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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE RESEARCH</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CURRENT RANGE OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CURRENT QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. CURRENT ACCESS TO TRAINING</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING AND LINKS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. REQUIREMENTS OF SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. STANDARDS AND QUALITY</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDICES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. TRAINING PROVIDERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. TRAINING PROVIDERS PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE AND REPORT</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. LIST OF TRAINING PROVIDERS INTERVIEWED</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. CHILDCARE PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE AND REPORT</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. STUDENT/CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE AND REPORT</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. TABLE 3 CURRENT MANDATORY AWARD CONTENT AGAINST KEY TOPICS IDENTIFIED FOR THE RELATIONAL DATABASE</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. REFERENCES</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The last five years have seen substantial growth and development in early years care, education and play services in Scotland. The sector has coped with rapid expansion alongside other changes, in particular the centralisation of registration and regulation of care and play services. These developments, and the government’s commitment to further integrating service delivery, require a framework for qualifications which will enable services and workers to cope with continuing change as well as ensuring quality provision. This study relates to those working as "para-professionals" in pre-school education, childcare and playwork; important issues remain how this might relate to higher level qualifications such as teaching.

2. The introduction to this report provides an overview of key aspects of the policy and practice context of early years care, education and playwork, focussing on the settings within which the majority of the estimated 32,100 predominantly part-time, female “para-professional” workforce is employed (Scottish Executive, 2002).

3. It notes that, notwithstanding the increasing recognition of the importance of the contribution that can be made in this context by trained and qualified workers, only 60% (Scottish Executive, 2002) of childcare staff across Scotland hold some form of relevant childcare, early education or playwork qualification.

4. The Scottish Executive is aware of this and of staffing shortages and poor retention rates in the sector. As our research shows, this is almost certainly associated with lack of career prospects and poor pay. It is committed to an examination of training and qualifications issues, career paths and progression routes, the status of the workforce and recruitment/retention issues. In addition, the Executive has recently given a clear indication that it sees joint training through continuing professional development as a way of creating the culture around which services may come together in a positive and constructive environment.

This report forms part of this examination. Drawing on the results of desk and survey research, its purpose is to review and analyse “para-professional” qualifications in early education, childcare and playwork and to establish whether they:

i. provide a clear framework of qualifications covering all early years and childcare work, with an accepted progression, which allows for transference of knowledge and skills and which introduces flexibility into the workforce

ii. are understood and accepted by employers and by those considering taking up the opportunity to gain qualifications

iii. meet the requirement to support integrated service delivery, given the clear direction of policy on this.
5. The **central questions** addressed in the research were

   a. How do the learning outcomes and performance criteria for the existing awards in early education, childcare and playwork relate to the standards and competencies required by the Care Commission in the standards listed in the National Care Standards - Early Education and Childcare up to the Age of 16 (Scottish Executive 2001) and by the HMIE in the self evaluative indicators for pre school education settings in The Child at the Centre (Scottish Executive, 2001).

   b. What are the inter-relationships among existing awards relevant to childcare, early education and playwork and how do they articulate with higher education opportunities?

   c. How well do current awards equip holders to do their jobs and provide high quality care and education, particularly in relation to integrated service delivery?

   d. Are there gaps/overlaps in terms of the competencies as against the standards requirements of the Care Standards and the HMIE indicators?

   e. What would be the key topics for inclusion in a comprehensive broad-based qualification which met all necessary standards and presented a framework robust enough to accommodate changes to these in the future?

6. Two main **strands of activity** were undertaken to satisfy the **research objectives**

   a. The design and construction of a **relational database** to allow the content of the current awards in early education, childcare and playwork to be related to a set of key topics drawn from an analysis of the standards and quality indicators expressed in the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’.

   b. **Survey and interview research** to establish the views and perceptions of the sector on the current qualifications framework and how well it is seen by the sector to relate to current and developing requirements of and demands on the sector.

7. The **response of the sector to the research study** was one characterised by interest and support – many people in the sector enthusiastically engaged with the surveys, offering valuable insights and suggestions based on experience.

8. In respect of the **development of the database** however, several difficulties and delays were encountered in both gaining the required information and then converting it into useable form.

