinned by a great many standards, as described in the section The Standard for Childhood Practice. It sat within a policy context and was linked to other strategic developments across the Scottish Government – including *National Priorities in Education; A Curriculum for Excellence; A Smart, Successful Scotland; Closing the Opportunity Gap*; and, *Choosing our Future: Scotland's Sustainable Development Strategy*. It also followed five guiding principles informed by the *Leitch Review of Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills* (HM Treasury, 2006).

Qualifications/Programmes of learning:

• should be demand led

• should build on existing structures

• should share responsibility between employers, providers and learners

• where possible, knowledge and skills should be portable between sectors and services

• should be able to adapt and respond to developing circumstances
(HM Treasury 2006 p5)

One additional principle was seen as crucial – that, to upskill the current workforce, learning should be work-based. This is important because it supports the current workforce, but it is often difficult for staff working within the private and third sector, in particular, to afford the time needed to achieve a degree. For example, an OSC practitioner wrote:

'Having studied initially for my SVQ3, thereafter SVQ4 and annually choosing to study at some level (SQA modules, Open University Undergraduate short course etc.), I am committed to professional development but at the age of 48, when I next have to register with the SSSC I will be asked to commit to begin working towards a Level 9 qualification. Having to work two jobs because of the nature of out of school care, I do not have the time to give to studying for a degree nor the inclination to do so for three years. I will, therefore, be forced out of a job that I love and believe I do well.' (Response to the second call for evidence)

Seven universities currently offer the BA Childhood Practice degree across Scotland. They deliver this in a variety of ways to support access, with some (for example: University of Aberdeen and University of Dundee) offering distance learning with most content online. The PDA SCQF Level 9 programmes are also available across the country: these Level 9 Childhood Practice awards are, as previously discussed, underpinned by the Standard for

Childhood Practice. The Standard, and accompanying degrees and awards, was developed to achieve a number of aims. First, to improve quality through supporting leadership within the sector: 'The Standard is an important step in ensuring managers in early education and child care sector have the necessary leadership skills to take forward excellent practice in centres that children and families use' (SSSC, 2014, p1). Second, to support the status and retention of staff. And third, to professionalise the ELC workforce.

The BA Childhood Practice supports work-based graduate development, builds on previous practice awards, and encourages widening participation policies in universities. Practitioners who have studied for the degree report feeling more professionalised and positive about their roles.

The list of skills and attributes within the Standard for Childhood Practice is extensive and includes 24 main elements, each with between four and eight expected features. Due to the number of elements, and to achieve the depth of discussion, understanding and analysis expected at this level of learning, some providers of the BA Childhood Practice and PDA SCQF Level 9 programmes seem to focus on certain attributes to the detriment of others. In addition, they appear to rely on their student learners mapping the areas which they have already met in previous, lower level, qualifications.

While the intention to have ELC and OSC settings managed by a graduate is laudable, treating everyone the same with such a diverse workforce causes many problems. Consideration of degree course-outlines available online indicates that many programmes follow the inclusive and collaborative culture within Scotland emphasised in many policies. Courses appear to focus more on aspects of leadership, management, collaborative working and the skills necessary to support quality improvement and self-evaluation processes, rather than on the curriculum and on the pedagogy and practice of teaching and learning.

While management and working with others, and so on, are important and necessary, the skills and depth of understanding about supporting children's learning and development at this level appear to be missing within some courses. This is likely to affect the ELC and OSC sector's ability to support and enhance children's outcomes, especially given the reduction of teachers working in ELC (see Dunlop, 2014; Scottish Government, 2014f).

The research literature concluded that, while some evidence suggests that all degree level qualifications impact on quality, more evidence points to the importance of specific 'teacher-like' skills to impact on children's outcomes. It is recognised that children need sufficient face-to-face time with a practitioner knowledgeable in 'teacher-like' skills to support their cognitive, social and emotional development. If, therefore, the leadership of learning is not to be the key element in the manager/lead practitioner's role, an alternative role and associated qualification needs to be considered. The person providing this 'leading learning' role could then gain a different qualification. Alternatively, the BA Childhood Practice could be refocused to include this.

As already discussed, the BA Childhood Practice has been well received, but there were a cluster of responses from the hub which suggested that leading practice warrants further attention.

Some practitioners suggested that assessment of practice by a university tutor might be useful, similar to the assessed placements teachers undergo during their initial teacher training. See above and the following response:

'Ensure that the BA Qualification has an assessment of practice as part of the qualification and post qualifying assessment to ensure that all students do have the relevant knowledge, skills and very importantly the experience to lead practice.'
(ELC practitioner response to second call for evidence)

Another ELC practitioner wrote:

'Trainers should come out to playgroup to interact and make suggestions, etc., based on direct observations and/or requests for support.'
(ELC practitioner response to the second call for evidence)

Many ELC hub responses suggested refocusing the BA Childhood Practice with more emphasis on leading learning and on supporting the learning and development of the individuals within the setting would be useful. Other responses proposed developing a new BA (Early Learning and Care) to run alongside the BA Childhood Practice.

A new ELC degree could be work-based – or it could also be offered as a full time undergraduate degree to attract young and mature people who wish to follow a career working with young children. If the degree could be accompanied by a one year guaranteed position working in an early years setting with a reasonable starting salary, as is currently the case for teachers within Scotland, it would be an attractive proposition for many people. In order to ensure that the educational aspect of leading learning in ELC is central to such degrees, they would need to be developed by – and sit within – the education departments of universities which have a strong history of, and suitable staff to teach, early years education and care.

Colwyn Trevarthan, while discussing the key critical skills, knowledge and experiences, noted that: 'It is essential to be in the hands of lecturers/tutors/teachers/supervisors with expert knowledge and understanding of children.' (Response to the first call for evidence.)

Many people, while commending the work-based degrees, also recognised that there was a need to attract career changers and/or young people who had attained well in their previous careers and school based studies. NDNA noted: 'The need to get more academic high achievers (from school leavers to graduates) in balance with support workers' (NDNA response to the first call for evidence).

Other related comments included:

'Make a commitment that this early years' workforce will employ a variety of qualifications including teachers directly working with children and planning within the team… There needs to be a clear structure of qualifications so that there is consistency across authorities and schools. There needs to be career opportunities for all, with relevant post qualifying courses

that do truly meet the needs of the profession. There needs to be a focus on quality and not just quantity.'
(Head of a Family Centre response to second call for evidence)

'Is it time to reconsider the BA Childhood Practice and re-introduce the BA Early Years Practice or similar?… Most of the BA Childhood Practice graduates are early childhood staff.'
(University provider response to first call for evidence)

And a Further Education provider noted: 'More creative and new initial graduate degrees would be of huge benefit to the sector – flexible delivery should still include a FE route.'
(Further Education provider response to Review)

Recommendation

19) If children's outcomes are to be supported and enhanced, it is important to ensure that there are highly qualified and knowledgeable practitioners in all ELC settings who lead learning and sensitively support families in developing a stimulating home learning environment.

Every strong profession has good initial, graduate entry route(s). More new and creative, initial graduate degrees designed for practitioners leading learning in ELC should be developed.

