

**Date: 13 December 2017**

## **Empowering Schools consultation briefing**

### **1. What is the Empowering Schools consultation?**

The Scottish Government is [consulting on the provisions of the Education \(Scotland\) Bill](#) which includes proposals to create a new workforce regulator, the Education Workforce Council, to register all workers in education roles. This proposal includes regulation of early years practitioners working in schools.

### **2. Should I respond to the consultation?**

The SSSC will respond to the consultation and we would encourage anyone working or with an interest in the early years sector to respond too. We have more than 38,500 daycare of children practitioners on our Register, many working in early years at all levels and in different types of services including private nurseries, pre-schools to school nurseries.

The consultation closes on 30 January 2018.

### **3. I'm an early years practitioner in a school – what will this mean for me?**

It is not clear from the consultation what it might mean for early years practitioners working in schools. If the proposed new regulator does go ahead, the Scottish Government have told us that the priority will be the registration of workers who are not currently registered or regulated. This would not be early years practitioners who currently register with the SSSC. Even if the changes do go ahead they will likely be some years off.

### **4. I work in a private or voluntary early years service – what will this mean for me?**

The consultation does not mention early years practitioners working in the private or voluntary sector so it is unclear whether the proposals would have any impact on them.

If you have any questions about the proposals and the consultation, please contact the Education Bill Team directly on 0131 244 7014 or by email at [EducationReform@gov.scot](mailto:EducationReform@gov.scot)

### **5. What about play workers and out-of-school club workers?**

The consultation does not mention play workers or out-of-school club workers so it is unclear whether the proposals would have any impact on them.

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**6. The consultation says setting professional standards and values will improve professional identity and practice but we already have the Codes.**

The early years workforce is a regulated profession in its own right with a strong sense of professional identity, which is supported by registration with the SSSC.

All registered early years practitioners already work to the SSSC Codes of Practice which set out the behaviours and values expected of social service workers. All of our registered workers have to have, or achieve, a recognised qualification.

The early years workforce is led by highly skilled people with degree level qualifications in childhood practice, a commitment to continued professional learning and an ethos of sharing good practice.

The consultation does not recognise any of those things and doesn't explain what gap the proposal is intended to address.

**7. The consultation says the proposed Education Workforce Council will establish and review standards of education, professional learning and leadership – what does this mean for the Standard for Childhood Practice?**

It is 10 years since we published the [Standard for Childhood Practice](#) and we revised it in 2015 to make sure it was up to date and reflected current practice and policy.

The degree level qualifications based on the Standard have played an important role in developing the early years profession. Two independent studies, [Making the Difference. The impact of staff qualifications on children's learning in early years](#) (Education Scotland, 2012) and [Taking the First Steps – is Childhood Practice Working?](#) (Scottish Social Services Council, 2014), assessed its impact favourably.

We would expect that to continue whatever changes might happen as a result of the consultation and whoever sets the standards in future, but there is no mention of this in the consultation.

**8. Will the changes mean you have to be qualified before you register with the proposed new regulator?**

It is not clear from the consultation whether it will remain the same, that is early years workers can register with the SSSC and work towards their qualification, or if the changes will include a requirement to be qualified before registration.

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**9. Will registration with the proposed new regulator be mandatory?**

It is not clear from the consultation whether registration for early years practitioners will be mandatory as it only mentions mandatory registration of teachers. For many early years practitioners registration and regulation with the SSSC has been an important part of building a professional identity.

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