In making these observations, we recognise that some of the difficulties relate to older units that are due for revision and which may have been written prior to the creation of SQA. We are also aware of the impact that the delay in setting up a Sector Skills Council for Early Years has had and is continuing to have on development work in relation to awards centred on “para-professional” occupational competence.

9. The **survey research** included the views of four clear clusters of interest in relation to the focus of the research - training providers; childcare providers; current students/candidates; a range of key stakeholders, including umbrella agencies, Childcare Partnerships and relevant national agencies.
Questionnaire and interview surveys elicited the views of these cluster groups on the key research issues. All 12 training providers were selected to provide geographical spread, mix of rural/urban location, size of operation, and of college/non college based provision. Interviews were carried out in November and December 2002.

200 providers were identified, using information from Childcare Information Services, in the same geographical locations as the training providers interviewed. Selections were based on achieving representative sampling across all forms of childcare. 107 questionnaires (54%) were returned.

10. A number of key stakeholders were identified, including representatives from umbrella agencies, Childcare Partnerships and national organisations with a lead interest in the development of training. All agreed to be interviewed and the interviews were carried out in January/February 2003.

11. The use of material from the interviews and the questionnaire surveys in this report has been anonymised, other than where it is impossible to avoid identification of particular respondents.

12. The results of the research show a proliferation of awards in early years and playwork, which continues with the recent launch of both a Scottish Progression Award in Playwork and the SVQ for Classroom Assistants and with early development work underway to establish a degree in Playwork. This proliferation impacts upon the development of a strategic approach to tackling the training needs of the sector as a whole.

13. In relation to the central questions addressed in the research, evidence strongly suggests that:

a. A comparison of the learning outcomes and criteria from the existing awards with the standards and competencies required by the Care Commission and the HMIE, using the relational database created for the research indicates that there is a variable relationship. SVQ awards relate quite well to these: the SVQ awards in Early Years and childcare are very good on working with children (though a negative perception of VQ based awards, particularly in Early Education and Childcare, on the part of some major employer is creating barriers to career progression for many workers) the SVQ Level 3 award in Playwork good on management responsibilities. Other awards (particularly the PDA awards) are too narrowly job-specific in relation to the more holistic requirements of the Care Commission and HMI and the integrated services imperative. Several awards fail to meet the requirements of the Care Commission and HMIE in a number of important respects.

b. Inter-relationships among existing awards relevant to childcare, early education and playwork are confused and confusing. There is no formal system of accreditation of prior learning in place to allow ease of progression from one award to another. Articulation with higher education is problematic as there is little formal recognition by HE providers of the value of existing awards.

c. Current awards equip holders to do their jobs and provide high quality care and education, particularly in relation to integrated service delivery, to a variable extent (see a. above). Several awards are job-specific to the extent that they both limit the horizons of people doing them and are at odds with the more holistic and integrated agenda the sector has to face.
d. There are significant gaps and overlaps in terms of the competencies against the standard requirements of the Care Standards and the HMIE indicators – to the extent that either a comprehensive appraisal of current awards is required or, as we recommend below, a new, sector-wide “para-professional” entry level awards is devised.

e. Other evidence accessed in the course of the research supports the need for such an approach.
   It would allow a number of problematic issues to be addressed such as:
   - the optimum balance between theory and practice
   - enhancing the resourcing and role of placement partnerships between training providers and employers, such that training providers are made more fully aware of the changing needs of the sector and up to date with developments in quality standards and the range of quality placements could be expanded over time
   - the absence of a career structure

14. In relation to the purpose and aims of the research, we find that there is therefore a clear need to:
   i. create a cohesive awards/qualifications framework that is comprehensive in terms of the emerging demands on the sector and associated needs
   ii. ensure that this framework has the scope to accommodate changing needs as these further develop in relation to integrated health, education and social work services
   iii. create a continuum of awards from school based qualifications through workplace and further education programmes to higher education in order, for example, to help promote a positive image of the sector as a career choice
   iv. develop stronger and more dynamic working partnerships between training providers and employers so that the needs of the sector continue to inform the development of training and the knowledge, skills and expertise of practitioners is incorporated into the training experience for students/candidates
   v. reflect a practice based approach to the construction of awards which maximises the value attached to experience in the workplace and resources workplaces to take on a significant role in training staff
   vi. develop clear and accessible information on the awards framework and career opportunities in the sector
   vii. consider how to develop a career structure for the sector that is reflective of the integrated nature of the work across early education, childcare and playwork and also allows for progression, long term prospects and a consequent stabilisation and further professionalisation of the workforce.
SECTION ONE – BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE RESEARCH

‘What we want to achieve is a future where our children are happy, healthy, safe and able to achieve their full potential from early childhood into adulthood, where families are strong and supportive and where our communities are thriving and vibrant. The provision of flexible and responsive services provided by a range of agencies in an integrated, joined up way is essential to the achievement of this vision.’ (Integrated Strategy for the Early Years Consultation Document, Scottish Executive, March 2003)

The last five years has seen substantial growth and development in early years care, education and playwork services in Scotland. The sector has coped with rapid expansion alongside considerable shifts in regulation requirements, as the system for registration and inspection for childcare services moves from the local context to a centralised system administered by the Care Commission, the Scottish Social Services Council and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate for Education. Change and development continues, with the Scottish Executive driving forward initiatives to create integrated services to provide a holistic response to meeting children and family’s needs.

Consultation is shortly to be undertaken by the Scottish Social Services Council into workforce competencies. In that context, consideration has to be given as to how to provide a framework for qualifications which reflects the core philosophy of integrated service delivery, takes account of current development and has the flexibility to cope with continuing change.

This report outlines the results of a research study designed to establish the breadth and scope of the current framework of qualifications, perceptions about the suitability of these in meeting the developing needs of the sector and options for the future.

In approaching this task, a number of key questions have to be addressed. These are set out in this section.

1. HOW BIG IS THE SECTOR AND WHAT ARE THE KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF ITS WORKFORCE?

In any discussion of the development of training to meet the needs of the sector, as it attempts to cope with this period of massive growth and change, it is important to have some notion of the size and scope of current activity.

1.1 Statistics from the Scottish Parliament Information Office indicate that:

- children make up 21% of Scotland’s population
- 20% of children are in lone parent families
- 52% of children are in small families
- 28% of children are in large families
1.2 In 97/98 1 in 3 children in the UK were in households with below half the average income.

1.3 27% of households with children use childcare outside the home.

1.4 Evidence from the Early Education and Childcare Workforce Survey (SEED, 2002) indicates that in Scotland in 2000

- 32100 workers were involved in the daycare of children under 8 years of age
- 22000 of these worked in pre school centres, 2600 in out of school care and 7500 as childminders
- only 1 in 3 of these workers is employed full time.

1.5 The Workforce Survey also found that the workforce was dominated by female, part-time and low paid workers. ‘The main barriers to expansion of the workforce were identified as low pay, perceived low status of childcare and poor career progression.’

1.6 Pay was characterised by poor hourly rates, from less than £4 per hour for trainees to £6.30 per hour for supervisory staff. A pay rate comparison was made with that of bar staff whose levels of responsibility, skill and expertise do not compare.

1.7 Significant annual staff turn around was reported – 27% on average.

1.8 Difficulty in recruitment was also reported by 33% of pre school centres and 60% of out-of-school care clubs. The main difficulties related to a lack of applicants with qualifications.

1.9 Overall, only 60% of childcare staff across Scotland hold some form of relevant childcare qualification.

1.10 The most commonly held qualification (33%) is the SVQ 111/HNC.

1.11 SVQ 11 is held by less than 10% of the workforce.

1.12 Pre-school centre staff are much more likely to be qualified than those in other parts of the service with 75% holding a qualification compared to 38% of out of school care staff and 25% of childminders.

1.13 Constraints on accessing training reported to the survey include lack of staff cover; time and funding.

1.14 Access to training, also reported to the survey, was perceived to be poor. Accessibility issues identified by the Scottish Executive survey included lack of staff cover, lack of funding and lack of time. One in five respondents to the Scottish Executive survey felt that they had insufficient information on qualifications and training.
In addition, the distribution of the workforce across care, education and playwork and the configuration of training across this differentiated range of settings may militate against a holistic, rational and integrated approach.