This could arrest the decline in numbers of teachers working face-to-face with young children, and should not threaten the work-based childhood practice degree programme or discourage further and higher educational institutions from offering their initial degree programmes to work-based practitioners through more creative, flexible delivery options.

9.4. Qualified Teachers in ELC

Currently, teachers generally hold the highest level of qualification at Level 10 (SCQF) of those working in ELC. This is either a B.Ed. honours degree or a Professional Graduate Diploma of Education (PGDE) which is open to applicants who already have a first degree. It should also be noted that all PGDE programmes in Scotland now award some credit at SCQF Level 11 as part of the PGDE and one university is developing a first degree teaching qualification which will lead to a SCQF Level 11 award. Qualified teachers are the only group registered to teach in both ELC educational provision and schools: they are qualified to teach across the age range 3-12 years.

The 'teacher induction scheme' guarantees them a year of employment following their degree. This is the national induction programme for newly qualified Scottish teachers and guarantees the offer of a one year teaching post in a Scottish LA – with teachers being allocated to one of five LAs of their choosing. Teachers on the programme have a maximum class commitment of 82%, allowing them a minimum of 18% extra time for their professional development. Everyone on the scheme has access to the services of an experienced mentor, and it is expected that they be able to gain full registration with the GTCS (GTCS, 2012) by the end of the year.

Until 2002, it was a requirement for LA educational settings to employ qualified teachers to work directly with 3-5 year olds. Teachers would typically work with an early childhood assistant and 20 children with a 1:10 adult to child ratio. An amendment to the Schools (Scotland) Code 1956 passed in 2003 changed this practice following the, then, Scottish Executive's announcement of new roles for teachers (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2002). The current Scottish Government policy position is that the entitlement to pre-school education should also give access to GTCS registered teachers, but it is no longer a requirement for every pre-school setting to have a full-time teacher working daily in the setting. Since this change there has been a decline in the number of teachers working in ELC settings.

An HMIE report (2007a) noted that some LAs had chosen to close or replace traditional Nursery Schools with alternative provision. This impacted on initial teacher education programmes and career prospects for early years teachers.

'Universities are finding it hard to place teacher education students in pre-school settings with experienced teachers. As a result they are not given enough support to establish careers in early years sector.' (HMIE, 2007a, p22)

The focus of initial teacher education courses across the age range (3–12 years) may be another factor in the reduction of teacher numbers in ELC within Scotland. The Review discussions, focus groups and consultation responses pointed to this as increasingly problematic, with many courses focusing on the older age range. EIS (2010) suggested that there had been a reduction in the emphasis on early years in existing initial teacher training programmes in Scotland. They also noted that placements in ELC can be short and may not include a trained teacher or university tutor visit. Further, they suggested that such experiences may impact on the value students attribute to the early years (EIS, 2010).

GTCS registration used to prohibit newly qualified teachers, in their guaranteed probationary year, from carrying out their probationary period wholly in a nursery class or school. Although this has now changed and teachers can undertake their induction wholly in a nursery, the practice is not widespread. The Core Reference Group for this Review felt that the change was positive, but there might remain some challenges '…. with diminishing numbers of experienced nursery teachers it may be a challenge to make appropriate arrangements for mentoring the probationer. Such induction would improve the status of early years and teacher aspiration to work there.'
(Minutes of the Core reference group, 2015)

Most early years specialists who responded to the hub call for evidence suggested that there is still a significant amount of work to do to ensure that the early years is given the value it deserves within the teaching profession, and beyond, to ensure that specialising in the early years does not limit teachers' career opportunities.

There is currently one primary initial teaching qualification programme which offers an early years specialism. This is provided by the University of Stirling. Student teachers study psychology, social work and family health – as well as primary literacy, primary numeracy and a module designed to support them in making the most effective use of their specialism in a primary school. In addition, some universities have developed additional qualifications for teachers in employment who are working in the early years (usually 3–8 years). These are typically offered at SCQF Level 11 leading to certificates and diplomas with the possibility of progression to a Masters degree.

Responses to the Review that considered the depth of understanding of early years pedagogy and practice needed to be effective early years practitioners said:

'The Early Years Specialism at Strathclyde also now looks to offer this depth to practice.'
(Teacher working in ELC response to the second call for evidence)

'The Edinburgh Froebel course offers staff opportunities to learn about Froebel principles and to reflect on their own practice and plan initiatives to deliver quality experiences for children.'
(ELC practitioner response to the second call for evidence)

The City of Edinburgh Council is one example of the best early learning focuses within Scotland. This is based on the professional development they provide for early years staff, much of which follows the Froebel model. This model is child-centred with a play-based pedagogy, and is underpinned by a knowledge and understanding of child development which supports assessment, evaluation and planning.

The Core Reference Group discussions suggested other examples of good early learning focuses; one of the ADES representatives advised that: 'Stirling Council… as have Angus Council…developed a comprehensive approach to Pedagogical Documentation.'

During the Review process, many people stressed both that primary school teachers should be well versed in supporting children in the early years through their initial teacher training courses, and that further professional development to support a move from primary to ELC and working with younger children would be useful.

'If teachers are moving from Primary to Nursery they need opportunities to reflect on the holistic nature of play and how children learn in a nursery environment.' (Teacher working in ELC response to the second call for evidence)

There has been debate about the possible demand for such specialist courses, especially given the reduction in teachers and diminished career opportunities within ELC for qualified teachers. The Review recognises this, but sees the recommendations regarding teachers as interlinked. If recommendation 15 is enacted, all the other related recommendations are likely to be considered.

Recommendation

20) Introduce early years specific teacher training in universities at both initial (0-6, with specialisms in 0-3 and 3-6) and postgraduate levels which are resourced and supported on a par with primary school courses.

21) Offer conversion and upskilling courses (such as the well-known Froebel training) for current primary trained teachers who have the existing 3–12 teaching award, but who do not feel confident to teach younger children. These courses should be linked to available vacancies.

22) Universities and other Higher Education Institutions should consider the range of courses they offer for ELC, as well as offering initial graduate routes of high quality such as the one at Stirling University, they should increase Masters routes which include a strong research component.

9.5. Quality Assurance

The universities have their own quality assurance checks, and SQA are responsible for the quality assurance of the providers of the qualifications they validate. They have systems of quality assurance which consider both the management structure of the qualification providers and their ability to deliver the qualifications. They conduct verification checks on the system and the qualifications. The qualification verification procedure includes considering: the validity of assessment instruments; verifying the reliability of assessment decisions; verifying that assessment instruments are being used correctly and in line with any assessment specification; and ensuring that the appropriate resources are in place to support the delivery of the qualification.

Despite these systems, both the discussions and the consultation responses during the Review suggested that: the quality of the providers' training and qualifications is variable; that, particularly with lower level qualifications, some learners are being accepted for study and supported to pass assessments unreasonably; and that some learners are not given sufficient time to reflect upon and complete their studies outside the work environment. They need time both for this and for gaining experience within a variety of excellent work environments.

