

Draft 10-year plan for the early years, childcare and play workforce in Wales

Consultation response form

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Responses should be returned by **15 December 2014** to

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Department for Education and Skills and Department for Communities and Tackling
Poverty
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

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December 2014

| | | |
|----------|-------------|---|
| Jon | Gruffydd | RSPB Cymru - Cardiff |
| Rachel | Jones | Powys County Council - Outdoor Education Advisers Panel |
| Jane | Richmond | Field Studies Council - NPT |
| Lorna | Fox | Wildfowl and Wetland Trust |
| Pamela | Styles | Wildfowl and Wetland Trust |
| Ack | Moore | National Trust - Stackpole |
| Sunita | Welch | Brecon Beacons National Park Authority |
| Angharad | Harris | Plas Tan y Bwlch - Snowdonia National Park |
| Graham | Peake | Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority |
| Sue | Williams | Natural Resources Wales |
| Adrienne | Wood | CADW (South Wales) |
| Jane | Powell | FACE - Farming and Countryside Education |
| Roger | Lee | Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (SW) |
| Anita | Daimond | Gwynedd Archaeological Trust |
| Jon | Brookes | Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (NW) |
| Danielle | Cowell | National Museum of Wales |
| Claire | Roberts | Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water |
| Steffan | Jenkins | Urdd - Llangrannog |
| Helena | Fox | Independent |
| Tim | Orrell | Swansea County Borough Council |
| Phil | Stubbington | John Muir Award |
| Louise | Timpirani | Keep Wales Tidy - SE Wales |
| Ann | Nicol | Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust |
| Deidre | Raffan | Centre for Alternative Technology |
| Erin | Robinson | CADW (North Wales) |
| Ann | MacGarry | Centre for Alternative Technology |

Launched in 2008, the Real World Learning Cymru Partnership (RWLCP) brings together organisations that support the delivery of Out of Classroom Learning, in both the natural and built environment.

The partnership shares good practice amongst its members and with the education sector through training events and resources.

RWLCP acts as a voice for the sector helping to raise the profile of Out of Classroom Learning and highlight its many benefits. It aims to foster greater understanding and appreciation of its value and its vital contribution to sustainable development and global citizenship.

The questions below relate to proposals and recommendations set out in the *Draft 10-year plan for the early years, childcare and play workforce*. The page numbers indicated after each question refer to that document.

1. Leadership

Recommendation 4 of the Foundation Phase Stocktake stated that there should be:

compulsory training for leaders' across the sector including strategic leaders in the Country, consortia, primary head teachers, advisory staff, leaders of funded non-maintained settings and services to support their understanding of the principles and practices of the Foundation Phase. The training should be bespoke to the audience taking into account their history and previous experiences and include research showing how effective implementation of the Foundation Phase can support standards and impact on social and economic growth generally.

Question 1 – Do you agree that there should be compulsory training for leaders to support their understanding of the principles and practices of the Foundation Phase? (p.21)

Agree

✓

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

RWCLP agrees that there should be compulsory training for leaders to support their understanding of the principles and practices of the Foundation Phase. The principles and practices should include a clear understanding of learning outside the classroom and outdoor play, both integral aspects of the Foundation Phase pedagogy.

In recent years, during training sessions provided by members, RWCLP partners have noted a lack of practical and outdoor experience amongst some educational practitioners. It is essential to consider outdoor learning knowledge and experience as an integral part of any training or assessment of understanding of Foundation Phase principles and practice.

Despite the early training through Module 6 of the Foundation Phase National Training Pack and the issue of document number 0022/2007 – Out of Classroom Learning, there is currently a lack of practical and outdoor experience amongst some educational practitioners, particularly those new into the profession. It is essential that leaders have out of classroom learning knowledge and experience in order to support their staff in this important aspect and that this should be updated through regular training.

Question 2 – Do you agree that the learning hub model as set out in the draft 10-year plan would encourage greater collaboration in the early years, childcare and play sector and help to support a self-improving network? (p.24)

Agree

√

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

RWLCP recognises the value of peer learning as an integral part of CPD and the role that networks can play in facilitating CPD.

RWCLP would like to draw attention to the role that organisations other than early years settings can contribute to learning hubs. Many individual and organisation members (third sector, independent providers, public sector bodies, NGO's, local authorities) will be able contribute to the proposed learning hubs, through skills and experience related to outdoor learning, real world learning, subject knowledge, site based knowledge and/or specific aspects of pedagogy (e.g. ESDGC).

Likewise outdoor education practitioners employed by other organisations could benefit in terms of their own early years educational practice by being part of learning hubs that include early years specialists and settings. RWLCP therefore advocates collaborative working and mentoring across sectors

Question 3 – Please consider Recommendations 15 and 16 of the Graham Review.