The issues outlined above are further complicated by continuing difficulties in agreeing on a Skills Sector Council to replace the Early Years National Training Organisation. As Children in Scotland argued in its recent paper to the Public Petitions Committee of the Scottish Parliament (Petition PE523: October 2002) ‘the Scottish Parliament (should) urgently inquire into current proposals to set up Sector Skills Councils with a view to establishing which, if any, of these will be most effective.’

1.2 WHAT ARE EMERGING TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE EARLY EDUCATION, CHILDCARE AND PLAYWORK SECTORS?

It may be useful to attempt to address this question by means of a summary of a small number of studies carried out both here in the UK and for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

1.2.1 A study carried out in 1997 across France, the UK, the USA and Canada by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) into patterns of childcare provision found that ‘childcare workers are employed for the most part in working situations with no or extremely short (career) ladders. Childcare takes place in small workplaces with no internal labour markets – there is extensive ‘tracking’ at entry level and few intermediate training opportunities.’

1.2.2 Similarly, the study found that ‘the most complex division of labour in the caring sectors has not led to the creation of a hierarchy of skill in a single expanded occupation – but instead to a segmented labour market….Career mobility is associated with leaving caring work rather than moving to a higher skill and compensation level within the sector.’

1.2.3 Finally, the same study found that ‘there are many barriers to access to training: isolation, low wages, time. Transferability of training credits and experience is limited in the absence of accepted standards of training and accreditation – a problem that becomes still more critical in a fragmented and decentralised system of provision.’ There is also ‘a conflict between the image of caring work which is typically portrayed as requiring few skills and the reality in which quite complex skills are required to intersect.’

1.2.4 A later OECD paper, which came in the form of a Country Note for the UK, ‘Early Childhood Education and Care Policy in the UK’ (Dec. 2000), noted that ‘the quality of early years settings is intimately related to issues of staff training and qualifications, recruitment and retention and remuneration. Current training schemes and conditions of work, especially within the childcare profession, challenge the Government’s plans to expand and improve services. Low salaries, poor or non existent benefits, long hours, poor working
conditions, high rates of turnover, limited access to training and few opportunities for advancement have led to instability and, in some cases, low morale in early years education and care settings.’

1.2.5 There is evidence emerging of an international trend towards integrated service delivery as a way to answer some of these shortcomings in the sector. One country which has made significant strides to bringing together childcare and education, principally through how it trains and defines the work of its workforce, is Sweden. It has recently created a single unified training structure for anyone working with children and young people from 0-18 years. All workers completing the training are referred to as teachers and able to work across the age range.

1.2.6 Within the UK, the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project collected information from over 3,000 children aged 3 and 4 using 141 settings to explore the effect of pre-school provision on young children’s development. It found that attending pre-school services enhanced children’s development, compared to those not using pre-school services. The study also concluded that settings which have higher qualifications show higher quality and their children make more progress (Sylva et al, 2003).

1.2.7 It is only now that we in Scotland are beginning to get to grips with a scenario that looks today, in 2003, very like that presented in 1997 and 2000 in the OECD research.

1.2.8 A significant and recent initiative designed to address some of the central issues that are required to be tackled to make a difference is the very recent publication of the Integrated Strategy for Early Years Consultation Paper from the Scottish Executive Education Department (March 2003).

1.2.9 The paper builds on the thinking in For Scotland’s Children (2001) and sets out an agenda for the integration of service delivery and the bringing together of various policy initiatives and funding streams, eg Sure Start, Childcare Strategy and Starting Well, to develop the kind of service which will recognise, use and develop staff skills and expertise across the whole sector.

1.2.10 The Scottish Executive wishes to create ‘a framework for the effective provision of universal and targeted services for children and their families, from pre birth to age 5.’

1.2.11 The Integrated Strategy for Early Years Consultation Paper quotes research carried out by Barnardo’s in Scotland into the management of transitions in the lives of children and young people as giving clear indications that intervention at an early age to provide a positive start in life for very young children promotes resilience in later life: ‘Resilient children are better equipped to resist stress and adversity, cope with change and uncertainty and recover faster from traumatic events.’

1.2.12 Similarly, the document points to the impact of early childhood experiences on life-long mental and physical health and fitness and the ability to learn.
1.2.13 Longitudinal studies in the USA have given clear indicators that there are societal benefits to be gained, too, from providing good positive experiences in early childhood through, for example, reductions in crime and violence.

1.2.14 Early intervention and family support appear to be of major importance in solving difficulties at a point before these difficulties in families and with children become long term and intractable.

1.2.15 The Scottish Executive is moving to a position where policies and the budgets linked to these policies, will align in such a way that it is possible, for the first time, to develop integrated early years services around a set of key objectives and common outcomes which will take forward the agenda for change.

1.2.16 The “Social Justice Milestones” also give a clear indication of the kind of contribution that high quality, integrated early years services might make to communities achieving their full potential. In the “Milestones”, there is a recognition that the needs of young children must be set within the context of the families, communities and environments in which they live and that holistic approaches to meeting need hold out the promise of being the most productive, both in the short and the long term.

1.2.17 ‘The more that agencies join up to provide the services to meet the needs of families with young children, the more those needs can be met in a seamless way and we can ensure that children are not ‘lost’ in the system.’ (Scottish Executive Consultative Paper.)

1.2.18 The aligning of policies and budgets will allow for the development of ‘joint planning, commissioning and single system delivery of early years services in local authorities, in NHS Boards and Trusts….This requires a new approach to how we use existing funding sources, to how we plan and deliver services and to our understanding of their purposes.’

1.2.19 The Consultation Paper sets out its priorities for workforce development and these relate to increased numbers of qualified staff, an expanded workforce, the encouragement of ‘progression up the career ladder, and also lateral movement across the early years and childcare sector as a whole.’

1.2.20 The Scottish Executive states, in the Consultation Paper, that it is aware of staffing shortages and the issues which might account for that, including poor retention rates in the sector associated with lack of career prospects and poor pay. It states that, as part of developing a Workforce Strategy for the early years workforce, it will ‘examine training and qualifications issues, career paths and progression routes, the status of the workforce and recruitment/retention issues.’ In addition, the Executive gives a clear indication that it sees joint training through continuing professional development as a way of creating the culture around which services may come together in a positive and constructive environment.
1.3 IS THERE EVIDENCE THAT A BETTER QUALIFIED WORKFORCE WILL LEAD TO BETTER QUALITY CHILDCARE, EARLY EDUCATION AND PLAY?

1.3.1 Several research projects have given clear indications as to the value of highly qualified staff in early years settings, including one carried out in New Zealand in 1996 and cited in a review of international research carried out by the Thomas Coram Research Unit into training in early years. (‘Research on Ratios, Group Size and Staff Qualifications and Training in Early Years and Childcare Settings’, Thomas Coram Research Unit, 2002)

1.3.2 The conclusion of the research was that ‘The quality of early childhood services was related to whether the staff held an early childhood education qualification, staff salaries, adult:child ratios, group size and type of service’. The authors concluded that ‘the key aspects of good quality are having staff who are appropriately trained, qualified and reasonably paid…’

1.3.3 The same study indicated that Continuing Professional Development opportunities for early years staff were also important in determining the quality of care available to children and that poorly qualified and badly trained managers ‘undermined the efforts of the most effective and able members of childcare staff.’

1.3.4 All developments around policy and funding therefore seem to be answering the findings of recent research work and developing an agenda for change linked to a move towards integrated services and built on access to a high quality, well trained and flexible workforce.

A coherent national training strategy ‘fits well with the increasing emphasis throughout Europe on the importance of providing professional development opportunities for all staff who work with young children and also supports the argument for the development of a more purposefully coherent conceptual and structural framework for both preservice and continuing development. Access and progression routes within a coherent framework of qualifications enables professionals to manage their professional development in a positive way.’ (“ Early Years Professional Development in Scotland: An Emerging Framework of Qualifications” Joan Menmuir, Early Childhood Education Research Journal Vol 9 No 2 2001)

It is against this background and context of enormous change and development that the research was undertaken and what follows is an outline of the methodology for the work, the main findings, our conclusions and a series of recommendations. We hope these will allow the Scottish Executive to take a strategy forward for Workforce Development for early education, childcare and playwork awards at a sub-professional level in a way that is complementary to its plans for an integrated early years and childcare service and that, indeed, becomes a key agent for the realisation of these plans.
SECTION TWO – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 THE RESEARCH REQUIREMENT

2.1.1 The knowledge, skills and competencies required of those working in childcare and early education at a “sub-professional” level, even some five to ten years ago, are not necessarily those required of the childcare workforce in Scotland now. This is particularly the case given the Executive’s clear agenda for the development of integrated services.

2.1.2 In an attempt to address growing requirements for more qualified staff in the field there has been revision of long standing qualifications and development of a range of new qualifications.

2.1.3 However, these developments have been largely ad-hoc and there are questions as to how well understood current “sub-professional” qualifications are by employers in the early education, childcare and playwork field or by people considering childcare as a career option and how well they match the changing skills, knowledge and understanding required in the workplace.

2.1.4 The Scottish Executive has decided now is a good time to look at these qualifications and to consider the extent to which they provide

- a clear framework of qualifications covering all early years and childcare work, with an accepted progression, which allows for transference of knowledge and skills and which introduces flexibility into the workforce
- a framework that is understood and accepted by employers and by those considering taking up the opportunity to gain qualifications

and

- meet the requirement to support integrated service delivery, given the clear direction of policy on this.

2.2 THE CENTRAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RESEARCH

2.2.1 How do the learning outcomes and performance criteria for the existing awards in early education, childcare and playwork relate to the standards and competencies required by the Care Commission and HMIE?

2.2.2 What are the inter-relationships among existing awards relevant to childcare?

2.2.3 How well do current awards equip holders to do their jobs and provide high quality care and education, particularly in relation to integrated service delivery?
2.2.4 Are there gaps/overlaps in terms of the competencies as against the standards requirements of the Care Standards and the HMIE indicators?

2.2.5 What would be the key topics for inclusion in a comprehensive broad-based qualification which met all standards and presented a framework robust enough to accommodate changes to these in the future?

2.3 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

We identified two main strands of activity in order to meet these requirements and to satisfy Scottish Executive objectives for the research:

2.3.1 The design and construction of a relational database which would allow the content of the current awards in early education, childcare and playwork to be related to a set of key topics drawn from an analysis of the standards and quality indicators expressed in the Care Standards and, in the case of pre-school provision, ‘The Child at the Centre’.

2.3.2 A piece of field research to establish the views and perceptions of the sector on the current qualifications framework and how well it is seen by the sector to relate to current and developing requirements of and demands on the sector.

2.4 DATABASE DESIGN

2.4.1 The brief was to design a database that was user friendly, with an accessible ‘front end’, was easy to navigate and included a glossary of terms.

2.4.2 The database was required to provide information, from SQA unit descriptors, on:

- a. The unit content of each award
- b. An outline of the purpose of each unit for each award, where this was stated
- c. The level of each award
- d. The progression routes available for each award, where this was stated
- e. The credit rating for each unit in each award, where this was stated
- f. The content of each unit for each award
- g. The assessment methodology
- h. The relationship between the award content and the competency requirements to meet the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’ performance indicators
- i. The gaps and overlaps in the current awards

2.4.3 The process engaged in was to:

- a. Ascertain the range of awards to be included
- b. Gather together all required unit descriptor information from SQA
c. Audit the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’ for 15 key topics and a range of sub topics at four levels

d. Relate all awards content, down to performance criteria level, to up to four topics/sub topics from the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’

e. Build the database with a limited range of queries to allow the obvious interrogations to occur while also allowing for the pursuit of other queries in later uses of the database.

2.4.4 It is worth stating at this point that we came up against several difficulties and delays in both gaining the information for the database and then converting it into useable form. These difficulties included:

a. A lack of consistency in the presentation of information in the descriptors eg. Assessment methodology being presented in different forms, support note information and range statement information being presented to varying degrees of clarity and usefulness

b. Missing information in some descriptors eg. Progression routes, credit values, target audiences

c. Multiple identification numbers for older units eg. Many NC units had 2 different identification numbers, with 1 appearing on the unit descriptor and another quite different number appearing in award framework details. We even came across 1 unit, Promoting Positive Behaviour, with 4 different numbers

d. The use of obscure elaborate and quasi-academic language

e. Difficulties in interpretation of meaning because of the extreme level of detail in terms of the performance described.

f. Range statements written to cover enormous ranges of activity but against single outcomes.

2.5 FIELD RESEARCH

2.5.1 Four clear clusters of interest in relation to a qualifications framework were identified:

a. Training providers
b. Childcare providers
c. Current students/candidates
d. A range of key stakeholders, including umbrella agencies, Childcare Partnerships and relevant national agencies.

The field research was designed to elicit the views of these cluster groups on key issues within the research as follows.

2.5.2 Training providers

A structured interview schedule and preliminary questionnaire were developed and piloted with 1 training provider. (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2). 12 further training providers were selected for interview based on geographical spread across Scotland, rural/urban location, size of operation, college/non college based provision. (Appendix 3). All training providers...
selected agreed to be interviewed and interviews were carried out in November/December 2002. Interviews elicited views on:

a. Coverage and appropriateness of the current qualifications framework
b. The desirability of developing a broad based introductory award to meet the developing moves towards integrated service delivery
c. Levels of understanding amongst employers/potential candidates
d. Recruitment and retention of candidates
e. The impact of the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’ on the development of training
f. Links with employers and with higher education
g. The likely opportunities and challenges for early education, childcare and playwork training over the next 5 to 10 years

2.5.3 Childcare providers

A short questionnaire was designed and piloted with 10 childcare providers. (Appendix 4). 200 childcare providers were identified, using information from Childcare Information Services, in the same geographical locations as the training providers interviewed. Selections were based on achieving representative sampling across all forms of childcare. 200 questionnaires were sent by post in December 2002 and, after reminder telephone calls and sending out repeat questionnaires in January 2003, 107 questionnaires (54%) were returned. Questionnaires addressed:

a. Coverage and appropriateness of the current awards framework and the role of staff in the setting
b. Recruitment and retention of staff
c. Levels of understanding of the qualifications framework
d. Perceptions of the impact of the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’ on work in the setting
e. Links with training providers
f. Views on the most useful future developments in training in the early education, childcare and playwork sectors.

2.5.4 Current students/candidates

A short questionnaire was designed (Appendix 5) and distributed to 200 current students / candidates in January 2003 through the training providers who had taken part in the earlier interviews. 127 questionnaires were returned (63.5% response rate). Questionnaires covered:

a. Accessibility of the qualification being studied
b. Support in making a choice of qualification to study for
c. Views on the appropriateness of the qualification being studied
d. Views on the content and methods of assessment
e. Views on how the qualification and the experience of training might be made better.

2.5.5 Key Stakeholders

11 key stakeholders were identified and the list approved by the Scottish Executive (Appendix 7). All agreed to be interviewed in line with a structured interview schedule (Appendix 6). Interviews were carried out in January/February 2003. The interviews addressed perceptions of:

a. Coverage and appropriateness of the current qualifications framework in terms of the developing needs of the sector
b. The desirability of developing a broad based introductory award to meet the requirements of the developing integration agenda
c. Levels of understanding of employers and potential candidates
d. Recruitment and retention of staff in the sector
e. The impact of the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’ on the development of qualifications for the sector
f. Links between training providers and Higher Education
g. The likely opportunities and challenges for early education, childcare and playwork training in the next 5 to 10 years.

All information from all questionnaires and interviews has been collated and analysed and forms the basis of this report. Questionnaire surveys were analysed using the statistical computer package SPSS Version 10.

Basic content analysis of transcripts of the tape-recorded interviews allowed the identification of both patterns of response and illustrative quotations to support these.

The use of material from the interviews and the questionnaire surveys has been anonymised. It is intended that interview partners be sent copies of Insight as a way of informing them as to how their contribution has fed into the overall research process.
SECTION THREE – THE CURRENT RANGE OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

‘...reviews need to be alert to any overlap of occupational standards and qualifications as for example between playwork and early years care and education and to test the case for maintaining separate qualifications.’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

To appreciate the requirement and the scope for the development of the qualifications framework it is necessary to consider, first of all, the current range of opportunities available to those working in the sector to access training.