A selection of responses to the hub illustrate these points:

'Students training for a HNC have often come into placement with a very limited knowledge of the Curriculum for Excellence.' (Local Authority response to the first Call for evidence)

'Many staff in the early years sector undertake "on-the-job" training and they are dependent upon in-house training. Current training is patchy and determined in many cases by the quality of the training providers… The SVQ depends so much on the placement: the quality of the overall provision/appropriate role models etc. The quality of the training can be poor and can be achieved too quickly; without establishing a rich underpinning knowledge base. If a candidate is in a good setting, the training provided could be excellent. There is maybe a strong role for remaining nursery schools here.'
(Third sector network response to the first call for evidence)

'There is too much of a patchwork with inconsistent standards of training. Often a very low standard of training is provided by trainers whose own level of qualifications is inadequate. Standards at the lower levels are very variable and often young apprentices get a very bad deal in this respect working for long hours for little remuneration with poor guidance, little encouragement and low expectations.'
(University response to the first call for evidence)

The feedback gleaned during the Review supports the notion of more rigorous quality assurance processes – especially in relation to early qualifications. The number and diversity of qualifications and providers of those qualifications also suggests that further collaboration and communication is desirable. SQA and SSSC have worked in collaboration with representatives from FEs, HEIs, private providers and employers etc. in previous qualification mapping and development exercises, so this will be familiar to them.

Recommendation

23) SQA and SSSC to introduce further checks on the effectiveness of training, assessment and qualifications providers to ensure standards and comparability. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring diversity of experiences within good and excellent settings and time given for reflection, planning and reading.

24) Qualifications bodies should engage in more collaborative working, including increased communication, which would ensure better understanding of each other's course content, core training needs and would develop continuity and progression within and across courses, both initial and postgraduate.

A key stakeholder group should be established by the Scottish Government to facilitate such communication and advise on future directions: it should include representation from relevant bodies such as SSSC.

9.6. Status, Pay and Conditions

In a comprehensive review of what is known about how young children learn and develop, and of the implications of this knowledge for the care and education of children, the Committee on Early Childhood Pedagogy concluded, 'There is a serious mismatch between the preparation (and compensation) of the average early childhood professional and the growing expectations of parents and policy makers' (National Research Council 2001, p. 261).

Many responses to the hub echoed these ideas. Consider, for example, one early years network's response below:

'It is now very clear not only that a child's earliest years see the most rapid development in the human brain than at any other period in the life course, but that a child's experiences during this critical period influence, for good or ill, the course of her or his future life. We therefore consider that it is an anomaly that those who work with children at this critical and formative stage generally have the lowest level of qualification and the worst pay and conditions in the children and young people's workforce.'
(Children in Scotland's response to the first call for evidence)

And an ELC practitioner wrote:

'It is also important to help people understand that the process of starting Playgroup or Nursery (the transition from home to setting) can affect a child's entire school history, and can either help prevent or lead to anti-social behaviour and depression in adolescents and adults. Playgroups are a vital intermediate step between home and the more formal setting of nursery. They should be recognised formally by the council/government, and early years' professionals should be paid on par with nursery and school teachers.'

(ELC practitioner response to the second call for evidence)

Despite the upskilling of the workforce, unequal rates of pay remain within ELC – with the largest inequalities in the private and third sector. This is, however, not unique to Scotland. In her review of the early years workforce in England, Nutbrown (2012) noted that the majority of the English early years workforce remains under-qualified, under-paid and overwhelmingly female (Miller and Cable, 2008). Low wages and high expectations are also found in the OSC sector.

Rate of pay is inextricably linked to status, and early childhood teaching is often considered to have lower status than teaching older children (King, 1998). In addition, there remains a deep divide between partnership settings and LA settings – as there is elsewhere (e.g. England, Wales and Northern Ireland) with the PVI and the maintained sector (Moss, 2006).

Most responses to the hub and discussions included comments on pay, together with the importance of terms and conditions of employment and the inequalities within the workforces.

Feedback from a Core Reference Group member during the Review suggested that: 'Annual leave, sick pay, maternity leave, health and safety legislation, access to personal development and additional training, agreeing career paths, all have their place in negotiating improvements in pay and conditions in the whole sector. Whilst teachers are currently covered by national terms and conditions, there is huge variation in nursery nurse and playworker wages, terms and conditions'

More than 75% of practitioners' and stakeholder institutions' responses to the hub mentioned the rate of pay as being important for raising the status of the workforce. For example, in their response to the call for evidence, SSSC wrote:

'Our workforce data confirms that a substantial proportion of the childcare workforce is employed by the private and voluntary sector (SSSC, 2013). A number of these workers may be paid a rate that is below the living wage. We welcome the Scottish Government's commitment to promote the living wage... We are working with COSLA, Scottish Government and other stakeholders on a project which aims to work towards a minimum of the living wage for all adult care workers. We need to ensure that similar work is underway in the early years and OSC sector. Ultimately we need to ensure that the professional early years and OSC workforce is receiving a professional wage. The pay disparities within the public, private and voluntary sectors also need to be tackled.'
(SSSC response to second call for evidence)

And the Scottish Out of School Care Network wrote:

'SOSCN is a living wage accredited employer and recommends this level at the very least for OSC.'
(SOSCN response to the call for evidence)

People consistently voiced their concerns over low pay; however, some of the private and third sector settings and their networks pointed to some of the complexities here. One consistent issue was linked to the funding afforded to the private and third sector to cover the costs of children's free entitlements by Local Authorities.

'For the early workforce to feel valued for the important job they undertake, we feel as a private provider they are not being rewarded with salaries that reflect their value and worth. We are unable to pay the 'Living Wage' because what are paid through partnership does not enable employers to do so.'
(ELC practitioner response to the second call)

While the NDNA pointed out:
'Funding levels to partner providers need to be at a level conducive to supporting high quality early learning and childcare. NDNA Scotland's 2014 Nursery Survey showed that nurseries are making a big loss on local authority funded childcare places…'
(NDNA response to the first call for evidence)

This is a complex issue which requires careful consideration. It is not only about workers within local authority control but also those outside and those in partnership with local authorities. It is likely to require a deal of trust and reorganisation of funding including funding for children's entitlement to ELC. Despite this, however, both practitioners and stakeholder institutions acknowledge that raising the minimum wage to at least the living wage is fundamental to improvement within the sectors. This Review, therefore, considers this a key recommendation, whilst understanding that it is aspirational to the extent that it is not enforceable in the private and third sectors unless accompanied by statutory change mandated by the UK Government. It does, however, represent the majority view of the ELC and OSC workforces within Scotland – and reflects the current policy direction of the Scottish Government in this area.

The Scottish Government has a fair work agenda, and has established a Cabinet level post to lead on fair work. They are establishing a Fair Work Convention, and the Living Wage has been a key feature of Scottish Government Public Sector Pay Policy since 2011.

Despite the difficulties this may cause for those who are self-employed (such as childminders) and/or working in the private or third sector, the move towards a national pay scale may be useful.

A Core Reference Group member suggested, during discussions as the report was being developed:

'There are other sectors where rates of pay for skilled workers are nationally agreed and negotiated, which then allows self-employed workers to set their rates and fees against a national scale.'

This aspirational recommendation could be considered and encouraged in all settings and enforced in all those under local government control or partnership.

Recommendation

25) All practitioners should receive the living wage, or above, rather than the minimum wage.