Recommendation 15: We recommend that Welsh Government ensures that regulations are revised to require appropriate Level 5 qualifications for leaders of all newly registered settings from 2018, and all settings from 2020.

Recommendation 16: We recommend that Welsh Government introduce regulations that require larger settings (registered for 20 children or more) to have a supernumerary manager should also require that manager to hold an appropriate Level 5 qualification (with specific leadership modules) by 2020 and a Level 6 qualification by 2024.

Do you agree with these recommendations? (p.26)

Agree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

√

Supporting comments

RWLCP does not wish to comment on the actual level of qualification required but wishes to highlight the importance of Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play as key components of early years education. Therefore, if introduced, Outdoor Learning should be an integral component of any Level 5 or 6 qualification introduced.

Question 4 – Do you agree that the proposed Level 6 qualification would equip practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead and deliver high-quality practice? (p.26)

Agree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

√

Supporting comments

As per question 3, RWLCP does not wish to comment on the actual level of qualification required but again wishes to highlight that any modifications to ITT, practitioner CPD or Higher Level qualifications should recognise and include Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play as integral parts of Foundation Phase education. The skills and knowledge required to enable outdoor learning and operate in outdoor settings should be an essential part of all ITT, CPD and higher level courses and qualifications.

2. Attracting high-quality new entrants

Question 5a – Do you agree that it would be beneficial for pre-entry information sessions to be extended to cover the requirements and opportunities of working in all types of settings in the early years, childcare and play sector? (p.32)

Agree

√

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

RWLCP agrees that it would be beneficial for pre-entry information sessions to be extended to cover the requirements and opportunities of working in all types of settings in the early years, childcare and play sector and that any such information should include a range of different outdoor settings.

Question 5b – If you agree, please provide information as to how these sessions could most effectively be extended and delivered. (p.33)

Supporting comments

RWLCP believes that in terms of out of classroom learning and outdoor play, sessions could most effectively be extended and delivered through improved connections and collaborative working with organisations and individuals that have outdoor learning knowledge and expertise. This could include environmental education, heritage education and adventure education professionals. RWLCP would be happy to play a role in facilitating collaborative working, sharing good practice and delivering CPD opportunities.

Question 6 – Do you agree that a structured induction process should be the first stage in a personal development plan for all new entrants to the sector and that completion of this should be recorded in a continuous professional development (CPD) portfolio? (p.33)

Agree

√

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

RWLCP agrees that a structured induction process should be the first stage in a personal development plan for all new entrants to the sector and that completion of this should be recorded in a continuous professional

development (CPD) portfolio. Consideration of the skills required to enable Out of Classroom Learning should be integral to any structured learning and personal development plan.

Question 7 – Do you agree that any future Level 6 qualification should be complemented by a Graduate Level Certificate in Leadership in Childhood Practice to enable graduates to gain a competency qualification at an appropriate level and to practice in the sector on completion of their degree? (p.33)

Agree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

As per question 3, RWLCP does not wish to comment on the actual level of qualification required but again wishes to highlight that if introduced the qualification should include study of the beneficial role of Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play in childhood development and future life choices.

Question 8a – Do you support the ambition to see Level 3 in a relevant qualification become the acceptable standard for all practitioners in the sector over time? (p.34)

Yes No Unsure

Supporting comments

As per question 3, RWLCP does not wish to comment on the actual level of qualification required but again wishes to highlight that if introduced the qualification should include study of the beneficial role of Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play in childhood development and future life choices.

Question 8b – Do you agree with the phased introduction of this requirement, in two stages over a 10-year period? (p.34)

Agree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

No comment

Question 9 – In your view, is it appropriate for childminders to achieve a relevant Level 3 qualification within three years of their initial registration? (p.34)

Yes No Unsure

Supporting comments

As per question 3, RWLCP does not wish to comment on the actual level of qualification required but again wishes to highlight that if introduced the qualification should include study of the beneficial role of Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play in childhood development and future life choices.

3. Raising skills and standards across the existing workforce

Question 10 – Do you agree that the workforce would benefit from a set of overarching CPD principles and individual online portfolios to record learning and development? (p.41)

Agree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree

Supporting comments

If introduced, RWLCP would like to ensure that any CPD principles should recognise the need for the development of skills and knowledge relevant to Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play. CPD relating to Numeracy and Literacy needs to link to 'Real World' applications of these skills. During a recent Literacy and Numeracy teacher training event delivered by RWLCP partners, it was evident that some teachers present had limited understanding of the real world value and application of numeracy and literacy skills. Out of Classroom Learning can provide valuable real life experiences which can help bring classroom teaching alive and make it relevant to everyday life and future choices.

