

## Media Release

**\*\*EMBARGO UNTIL WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE\*\***

**30/06/2010**

### **Helping services work together to 'get it right' for children Government conference looks at Scottish pedagogues**

Introducing Scottish pedagogues could raise standards in children's services, provide a more flexible professional workforce for the children's sector and help improve outcomes for children, a government conference will hear today.

In a new report *Exploring the benefits of Danish pedagogy*, Scottish practitioners look at what the pedagogue model, successfully established in other European countries, could bring to the children's sector in Scotland as the workforce aspires to deliver services in a more holistic way.

The report and conference share feedback from the government's Working It Out debate, facilitated by Children in Scotland, which has engaged thousands of children's sector workers in discussion about how best to ensure services can respond to new challenges in the future. Piloting a Scottish pedagogue model is an option that has received support from across the sector.

In the report Scottish practitioners highlight stability, continuity, flexibility and professionalism as defining characteristics of the pedagogue approach, along with transferable skills crucial for meeting children's physical and emotional needs across a range of settings – including education, health, residential care, and additional support needs.

They consider the work of pedagogues in a range of practice settings in Denmark, including residential care, where currently 6 out of 10 young care leavers progress to higher education: in Britain the figure is 6 out of 100.

Minister for Children and Early Years Adam Ingram said:

"Nearly a quarter of a million people work in our services for children, young people and their families – contributing to a sector which is fundamental to Scotland. Much discussion has focused on the importance of working together. It has highlighted the distance we still have to go in ensuring, for example, that many of those working with the youngest and/or most vulnerable of our children are given the education and support they require and has focused attention on the advantages we might gain from greater flexibility in workforce roles.

In this report a group of experienced employers, practitioners and those involved in planning and delivery of qualifications and training share their experiences of services in Denmark where pedagogues constitute the main staffing group in a wide range of services working with children and adults. I look forward to further discussions taking place on how we might take forward some of the points arising from these examples.”

Bob White, a British bricklayer now working as a pedagogue in Denmark, said: “I worked as an assistant pedagogue with adults who had drug and alcohol problems, and then started my degree to become a fully qualified pedagogue. I was attracted by the professional autonomy that pedagogues have, and by the higher salary. I value my qualification enormously. I feel it enables me to separate my own personal views from my work. I can stand back and analyse children’s behaviour with confidence, then intervene if I believe it is necessary. I can create opportunities for children.”

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The National Workforce Conference takes place today (Wednesday 30 June) at the Sheraton Hotel, Festival Square, Edinburgh. It will share feedback from the government’s Working It Out programme, which began in November 2008, and stimulate ideas about what should happen next.
2. In Scotland a wide range of subject-specific educational qualifications prepare people for jobs and roles in settings where there can be a considerable overlap of skills and knowledge. Professional pedagogues, educated to degree level or beyond, are equipped to cover a range of roles working with both children and adults, and a range of settings, from education through preschool and out of school care, to health, youth services, social work, childrens’ services, in residential care settings and among people with disabilities.
3. **Children in Scotland** is the longstanding national agency for the whole of the children’s sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk).

**The report *Exploring the benefits of Danish pedagogy* is attached.**

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### **More quotes on and from the report**

“Having been closely involved with the management of social care services over many years, I believe the pedagogy model offers us a powerful tool to help bring about improvement and resolve some apparently intractable problems.”

*Phil Robinson, formerly chief executive of Quarriers*

“We welcome the findings of this report, which reinforces our own experience of the holistic pedagogical approach. We are keen to see the development of Scottish pilot pedagogy programmes to equip the existing children’s workforce with practical, transferable and valuable skills that not only ensure the best possible care for Scotland’s children, but aid the flexibility and mobility of the workforce, essential to both employers and employees in a challenging economic climate.”

*Irene Audain, chief executive of the Scottish Out of School Care Network*

“The pedagogues’ three-and-a-half years of training showed in their approach to children. It also showed in their ability to offer explanations of their actions, explicit aims and intentions in working in the way they did, in the way they planned the use of resources, and in the activities they offered children. It was especially seen in their ability to analyse and assess risks themselves, to establish explicitly norms and expectations of behaviour for children, and then to leave children a great deal of freedom in exploring their environment by themselves, to the benefit of their social and intellectual development.”

*Jill Bourne, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Strathclyde*

“The practitioners have both a clear understanding of and an unswerving commitment to the children and young people maintaining connections and developing relationships with their parents. This was not with the expectation of the children returning home necessarily, but rather in appreciation of the important role of parents in the lives of children, regardless of where they may eventually live. The staff members’ nonjudgmental attitudes toward the parents were evident in how they spoke about the parents and described the parents’ regular visits into the heart of the home.”

*Jennifer Davidson, Director, Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC)*

“At each and every setting I encountered confident children who were comfortable with themselves and their peers. To use the terms of Curriculum for Excellence, they were confident individuals, effective contributors, responsible citizens and successful learners.”

*Peter Diamond, Assistant Assistant Director, Education and Leisure Services, Orkney Islands Council and Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES)*