

Response to Review of Teacher Education

Children in Scotland is pleased to submit evidence to the Review of Teacher Education in Scotland.

The review needs to take place in the context of developments within the wider children's sector workforce.

The focus of our evidence will be:

- The need for teachers to recognise their profession as an important part of a wider children's sector workforce made up of approximately a quarter of a million people who should all share the same overarching goal
- Support among the children's sector workforce for development of a 'common core' – skills, knowledge and values that everyone working with children and families in Scotland should share
- Support for exploring the benefits of pedagogy to the children's sector workforce in Scotland and the relevance of this for the teaching profession
- Skills that will enable teachers to deliver Curriculum for Excellence and other policies such as Getting it Right for Every Child and the Early Years Framework.

In 2008, Children in Scotland invited the children's sector workforce, with employers, planners, universities, colleges and other stakeholders to join us in debate about future workforce development. The debate, *Working it out*, is ongoing and representatives from education have made many important contributions.

The focus of the debate is how to deliver services in a more holistic and child-centred way and achieve the Scottish Government's vision of a workforce that is "a single unitary system".

The most pressing challenges identified by contributors to the debate have been the need for:

- a common language, and core skills and values shared by everyone working with children and families regardless of their specialism
- flexible job roles across the sector
- an appropriately skilled and valued workforce that is representative of the communities it serves.

Teachers have an important role to play in addressing these challenges. It will be important for initial teacher education and continuing professional development to ensure that teachers understand they are one (critical) part of a very large, diverse and complex sector with an overarching goal to help ensure all children and young people are “confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens” (Scottish Government). Teachers’ depth of understanding and appreciation of other parts of the workforce, and the strength of their relationship with other professions will contribute to achieving this goal.

The *Working it out* debate has revealed very strong support for the development of a ‘common core’ – skills, knowledge and values that everyone working with children and families in Scotland should share, whilst recognising the need for specialism. Any review of teacher education should be carried out within the context of developments in this area:

(June 2010) The Scottish Government has commissioned the University of Strathclyde to analyse those policies which capture Scotland’s aspirations for children and families, identify what the workforce needs to do to deliver those aspirations, and create a set of key functions that need to happen around a child and family. With these functions identified, the Scottish Government intends to invite a broad range of stakeholders to identify a ‘common core’ of skills later in 2010.

The *Working it out* debate has also revealed support for exploring the benefits of pedagogy. A small group of professionals, including Peter Diamond of the Association of Directors of Education (ADES), recently visited Denmark at the request of the Minister for Children and the Early Years to examine the role, practice and education of pedagogues there and assess what pedagogy could bring to Scotland. Peter Diamond, has recommended that ADES “supports any work that seeks to explore the ways in which the role/qualification [of pedagogy] can be introduced into the children’s services workforce”. Support for pedagogy in Scotland impacts on teachers in two ways.

Firstly, the pedagogue role traditionally complements that of the teacher and in many countries the two professions work closely together. In Denmark, for example, pedagogues work in a variety of settings including out-of-school care and in classrooms in roles similar to Scotland’s classroom assistants.

Secondly, the skills that pedagogues value could hold useful lessons when assessing what kind of skills teachers may need to place more emphasis on in order to deliver the Curriculum for Excellence, and other legislation and policies such as the Additional Support for Learning Act, Getting it Right for Every Child and the Early Years Framework. A detailed description of the pedagogue role and the possible benefits it holds for Scotland is in the Children in Scotland report of the study visit to Denmark (published June 30). However, some of the skills pertinent to this review are as follows:

Pedagogues take a holistic approach and are concerned with the whole child – their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, moral and aesthetic development. They place enormous value on ‘soft skills’, such as developing strong and meaningful relationships with and between children, encouraging confidence and independence in children by knowing when to intervene and when to stand back, and on reflective practice.

Pedagogy training also focuses on developing in students' practical skills that enable them to engage children in creative and cultural activities, making use of local resources, to enhance their overall development and wellbeing, and incorporates a module on working collaboratively with other professions. At least one of three work placements must involve working closely with a professional from a different part of the workforce.

Pedagogues take an inclusive approach and often work closely with children who have a range of additional support needs. They are the main staffing group in residential care. Denmark's record of strong educational outcomes for children in care (60 per cent of care leavers go on to higher education compared to the UK's 6 per cent) is testament to pedagogues' commitment to achieving the integration of disadvantaged young people into wider society. It is fundamental that the teaching profession, with support of colleagues in the wider sector, addresses the groups of children and young people that we are currently failing.

The *Working it out* debate is ongoing and Children in Scotland recommends that any review of initial teacher education and ongoing professional development keeps abreast of its developments.

The *Working it out* website is <http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce> where all publications relating to the programme are published.

Other reading: *Working it out: developing the children's sector workforce* (Children in Scotland 2008)

Children in Scotland is Scotland's national agency for organisations and professionals working with and for children, young people and their families. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that policies and services and other provisions are of the highest possible quality and are able to meet the needs of a diverse society. Children in Scotland represents more than 400 members, including 90% of Scottish Local Authorities, all major voluntary, statutory and private children's agencies, professional organisations, as well as many other smaller community groups and children's services. It is linked with similar agencies in other parts of the UK and Europe.

The work of Children in Scotland encompasses extensive information, policy, research and practice development programmes. The agency works closely with MSPs, the Scottish Government, local authorities and practitioners. It also services groups such as the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Children and Young People (with YouthLink Scotland). In addition, Children in Scotland hosts Enquire - the national advice service for additional support for learning, and Resolve: ASL, Scotland's largest independent education mediation service.