Develop and recommend a national pay scale for ELC and OSC which should be adopted by all local authority provision and highly recommended to the third and private sector who serve funded children. This is likely to necessitate a review of funding of children's entitlement in ELC within the private and third sector.

The view that members of the workforce who have achieved qualifications should have them recognised and receive suitable remuneration was a consistent theme in discussions and hub responses.

Unfortunately, there were anomalies here too. Some providers reported that, following the Modern Apprenticeship scheme, some young people were unable to gain jobs due to the increase in wages they expected. Others said that having a degree meant little in terms of remuneration – especially in the private and third sector.

An ELC practitioner wrote:
'I am now required to complete a BA in Childhood Practice or leave my job. I will have spent approximately seven years training (initially… to SVQ Level 4…). I only earn £7.20 per hour (less than the living wage and less than council cleaners etc.). The playgroup receives NO council support and rely solely on children's fees and parent fundraising to continue. My wages are set by the voluntary Parent Committee and dictated by a need to pay rent etc. and a need to keep fees low.'
(Response to second call for evidence)

Responses from university providers:

'It is time that graduates of the BA Childhood Practice courses see salaries reflect the qualification.'
(University response to first call for evidence)

'Remuneration would need to reflect that at the moment this is an ordinary degree…. and provide incentive for people to progress to or choose honours options.'
(University response to first call for evidence)

> **Recommendation**
>
> 26) Review remuneration over time for those who have worked to achieve their BA in Childhood Practice or those who, in the future, enter the profession with appropriate degree level qualifications.

The public view of the early years workforce is critical to its status. There is a strong awareness in Scotland of the power of language, and this was a driver in developing the terminology of ELC. One term which appears to have persisted within the Scottish culture, and which may now be worth reconsidering, is 'practitioner'. This term is typically associated with someone junior supporting a more professional superior, such as nurse practitioner supporting a doctor – that is, someone with technical experience and knowledge, but not a leader with expertise.

In addition, some childminders mentioned feeling dissatisfied with their title and the associations they thought it had. Several suggested the term 'Early Years Educators' as a replacement.

Many ELC settings do refer to their staff as 'practitioner' and 'lead practitioner', while some describe themselves as 'Early Years Professional' and 'Early Years Teacher'. Interestingly, within some LAs the term 'Early Years Officers' has already become established, and, during discussions had as part of the Review process, it was suggested that this could be adopted across the sector.

One union, while commenting on the recommendation below, as part of the Review process, suggested that further consideration of the language and terminology used within ELC and OSC might open recruitment to others in addition to young workers/school leavers.

> **Recommendation**
>
> 27) Language is powerful in influencing people's attitudes and views. For this reason, the term practitioner should be reviewed as it is unlikely to be associated by a lay person with a professional or an expert in their sector. The Scottish Government's Early Years Division should consult the sector and find a more suitable term.

9.7. Inequality across different ELC settings

In the section Quality and Outcomes some research, aligned to inspections, was considered in relation to the type of qualification held by practitioners/teachers and the impact this had on children's outcomes. While it remains impossible at this stage to decide whether a qualified teacher or an early years practitioner with a BA Childhood Practice or similar supports quality and children's outcomes better, it is possible to recognise inequalities in opportunities across the sector. GUS (Scottish Government, 2014c) noted a lower level of quality in partner provider settings, particularly within private sector provision, in Scotland.

Dickens et al. (2005, cited in EIS, 2010) suggested that the tax system in England promoted an inequity in early years provision, and GUS (Scottish Government, 2014c) noted differences in the mix of children attending settings in Scotland. Care needs to be given to ensuring that the funding systems in Scotland do not inadvertently encourage segregation and risk the future educational success of all children.

It is well known that marketisation and inter-setting competition, often viewed uncritically as parent choice, is likely to exacerbate educational inequality (Cambridge Primary Review, 2010). Adams (2008 in EIS, 2010) points to the negative effects of entrepreneurs in the provision of ELC. They may open settings which flexibly meet the needs of parents for full-time and extended day care, keeping their costs low by training staff on the job, which can increase the number of staff with low or no qualifications.

The recent changes in entitlement hours in Scotland were accompanied by a shift in the workforce in ELC. Many practitioners took the opportunity to move from the lower paid private sector to the better conditions of service provided by Local Authorities. The proposed additional entitlements and support for vulnerable two year olds in coming years could cause a further shift and unrest. It could bring further challenges around the quality of service in the private sector. It therefore seems important that local authorities and childcare partnerships plan and manage the ELC workforce in a more integrated way. For example, they could commission joint training, placements, secondments and other exchanges across different settings and sectors. Integrated working would also be useful to ensure the quality and accessibility of OSC provision.

Recommendation

28) LAs should bring LA and partnership settings together to support planning and management of the ELC and OSC workforces in a more integrated way.

9.8. Recruitment

It is well known that there is a general international problem about recruiting and retaining staff within ELC and OSC sectors (Rolfe, 2005). The reasons include pay and working conditions e.g. short working hours, low status and competition from other sectors. Rate of pay is discussed in the section headed Status, Pay and Conditions and Recommendation 25.

The discussions and hub responses pointed to a lack of suitable recruits entering the profession. Currently, there appears to be a popular misconception, discussed earlier, that working in ELC does not require academic skills and that there is little career progression. There are reports of young women who are unlikely to make the academic grades for other professions being steered towards hairdressing or childcare (the hair or care syndrome). This was reflected in some of the responses to the hub:

Comments such as this '...Careers advice in school – don't suggest pupils with low academic ability work with young children – we need more than just a basic grasp of literacy and numeracy.' (Teacher in ELC response to second call) were common.

And:

'Change school careers advice that those who have performed poorly in exams should be the only ones who consider childcare as a career.' (ELC practitioner response to second call for evidence)

People need to realise that the care and education of young children requires a professional and suitably qualified workforce in the same way as for those working with older children.

Many hub responses and discussions during the Review mentioned the qualities practitioners need as a basic requirement for the work: a recurrent theme was being enthusiastic and motivated to work with children and their families/carers.

It was highlighted that prospective ELC and OSC workers need to understand that the job is important and demanding, and that they would be required to gain the relevant knowledge and qualifications. Many people commented on the need for new recruits to have good literacy and numeracy skills, and to be willing to learn and develop as the settings changed and respond to the diverse needs of the children and young people within them.

One ELC practitioner wrote:

'Children leaving school are not made aware of the importance of the early years workforce, they think it is an easy option, we are not getting the higher achieving school students applying as the wage is not good and there is no great career route.' (ELC practitioner response to the second call for evidence)

On a more practical note, it was highlighted that career advisors should know the clear career pathways within ELC and OSC, and that students can gain qualifications at a number of different levels and in different ways – from work-based apprenticeships through to initial full time degrees at university.

The challenges regarding ensuring that knowledge and understanding of careers in OSC provision and the importance and complexity of the work there are equally as evident as within ELC. There are further complications in OSC, due to the often

part-time nature of the work and the smaller number of centre based settings. The need for high quality settings and suitable qualified staff is indisputable for both ELC and OSC.

Interestingly, the Scottish Out of School Care Network wrote:

'We can only improve the recruitment and retention of the best candidates by improving the status, pay and conditions of the workforce and promoting this as a valuable career path. We find in our workforce surveys that there is an increasing view that working in out of school care is a career.'
(Response to the first call for evidence)

Recommendation

29) Guidance needs to be prepared and disseminated to career service advisors, and those responsible in secondary schools for supporting young people with career choices, to ensure that they understand the importance of the work and rigours of the qualifications and day-to-day challenges in professions related to ELC and OSC.

9.9. Impact of education, training and qualifications

As yet, the evidence base regarding the impact of the new roles, responsibilities and associated qualifications within Scotland is incomplete. This is likely to be due to the short time scales in which the qualifications have been running, and further research will be important here in the future. If the impact of ELC and OSC services on children's outcomes – in terms of their socio-emotional and cognitive development – is to be fully realised, not only will the qualifications and professional development need to have the right focus, but also the inspections. Further, there will need to be a national system put in place to monitor young children's developmental progress. These all form part of the set of recommendations outlined in this Review.

The research literature suggests that many recommendations here, if implemented, are likely to impact positively on children's outcomes – and will be particularly supportive for those children living in areas of disadvantage and/or with additional learning needs. Many people, in response to the hub call for evidence and in discussions which informed the recommendations, felt that the need for improved services for children with additional learning needs warranted particular attention. The training and qualifications of workforces were seen as pertinent and fundamental to ensuring the safety, nurture and socio-emotional and cognitive development of vulnerable children such as these.

The Learning Disability Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Scotland Network wrote 'Our experience is that Out of School clubs, even when run in Special Schools do not always provide suitably trained staff and cannot manage some of the more challenging/complex children and young people. Those with the highest needs (and whose parents most need support and respite) can therefore have difficulty accessing services.'

They noted that '...respite/social opportunities are offered on a transient basis with local authority short term contracts with voluntary/third sector organisations. Particularly for our population of children/young people with complex needs, there needs to be consistency of access to services. Short term projects serve them and their families poorly and the staff who contribute to those projects inevitably are transient with little or poor opportunities to build any kind of sustained expertise.'

They suggested that access to suitable high quality OSC for children with learning disabilities '...is particularly crucial for their development as well as to offer much-needed respite to families.'

These are important criticisms and should not be overlooked, and they link to the research literature and key themes which suggest that high quality education and care is imperative to support children with learning disabilities. It is important to note, however, that the majority of OSC is provided by the third and private sector and is typically neither statutory nor grant funded. Local Authorities are key for children with disabilities, as they can support staff and settings with relevant training, experiences and even premises/resources which better meet the needs of their communities. Responses to the hub

and from the Scottish Out of School Care Network suggest a strong desire within the OSC workforce to be trained and resourced appropriately, and to be able to include all children.

Discussions around ensuring that the training and qualifications available are suitable and supportive of the workforce and their particular working context can be found in the section headed Qualifications and Recommendation 18.

In their consultation response, one ELC practitioner wrote: 'As well as learning how to support children who develop as usual… useful to know what to expect… planning support for children with special needs.' (Response to the first call for evidence)

The workforces' knowledge and understanding of child development, learning and assessment are vital and, in addition, professional development and training around the specific needs and attributes of children with more common identified medical issues and learning difficulties may be useful, e.g. supporting children with eczema, asthma, hearing loss, autistic spectrum disorder and speech and language delay. However, further work considering the developments necessary to ensure the ELC and OSC workforces are equipped to support the needs of children with complex needs and disabilities is recommended.

Research is the final element warranting consideration to ensure that Scotland continues to move forward with its transformational change. There is a demand for further high quality research in all areas of ELC and OSC, but – as the research literature suggests – this is

particularly important for childminders and OSC services, where generally there is a much smaller evidence base looking at quality.

As part of the discussions with the Core Reference Group on the recommendations, a Higher Education representative stated: 'Childminders are important… and it is essential that we know more about their contribution to continuity, stability, emotional wellbeing and learning for the children in their care.'

And the Scottish Out of School Care Network pointed to: '… a shortage of this higher level of research to inform the development of the school age childcare workforce in terms of research around out of school care.'

Recommendation

30) Further evaluation and research is needed to consider the impact of OSC and childminding on children's outcomes in Scotland.

In addition, further research considering the impact of ELC and OSC for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or with additional learning needs in needed in Scotland.

Importantly for Scotland, research making further links between inspection processes and indicators which impact on children's outcomes would also be valuable. The bodies which currently undertake ELC and OSC inspections are also those that support improvement generally and inform policy direction – so this is key for Scotland.

Currently, inspection processes are under review and the GUS report (Scottish Government, 2014c), though inconclusive due to the small sample of Education Scotland inspections, found only one link between the Care and Support theme of the Care Inspectorate and children's outcomes.

Recommendation

31) Further research is needed to consider the inspection process and how this links to children's outcomes. This would support the further development of inspection indicators, as well as ensure that inspections support improvement and continue to inform future policy direction.

10. Personal concluding comments

'When, in March 2014, the Scottish Government commissioned me to conduct this review, I little expected that it would take over my life to the extent it has. I had carried out similar pieces of work for other national governments, and did not expect my requests for co-operation and evidence to be met with such passion & eagerness – by every sector of the Scottish ELC & OSC workforce.

The volume and strength of the responses were stimulating and refreshing, and the degree of intelligent interest superseded that which I had experienced elsewhere. Through my visits and discussions, I soon learnt that the ELC & OSC sector was strong in Scotland, and had achieved much over the last couple of decades. Instead of writing a review to remedy weaknesses and shortcomings, I found that I had been given the privilege of making recommendations to develop strengths and build on good practice.

Everyone agrees that the ELC and OSC workforce must be fit-for-purpose, but what is that purpose? I believe that our sights should be higher than simply providing for children to release parents into employment, higher even than providing children with positive and effective development, wellbeing and learning (and offering the right support to their families and carers).

My view is that strengthening society, negating the impact of poverty and increasing social mobility (and their considerable concomitant economic benefits) are the ELC & OSC workforce's ultimate purpose – and that national governments are economically and sociologically short-sighted when they focus on early years' quantity at the expense of early years' quality. Strengthening and developing the ELC and OSC workforce should be a top priority for every far-sighted government. According to James Heckman, the Nobel Laureate in economics and expert in human development, it is precisely this investment which reduces national deficits and strengthens national economies. (See http://heckmanequation.org/content/resource/invest-early-childhood-development-reduce-deficits-strengthen-economy.)

Professor Heckman has shown that, 'The highest rate of return in early childhood development comes from investing as early as possible, from birth through age five…Efforts should focus on the first years for the greatest efficiency and effectiveness. The best investment is in quality early childhood development from birth to five for disadvantaged children and their families.' James J. Heckman December 7, 2012.

In my work around the world, time and again I have seen that government investment in a more professional, higher quality workforce impacts directly on quality provision for young children – and that this, in turn, yields greater economic and social returns in education, health and productivity.

Heckman's work shows that, to a unit dollar, investment in the early years and their workforce development yields greater economic returns than investment in any other sector of education – including schools and post-school sectors like training and apprenticeships.

Every child benefits from high quality ECEC, but the evidence proves that the children from families struggling in the most challenging circumstances are those who benefit the most from high quality ECEC – and it is this which delivers the economic and social gains.

