

Early Years Professionals: EYP Factsheet

Introduction

The Early Years Professional status (EYPS) is just one part of the Government's commitment to the Every Child Matters Agenda. It recognises excellence in leadership skills across a range of national graduate-level standards associated with working with children from birth to five years. Aspect has now established an autonomous section for EYPs, led by a National Committee, to ensure EYPs have a strong voice on the national stage, and access to ongoing professional advice, development and mutual support.

Background

Evidence from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education 2003 study shows that improving the quality of the early years experience is directly related to better outcomes for children. Key factors contributing to the quality of this experience are well-qualified leaders, trained teachers working alongside and supporting less qualified staff and staff with a good understanding of child development and learning.

Within the "Children's Workforce Strategy", proposed by the Government, EYPs represent part of the aims to create a "world class" workforce and to improve the levels of qualified staff working in the early years, particularly in terms of providing career opportunities.

What is an Early Years Professional (EYP)?

It is intended that a graduate EYP will lead multi-professional early childhood practice across the new Early Years Foundation Stage; the government's target is that there should be an EYP employed in every children's centre by 2010 and one in every private full day nursery by 2015. There is also an aspirational target to have 2 EYPs in private day nurseries in areas of disadvantage although funding issues remain complex.

EYPs are intended to be equal in status to teachers:

- The EYP is a new role or 'status' that should raise the quality of early years provision and improve practice.
- The EYP role includes responsibilities leading the delivery of the new Early Years Foundation Stage
- This encompasses leadership in play, care and learning, and mentoring and coaching for other staff involved in early years practice within the setting
- EYPs are a key contributor to the government's intention to build a well trained, highly motivated workforce that will ensure quality provision helping children achieve their potential and supporting parents and families.

How do you become an EYP?

An EYP is a level 6 status, an equivalent level to, but very different from being a teacher, responsible for learning, care and development of children aged 0 - 5. For those with a level 6 (graduate) qualification the 'pathway' of training will vary, with both full time and part time routes available depending on an individual's prior experience.

For those without a degree (nursery nurses are often qualified to level 3), the most common study route is to undertake an early years foundation degree (level 5), then a 'pathway' to reach EYP status.

The following groups may be eligible for the funding to do the EYPS work-based pathways:

- Candidates from Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) full day-care and children's centres
- Candidates from sessional care or childminders (particularly those leading childminder networks)
- Candidates from maintained full day-care settings such as social services family centres; and
- Candidates involved in training the early years workforce in PVI settings and Children's Centres, such as Advisory teachers, LA early years development officers and FE teachers

There are no eligibility criteria for candidates wishing to do the full time twelve-month pathway other than graduate status. Candidates that meet the entry requirements can apply to training providers.

What is the Graduate Leader Fund?

The Graduate Leader Fund is money provided by the DCSF (Department of Children Schools and Families) to fund support for the recruitment, retention and training of people with the right qualifications.

- For further details on the national funding provision visit:
<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/workforcereform/earlyyearsworkforce/>
- Contact your local authority for details of local arrangements and to see if your setting is eligible for funding.

What are the pay and conditions for EYPs?

Aspect is calling for EYPs, who are regarded as being "equivalent to" but not the same as qualified teachers (with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)), to be employed on equivalent terms and conditions. To date, however, there

has been no proposal put forward for a national pay scale or for conditions of service.

Aspect's policy paper, which has already been raised with both the DCSF and the CWDC, called "Making the EYP project a success" focuses on pay and conditions of service. Aspect Members can access the policy here (link)..

What professional development (CPD) is available for EYPs?

There are two key drives around CPD for EYPs.

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has provided a fund designed to support local authorities that are 'driving forward' the development of their support network through innovative, interesting or integrated ideas. Practice varies but examples of how the Fund has been utilised include:

- joint meetings with other Local Authorities
- integration of technology into their network to improve EYP deployment
- support for the establishment of a "network library" with both books and materials to be shared among EYPs and settings
- innovative ways of sharing best working practices
- the facilitation of development trips such as pedagogy-focused visits to Scandinavia or tours of the settings and streets of Reggio Emilia.

Aspect's EYP section has also published a CPD protocol (available here for members - link) which has been discussed with both the CWDC and the DCSF, as well as forming the basis for ongoing discussions with various training providers.

How do EYPs relate to other parts of the children's workforce?

EYPs work collaboratively with other colleagues providing leadership, mentoring and coaching to enable all staff in the setting to contribute to raising the quality of provision and improving outcomes for children. EYPS and QTS are both professional statuses, based on a different set of skills and knowledge - they are not interchangeable. The detailed relationship between QTS and EYPS needs further clarification especially in the context of new Early Years Foundation Stage.

EYPs also work as part of multi-agency teams, and alongside other children's services professionals such as social workers, extended schools officers, and those in parent partnership roles.

What are the outstanding Issues?

With EYP status still in its infancy, many features of the role, its operation and relationships remain not fully clear. There are outstanding questions of detail in the points above and practice varies around the country.

So join Aspect today: your voice needs to be heard. EYPs are leading the way in their settings and local authorities. Working within Aspect EYPs are also leading the way nationally - and with your support we will ensure progress continues to build a world class workforce within Early Years. The EYP application form is available [here](#) (link).

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