

Launch of the Early Education and Childcare Qualifications Review

I am grateful for the opportunity to undertake this review and work with you on something so important, something we have to get right.

It is clear to me that the quality of early years education is an essential part of what we do to improve the life chances of all children, particularly the most vulnerable and that we need to ensure this quality is sustained.

A good quality pre-school experience, for example, has a positive effect on achievement in English and maths at age 11 and on social and behavioural outcomes. And the evidence shows a clear link between a well-qualified, skilled, professional early years workforce and children's healthy development.

That is why the early years workforce is critical to giving children the best start in life. They are responsible for the care, education, development and wellbeing of over three million young children in this country.

Recent years have seen a steady improvement in the skills of the early education and childcare workforce and progress here was noted by Dame Clare Tickell in her review of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

My Review will look at qualifications for the foundation years workforce, and will in particular consider five themes: content of qualifications and training courses, coherence and inclusivity, creating clear career pathways, standards, and the status of the workforce. I will be making a wide ranging assessment of the current qualifications landscape and opportunities for strengthening the system, with a view to putting proposals before the Secretary of State for Education and the Minister of State for Children and Families in summer 2012.

So far my approach to this review has been to listen to what sector representatives and experts say and I will do more of this. There will be a number of intensive discussions over the consultation period, including a series of targeted workshops – details to be released shortly.

I now want to delve deeper and engage in discussion with large numbers of people who have an interest in the early years and childcare qualifications, including people who work in the sector, employers, parents, training providers, academics and local authorities.

I am keen that as many people as possible respond to the call for evidence so as key partner organisations can I ask that you encourage them to take part.



Professor Cathy Nutbrown