Question 11a – In your view, should there be a system of professional registration for the non-maintained sector? (p.41)

Yes

√

No

Unsure

Supporting comments

RWLCP would like to see any annual registration, reflecting the current position in Scotland, where all practitioners are required to provide evidence of their ability to teach in an outdoor setting. This should be across the maintained and non-maintained sectors.

Question 11b – If yes, how could this system be monitored? (p.41)

Supporting comments

No comment

Question 12a – Please consider Recommendation 12 of the Foundation Phase Stocktake, which called the Welsh Government to:

Develop training that ensures all staff understand the research on the effects of disadvantage and poverty and the possible ways to close the achievement gap. Sharing good practice from those maintained schools and funded non-maintained settings where this is working well should be part of the training and so should research on supporting the home learning environment (HLE). Maintained schools could be asked to devote some of their Pupil Deprivation Grant (or similar) to support staff development here.

Would training on the effects of disadvantage be of benefit to practitioners and teachers in the Foundation Phase? (p.44)

Yes

√

No

Unsure

Supporting comments

RWLCP agrees that training on the effects of disadvantage would be of benefit to practitioners and teachers and that this should include those disadvantaged due to lack of experience

Research into the benefits of Out of Classroom Learning, outdoor play including delivery mechanisms such as Forest School and awards such as the John Muir Award should be included in any training. In particular the value of

Out of Classroom experiences for young children experiencing disadvantage and poverty should be an integral part of training. The provision of quality Out of Classroom Learning/Outdoor Play should be identified as a positive use of Pupil Deprivation Grants.

Question 12b – Who would be best placed to develop and deliver this training?
(p.44)

Supporting comments

Members of RWLCP would be happy to provide training related to Out of Classroom Learning and outdoor play.

Question 13 – Do you agree that that the proposed ‘stepped approach’ to up-skilling could potentially help to address the appetite within the early years, childcare and play workforce to further learning and development? (p.44)

Agree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

✓

Supporting comments

No comment

Question 14 – Please consider Recommendation 18 of the Foundation Phase Stocktake, which stated that the Welsh Government should:

Review the current adult to child ratio in reception classes. Currently it is 1:8, primary schools’ staff, advisors and inspectors agreed that it could be increased to 1:10 without affecting quality. However, some schools may need to apply for an exception where, for example, they are situated in very rural areas or where they have a considerable number of children with additional needs such as SEN or E/WAL as it would not be practical to increase the ratio.

Do you agree with this recommendation to change adult to child ratios in reception classes in schools? (p.46)

Agree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

✓

Supporting comments

RWLCP would like to highlight that any changes made to adult/pupil ratio should not impact on early years settings ability to provide outdoor opportunities for learning. The impact of ratio changes on the amount and quality of outdoor provision should be monitored and researched. A proportion of any funds diverted to professional development made possible due to ratio changes should relate to outdoor play and Out of Classroom Learning.

Question 15a – Do you agree that a Grade C GCSE, or equivalent, is the appropriate minimum level of essential skills for those working within the early years, childcare and play workforce? (p.47)

Agree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree ✓

Supporting comments

As per question 3, RWLCP does not wish to comment on the actual level of qualification required but again wishes to highlight that if introduced the qualification should include study of the beneficial role of Out of Classroom Learning and Outdoor Play in childhood development and future life choices.

Question 15b – Should these skill levels be a requirement on entry to the sector (rather than achieved while working, within a fixed time period)? (p.47)

Yes No Unsure ✓

Supporting comments

No comment

Question 16 – Do you agree that the Welsh language support as set out in this draft plan would help to promote greater use of the Welsh language in schools/settings? (p.47)

Agree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree ✓

Supporting comments

RWLCP believes it is important to remember that outdoor play and out of classroom learning can provide opportunities to develop language skills including Welsh language skills. Outdoor learning opportunities should be integral to any Welsh language skill development programme.

Question 17 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them:

Please enter here:

RWLCP would like to highlight the fact that outdoor play and Out of Classroom Learning are not specifically referred to in this document. Both however are key components of early years pedagogy and should be explicitly included in all professional training schemes and qualifications.

RWLCP believes that all practitioners need to be competent and appropriately trained to facilitate the process of outdoor learning, and must themselves be confident interacting in a natural space in order for the children involved to benefit fully from the experience.

As this is a 10 year plan, there is a need to be explicit about this, as the children this will affect will most likely be facing significant environmental issues in later life related to degradation of ecosystem services. This fact increases the importance of connecting young children with nature and their local natural environment as early as possible

There is significant evidence to suggest that spending time learning in a natural setting has a positive impact on children’s emotional wellbeing, physical and cognitive development and that it promotes care, appreciation and stewardship of the natural environment in later life.

Overall RWLCP supports the intention to increase professionalism in the sector and would like to see developing environmental education skills form part of the CPD that all practitioners should undertake. RWLCP would be happy to support the delivery of this aim.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: