

Key Proposals

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

I expect work to construct an integrated qualifications and professional development framework to start in September 2006 and to be completed by September 2007.

I expect programmes offering the new qualifications and professional development for leaders to be in place by September 2008.

I expect programmes offering new qualifications and professional development for those entering and progressing through the workforce to be in place by September 2009.

I expect a toolkit which supports understanding of progression routes for early years and childcare workers to be in place by September 2009.

I expect the workforce to be considered as a highly regarded, high quality, highly qualified sector with workers earnings reflecting the quality of qualifications.

I expect local authorities to offer increased flexibility in delivering early years and childcare services.

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

From this year, I will invest an additional £5m p.a. in pre-school education to fund an increase in the “advisory floor” used to inform local authority decisions about the cost of providing preschool places.

In the longer term I intend to move towards a position where all centres providing quality services are funded on a similar basis.

Overview of Proposals

In this response I set out what I intend to do to start the process, building on the progress

we have already made in improving services and providing development opportunities for

many staff within the sector. The key actions I intend to take are:

Developing leadership in the early years and childcare sector by creating a workforce that is led by degree (or a work-based equivalent) qualified professionals.

I want the first managers to be able to start continuing professional development routes to the new professional leadership level by September 2008. I will ask the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) to amend their registration requirements from 2011 to require lead practitioner/managers to have attained this leadership level or to attain it within a specified period.

Creating a genuine career structure for the workforce where career progression and development is supported by a qualifications and professional development framework. I want the framework to be in place by September 2009 to allow workers to develop their professional skill and competence to progress their careers, which for some will be towards management and leadership roles. Our analysis supported by economic theory indicates that increasing levels of qualification in the workforce would be expected to lead to increasing pay in the sector.

Supporting private and voluntary sector providers of pre-school education to invest in their workforces by providing an additional £5m each year to increase the "advisory floor". Increased payments to providers will begin in the 2006-07 school year. I am confident that together, these actions will improve the status and recognition of the workforce and support improved recruitment, retention and progression within the sector.

There are many partners involved in delivering early education and childcare services. This response gives a clear lead to partners and stakeholders as to the action they need to take to deliver the high quality, flexible services parents demand:

I want **local authorities** to develop and support career pathways for their staff.

All staff in early education and childcare should be clear about routes for progression and have access to development opportunities that will allow them to work towards securing promoted posts and leadership positions, where they have the personal qualities to fulfil such roles. I would expect implementation of career pathways leading to staff increasing their level of qualifications and

responsibility will affect job evaluation processes and, consequently, levels of reward.

I will update guidance to **local authorities** to require them to work more closely with their partner providers to ensure a high quality service is delivered to all children. Central to this must be greater equity in partnership arrangements and funding for pre-school education providers.

Scottish Executive Response

In return, I expect **private and voluntary sector pre-school providers** to use this additional support to ensure that they can attract, train and retain staff, ensure that their staff meet registration requirements and support workers' professional development. The level of professionalism of their workforce, particularly amongst leaders and managers, must be as high as other parts of the sector if they are to achieve the consistently high standards of service that children deserve.

I am asking the **Scottish Social Services Council** to deliver a 3 year programme to develop a qualifications and professional development framework. I will ask it to do so in partnership with key stakeholders including representatives of employers, the workforce and education and training providers.

We will only achieve the outcomes that we seek if **employers** assist their **managers and staff** to take ownership of their increasingly professional identity by actively managing their own careers and making