Compared to other nations, Scotland has set a very exciting agenda for its children, including those in their earliest years. It has taken a huge step forward by integrating early learning with care at national policy level – and the vision is now set and real. Historically, however, ECEC services and provision have been fragmented right across Europe. And, in Scotland, separate strands from education and care still persist in some of the structures and processes around qualifications, their levels, the unions representing different parts of the workforce, inspection bodies, conditions of service, types of provision, and so on.

Not all diversity is a problem, of course, but too much fragmentation can be. The Scottish Government's national vision has begun to challenge the levels of difference and disparity, which are reflected in the workforce, but more needs to be done. My challenge has been to produce a review which recognizes the strengths of the current system (with all its diversity) yet offers recommendations which pave the way for a more unified system. This system would include a workforce which is better and higher educated, where there is a framework and entitlement to good initial training, continuous development, and well-trodden routes to further, post-graduate education.

I understand that some aspects of my recommendations for producing a better, stronger, more cohesive and fairer workforce will be challenging, and that stakeholders will need time for consultation and dialogue before they can reach a consensus. I also realize that the Scottish Government, and its agencies, will need time to evaluate the economic benefits from the reforms' budgetary implications.

I am certain, however, that my recommendations, when implemented, will result in a stronger, higher-quality workforce – and that this will, in turn, increase both the public's esteem of the sector and the positive social and economic impacts for Scotland's children, families and national economy.'

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April 2015

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12. Appendices Appendix A

An Independent Review of the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce and Out of School Care Workforce.

Terms of Reference

Policy Context

- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act will deliver an increase in the funded entitlement to a minimum of 600 hours per year for 3 and 4 year olds, and 15% of 2 year olds, from August 2014. There will be a further expansion from August 2015, meaning that 27% of 2 year olds will be entitled to 600 hours of funded provision.

- The Act is also setting the stage for further expansion to meet the Scottish Government's wider ambitions to develop a high quality, flexible system of early learning and childcare that meets the needs of all children, parents and families. This includes a requirement on Local Authorities to consult parents on their needs in relation to all early learning and childcare and out of school care which they have duties or powers to deliver or support; and, not just the statutory entitlement to provide a degree of choice and flexibility over the funded entitlement to 600 hours.

- The Scottish Government's White Paper, 'Scotland's Future', sets out an ambitious programme to further expand high quality early learning and childcare for children aged 1-5 in the longer term.

- A significantly expanded and qualified workforce will be vital to deliver the improved and expanded system of childcare outlined in the White Paper. It is estimated that an expansion to 1,140 hours, as set out in 'Scotland's Future', will require around 35,000 additional staff in nurseries and early years centres. This represents double the number currently working within these settings.

- The last National Review of Early Years Workforce in Scotland took place in 2006. Since then, there have been major advances, particularly in the field of neuroscience, highlighting the importance of the earliest years of a child's life in terms of influencing their future outcomes cognitively, socially, emotionally and behaviourally.

- The Early Years Framework, published jointly by Scottish Government and COSLA in 2008, sets out the case for early intervention, and sets the strategic direction for early years policy in Scotland.

- The Scottish Government wants to see a significant shift to preventative spend in the early years and has set up an Early Years Taskforce to lead the drive to preventative spend at a national level.

- This is supported by the establishment of a £274.25 million Early Years Change Fund over this Parliamentary term and by the establishment of an Early Years Collaborative from November 2012.

- Given the significantly changed landscape in early years since 2006, it is timely to undertake a new Review to look at a range of issues relating to recruitment, training, skills and qualifications, career progression and status of the workforce.

Purpose of Review

To identify and make recommendations on how the skills, qualifications and training of staff working within the early learning and childcare and out of school care sectors, from birth to age 14, can contribute to improved outcomes for children, help to reduce social inequality and close the attainment gap, based on the evidence gathered in the course of the Review and wider research evidence.

Key Areas for Review

This Review will look at a number of key areas:

• Skills, training and qualifications of the early learning and childcare workforce, including teachers, Childhood Practitioners and all other levels of the workforce

• Recruitment and retention in the workforce, to ensure the right people are attracted to working in the sector

• Career Pathways, including continual professional development pathways, to ensure that staff are encouraged to progress their careers within that sector

• Status of Early Learning and Childcare Workforce, in recognition that working with young children is vitally important work, and should be valued as such

• Workforce Planning, to identify the steps needed to grow the early learning and childcare workforce over the next decade, including consideration of the level of qualifications and training that should be aimed for, to enable a significant expansion of high quality provision in this timescale

• Status, skills, training and qualifications of the out of school care workforce.

Key Questions for Review

• What are the key, critical skills, knowledge and experience necessary to achieve high quality learning and care in early years and out of school care?

• How best to support staff who are undertaking different levels of qualifications including the higher level qualifications such as teacher training, early years specialism, and the BA Childhood Practice Award or similar?

• How to provide opportunities for training and up-skilling the teaching workforce in specific early years pedagogy to help improve the delivery of quality experiences for children?

• How to up-skill the whole workforce in early childhood pedagogy through relevant continuing professional development to help in the delivery of quality experiences for children?

• Is there scope for any further activity or support for the workforce to increase skills of those working with young children at all levels?

• How to increase the status of the early years workforce as a profession?

• How to increase levels of recruitment and retention of the best candidates to build careers within early learning and childcare, to grow a high quality workforce in future?

• How can staff, including heads and managers (teachers and childhood practitioners), with different skills, training and qualifications best be deployed to ensure a high quality provision for young children?

- Is the existing training for all those working within the early years workforce and the out of school care workforce equipping them with the skills and knowledge to provide high quality early learning experiences for young children?

Structure for Review

Professor Iram Siraj will chair the review, assisted by a researcher. Professor Siraj will engage with a wide range of stakeholders from across Scotland to gather views, perspectives and data for the Review. This will include a web-based consultation exercise. The Chair will also conduct a literature review of relevant research on the issues set out in the Terms of Reference. The Chair will produce a report for the Scottish Government with recommendations by 15 April 2015.

The Review will be informed by expert knowledge derived from:

- Writing a literature review on best training and qualifications to achieve high quality early learning and childcare.

- Visits to early years settings and discussion with practitioners local authority, partner providers, and, private and third sectors provision.

- Documentary analysis; e.g. content of training, vocational and academic courses; web based and other sources and resources; Government reports, guidance and documents.

- Focus Group discussions with practitioners, advisors, academics etc.

- Meetings with key stakeholders.

- Questionnaires completed via Scottish Govt consultations hub.

- Scottish Govt Officials and Ministers.

The Chair will also draw on the expertise of a Core Reference Group, comprised of the organisations listed below, who represent a range of interests on early years workforce in Scotland.

EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland)

SSSC (Scottish Social Services Council)

UNISON

STUC (Scottish Trades Union Congress)

COSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities)

Dr Christine Stephen, University of Stirling (early childhood academic)

Professor Aline-Wendy Dunlop, Emeritus Professor, University of Strathclyde

West College Scotland

West Lothian College

SQA, (Scottish Qualifications Authority)

Education Scotland

Care Inspectorate

ADES (Association of Directors of Education in Scotland) Early Years Representatives

Skills Development Scotland

National Day Nurseries Association

Scottish Out of School Care Network

Scottish Childminding Association

AHDS (Association of Heads and Deputy Heads Scotland)

GTCS (General Teaching Council Scotland)

The role of the Reference Group will be to contribute expertise, knowledge and a range of perspectives to the Review. Professor Siraj will meet members of the group individually in the first instance in order that they can:

• Provide an overview of key issues;

• Identify potential visits and other key stakeholders to engage with;

• Assist the Chair to establish ongoing contacts and sources of expertise;

• Represent their members or interests.

The Reference Group will also meet formally, particularly during the second phase of the Review, to comment on the Chair's initial findings and consider drafts of the final report.

The Chair will be supported throughout the Review by Scottish Government officials within the Early Years Division, as below:

Kathryn Chisholm – Early Years Workforce Review Manager/ Policy Lead

Liz Paterson – Professional Advisor to the Scottish Government on Early Learning and Childcare; and, the Early Years Workforce Review

Susan Bolt – Team Leader, Early Learning and Childcare

Stuart Robb – Unit Head, Early Years Policy Development Unit.

The Chair will also undertake a wide ranging programme of wider engagement with key stakeholders throughout the Review process, to be agreed with officials from the Scottish Government's Early Years team.

The Chair should produce a final report setting out recommendations on all aspects of the Review, as set out in the Terms of Reference, no later than 15 April.

Appendix B

Table showing how the recommendations relate to the questions in the Terms of Reference document.

Question taken form the terms of reference for the review	Associated recommendation(s)
What are the key, critical skills, knowledge and experience necessary to achieve high quality learning and care in early years and out of school care?	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28, 29, 30.
How best to support staff who are undertaking different levels of qualifications including the higher level qualifications such as teacher training, early years specialism, and the BA Childhood Practice Award or similar?	1, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.
How to provide opportunities for training and up-skilling the teaching workforce in specific early years' pedagogy to help improve the delivery of quality experiences for children?	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 27, 28.
How to up-skill the whole workforce in early childhood pedagogy through relevant continuing professional development to help in the delivery of quality experiences for children?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30.
Is there scope for any further activity or support for the workforce to increase skills of those working with young children at all levels?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.
How to increase the status of the early years workforce as a profession?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.
How to increase levels of recruitment and retention of the best candidates to build careers within early learning and childcare, to grow a high quality workforce in future?	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.
How can staff, including heads and managers (teachers and childhood practitioners), with different skills, training and qualifications best be deployed to ensure a high quality provision for young children?	1, 2, 7, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30.
Is the existing training for all those working within the early years workforce and the out of school care workforce equipping them with the skills and knowledge to provide high quality early learning experiences for young children?	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29, 30.

Appendix C

Focus Group and meetings: practitioners:

- Childminders
- Early learning and childcare practitioners
- Primary school teachers
- Providers of out of school care training and qualifications
- Representatives of the Scottish Childminding Association
- Representatives from the Scottish Out of School Care Network

Appendix D

Focus Group and meeting contributors. Stakeholder institutions, bodies, representatives etc.:

- Acting Minister for Children and Young People
- Association of Heads and Deputy Heads Scotland
- Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning
- Care Inspectorate
- Children in Scotland
- City of Edinburgh Council with responsibility for early learning and childcare
- Core Reference Group
- Cowgate Pre-5 Nursery
- Deputy Director, Early Years Division
- Director for Children and Families, Scottish Government
- Director of Education
- Director General, DG Learning and Justice, Scottish Government
- Director for Learning, Scottish Government
- Early Years Division officials
- Early Years Policy Delivery Unit
- Educational Institute of Scotland
- Education Scotland
- Employers' representatives
- General Teaching Council Scotland
- Glasgow City Council
- Glasgow Clyde College who deliver HNC
- Minister for Children and Young People
- National Day Nurseries Association

Appendix E

- Permanent Secretary of Scottish Government
- Private training providers delivering the SVQ
- Scottish Childminding Association
- Scottish Government officials from Children and Families Directorate
- Scottish Pre-School Play Association
- Scottish Out of School Care Network
- Scottish Social Services Council
- Statistician from Education Scotland
- UNISON representing public sector workers
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Stirling
- University of Strathclyde
- University of the West of Scotland
- West College Scotland who deliver HNC
- West Lothian College who deliver HNC

List of visits:

- After-school care club at Craigour Primary
- Fort Early Years Centre (Local Authority centre) – Edinburgh
- Greenbank Pre-school Playgroup
- Melville Street nursery, Edinburgh
- North Edinburgh Childcare (social enterprise childcare facility) – Edinburgh
- Parkhead Community Nursery (local authority centre) – Glasgow
- St Francis Primary School Nursery Class (Local Authority nursery class) – Glasgow
- St Leonards Nursery School, Edinburgh

Appendix F

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First consultation: questions:

- Skills, training and qualifications of the early learning and childcare workforce, including teachers, Childhood Practitioners and all other levels of the workforce

- Recruitment and retention in the workforce, to ensure the right people are attracted to working in the sector

- Career Pathways, including continual professional development pathways, to ensure that staff are encouraged to progress their careers within that sector

- Status of Early Learning and Childcare Workforce, in recognition that working with young children is vitally important work, and should be valued as such

- Workforce Planning, to identify the steps needed to grow the early learning and childcare workforce over the next decade, including consideration of the level of qualifications and training that should be aimed for, to enable a significant expansion of high quality provision in this timescale

- Status, skills, training and qualifications of the out of school care workforce.

Appendix G

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Second consultation: questionnaire:

About you/your setting

1. Please indicate one category which best describes you:

   Out of School Care: employer/owner; manager; practitioner; trainee; other professional

   Training provider: BA Childhood Practice, SVQ playwork etc

   Parent/carer

   Young person

   Union/professional representation

   Other
   Please specify

2. Please describe the setting in which you work or have contact (e.g. out of school care, playwork, breakfast club, holiday care).

3. Please select the qualification(s) you currently hold or qualifications the staff hold in the setting you are discussing:

   ☐ No Qualification

   ☐ Level 1: Access 1

   ☐ Level 2: National progressions Awards, National Certificates

   ☐ Level 3: Foundation Standard Grades, National Progressions Awards, National Certificates

   ☐ Level 4: Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 1, National Progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 5: Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 2, National progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 6: Highers, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 7: Professional Development Awards, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificates of Higher education (CertHE), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 3, Advanced Highers

☐ Level 8: Professional Development Awards, Higher National Diplomas, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 4, Diplomas of Higher Educations (DipHE)

☐ Level 9: Bachelors/Ordinary degrees (BA, BSc), Professional Development Awards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

☐ Level 10: Bachelor's degrees with Honours (BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

☐ Level 11: Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates

☐ Level 12: Professional Development Awards, Doctoral Degrees

4. Are you currently training for a qualification? If yes which one?

5. Are you/your setting registered with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Answer: yes / no / unsure

Your priorities

6. In your opinion what are the most important things children need from the staff who work with them in out of school care?

7. In your opinion what are the most important things families need from the adults who work with their children?

Status

8. We believe the work of the out of school care workforce is vitally important. How do you think the general public perceive the workforce?

9. Do you think the public's perception of the workforce could be improved and if so how?

10. Do you believe we have the right mix of people in the workforce (ie a workforce that is sufficiently diverse and inclusive when considering characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age)? If not how might we change this?

11. Do you believe the profession attracts high enough quality recruits? How would you suggest we recruit the best people and retain them within the profession?

Qualifications and training

12. How well do you think you/the staff you work with have been taught? The blend of skills, knowledge and capabilities they have gained through their training and qualifications are... Excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, poor, very poor

13. What skills, knowledge and capabilities should be taught through initial training and qualifications?

14. What skills, knowledge and capabilities should be taught through ongoing continuous professional development/ training?

15. Do you believe the current qualifications equip people to move between out of school care and other parts of the social care workforce e.g. younger children to older children to the elderly?

16. How well do you rate the general standard of delivery of qualifications and training courses?

    Excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, poor, very poor, too varied to say, no recent experience, not sure?

17. Consider your latest or most important qualification/training and explain how relevant and useful it has been in supporting your understanding and practice in working within out of school care? Please state the qualification/ training first followed by your description.

18. Considering what is currently available to you (and other staff in your setting) to support your understanding of high quality out of school care, what would you suggest to improve this?

19. Drawing on your experiences of training and qualifications how might you have been better supported while studying for those?

20. Are there any barriers to accessing initial training and/or continuous professional development/training? Please explain.

21. Do you think that the quality assurance processes for qualification(s) and training are fit for purpose?

22. Do you believe that all out of school care settings should have a lead graduate practitioner? Please explain your views.

Skills, knowledge and experience

23. Are there particular skills, knowledge and experiences that are specific to out of school care? And if so what are they?

24. What would you say are the key aspects of high quality out of school care practice? How do you ensure that that these experiences exist in your setting?

Staffing

25. What mix of staff do you think makes the best team of out of school care workers?

26. Do you believe different staff require different training and qualifications? If so please explain.

27. Are there any obstacles to developing a higher quality workforce that you can identify?

28. How would you suggest career pathways and progression might be improved within the out of school care workforce?

29. Any further information that you believe would support the review of the out of school care workforce.

Questionnaire: the Independent review of the Early Learning and Childcare Workforce

About you/your setting

1. Please indicate one category which best describes you:

   Early Learning and Childcare: employer/owner; manager; practitioner; trainee; other professional

   Training provider: BA Childhood studies, BA Childhood Practitioner, Initial Teacher Education, please describe

   Parent/carer

   Childminder

   Early Years Teacher

   Union/professional representation

   Other
   Please specify

2. Please indicate one category which best describes the setting in which you work or have contact:

   Childminder

   LA Nursery Class

   LA Nursery School

   Other LA/Daycare or Family Centre

   Private Setting e.g. daycare, nursery

   Voluntary Setting e.g. playgroup, pre-school

   Further Education, please specify (e.g. provides qualifications in NC, HCN, SVQ, PDA)

   Higher Education, please specify (e.g. provides qualifications in BA Childhood Practice, BA Education etc)

   Other

3. Please select the qualification(s) you currently hold or qualifications the staff hold in the setting you are discussing:

☐ No qualification

☐ Level 1: Access 1

☐ Level 2: National progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 3: Foundation Standard Grades, National Progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 4: Intermediate 1, General Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 1, National Progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 5: Intermediate 2, Credit Standard Grade, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 2, National progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 6: Highers, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 3, Professional Development Awards, National Progressions Awards, National Certificates

☐ Level 7: Professional Development Awards, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Certificates of Higher education (CertHE), Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 3, Advanced Highers

☐ Level 8: Professional Development Awards, Higher National Diplomas, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 4, Diplomas of Higher Educations (DipHE)

☐ Level 9: Bachelors/Ordinary degrees (BA, BSc), Professional Development Awards, Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 4, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

☐ Level 10: Bachelor's degrees with Honours (BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), Professional Development Awards, Graduate Diplomas, Graduate Certificates

☐ Level 11: Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SQV) level 5, Professional Development Awards, Postgraduate Diplomas, Master's Degrees, Integrated Master's Degrees, Postgraduate Certificates

☐ Level 12: Professional Development Awards, Doctoral Degrees

4. Are you currently training for a qualification? If yes which one?

5. Are you/your setting registered with Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

   Answer: yes / no / unsure

6. Who inspects your setting

   Answer: Education Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Unsure

Your priorities

7. In your opinion what are the most important things children need from the staff who work with them in early learning and childcare?

8. In your opinion what are the most important things families need from the adults who work with their children?

Status

9. We believe the work of the early learning and childcare workforce is vitally important. How do you think the general public perceive the early learning and childcare workforce?

10. Do you think the public's perception of the workforce could be improved and if so how?

11. Do you believe we have the right mix of people in the workforce (ie a workforce that is sufficiently diverse and inclusive when considering characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age)? If not how might we change this?

12. Do you believe the profession attracts high enough quality recruits? How would you suggest we recruit the best people and retain them within the profession?

Qualifications and training

13. How well do you think you/the early learning and childcare practitioners you work with have been taught? The blend of skills, knowledge and capabilities they have gained through their training and qualifications are…

   Excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, poor, very poor

14. What skills, knowledge and capabilities should be taught through initial training and qualifications?

15. What skills, knowledge and capabilities should be taught through ongoing continuous professional development/ training?

16. Do you believe the current qualifications equip people to move between early learning and childcare and other parts of the social care workforce e.g. younger children to older children to the elderly?

17. How well do you rate the general standard of delivery of qualifications and training courses?

   Excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, poor, very poor, too varied to say, no recent experience, not sure

18. Consider your latest or most important qualification/training and explain how relevant and useful it has been in supporting your understanding and practice in working within early learning and childcare? Please state the qualification/training first followed by your description.

19. Considering what is currently available to you (and other staff in your setting) to support your understanding of high quality early learning and childcare, what would you suggest to improve this?

20. Drawing on your experiences of training and qualifications how might you have been better supported while studying for those?

21. Are there any barriers to accessing initial training and/or continuous professional development/training? Please explain.

22. Do you think that the quality assurance processes for qualification(s) and training are fit for purpose?

23. The government is committed to having a graduate practitioner in all early learning and childcare settings, what are your views on this?

Skills, knowledge and experience

24. Are there particular skills, knowledge and experiences that are specific to early learning and childcare? And if so what are they?

25. What would you say are the key aspects of high quality early years learning and childcare practice? How do you ensure that that these experiences exist in your setting?

Staffing

26. What do you think makes the best team of early years practitioners? (You may include: Early Years Teachers, Early Childhood Practitioners, Nursery Nurses, Nursery Assistants, Support Assistants, Support Workers, others etc.)

27. Do you believe different staff require different training and qualifications? If so please explain.

28. Are there clear career pathways and progression routes within early learning and childcare for you and the people you work with?

Answer: Yes / no / not sure
Please explain your answer

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29. The government intends to expand the Early Learning and Childcare workforce in the future to support the learning and care of more and younger children. What advice would you give to ensure the workforce is suitable and ready to provide the high quality practice necessary?

30. Are there any obstacles to developing a higher quality workforce that you can identify?

31. Any further information that you believe would support the review of the early learning and childcare workforce.