3.1 COURSES ON OFFER AND PURPOSE OF EACH

3.1.1 The current range of nationally recognised qualifications is complex. It ranges across competence based awards such as the Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) assessed in the workplace to the more traditional college based awards which are a mixture of practical competence assessed in a work placement and knowledge and understanding assessed in the classroom.

3.1.2 The qualifications have been developed over a considerable period of time and have attempted to answer the developing needs of the sector. However, they have largely been developed in an ad hoc way in response to the emergence of new job roles eg classroom assistants, school auxiliaries.

3.1.3 Each qualification has been designed to address a particular need and to meet a particular set of functional requirements. There has been little attempt made to consider how these qualifications might relate to each other or take account of each other in terms of transferability.

3.1.4 As policy, strategy and practice moves towards integrated services it is apparent that the range of qualifications currently available may not reflect emerging needs for a highly flexible and broadly skilled workforce.

3.2 TAKE UP OF TRAINING

3.2.1 Across Scotland the numbers of candidates registered with the Scottish Qualifications Authority as training in early education, childcare and playwork, at the time of writing (February 2003), is considerable (8867 candidates, see Table 1).

3.2.2 The most commonly available qualifications are the SVQs in Early Years Care and Education. Numbers of candidates per training provider for these particular qualifications range from 1 (14 centres) to 240 (1 centre) with an average of 28.9 across all qualifications.
3.2.3 Numbers of training providers offering SVQs in Play work are 32% of those offering VQs in Early Years Care and Education.

3.2.4 Numbers of candidates accessing Playwork VQs are 28% of those doing Early Years VQs.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>No. of candidates</th>
<th>No. of training providers</th>
<th>No. of candidates per training provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Early Years Care &amp; Education (Level II)</td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Early Years Care &amp; Education (Level III)</td>
<td>1529</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Playwork (Level II)</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Playwork (Level III)</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate in Childcare &amp; Education</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award for Classroom Assistants</td>
<td>842</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award for Childcare and Education</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award for Support for Learning Assistants</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Group Award in Care (Intermediate 2)</td>
<td>1089</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate in Supporting Special Learning Needs</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Progression Award Training for Children &amp; Young People</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Progression Award Children's Care and Play</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8867</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority*

*Note - No figures are available for the NC in Childcare and Education as, because there is no award structure for it, other than that prescribed for registration with the Scottish Childcare and Education Board, it is not recognised as an award by SQA but simply as a collection of NQ units.*

3.2.5 Table 2 below shows the distribution of courses delivered by 9 of the training providers interviewed (Training providers interview schedule – Appendix 1), all Colleges of Further Education. Information was obtained through a pre interview questionnaire (Training providers preliminary questionnaire – Appendix 2).

3.2.6 The most commonly available qualification in these colleges is the SVQ in Early Years Care and Education, delivered by all 9. The Level 11 award in Early Years Care and Education is also popular and is offered by 8 of the colleges.

3.2.7 Playwork qualifications are less commonly available than qualifications focussed on care and/or education.
Table 2  Number of courses available amongst training providers surveyed by preliminary questionnaire. (Appendix 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number of Further Education Colleges providing courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Early Years Care and Education (Level III)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Certificate in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Early Years Care and Education (Level II)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award for Classroom Assistants</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award for Childcare and Education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award for Support for Learning Assistants</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Group Award in Care (Intermediate 2)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification in Playwork (Level II)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification in Playwork (Level III)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate in Supporting Special Learning Needs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Qualification (Intermediate 2)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.8 Both Lauder and Inverness College deliver 11 of the 12 courses identified. All Colleges offered 5 or more courses, with the mean number of the course on offer being 7.4.

3.2.9 9 out of the 12 training providers interviewed reported no difficulty in attracting students/candidates onto courses, although 3 reported that the quality of applicants had gone down in recent years and 2 that it is less competitive to get a place now than it used to be.

3.2.10 One provider explained this by pointing to the considerable expansion in Higher Education in recent years, leading potential students away from the vocational area as a career choice.

3.2.11 One provider reported a desire on the part of applicants coming from school with Highers to miss out the NC year and jump straight into the HNC year.

Key Points

- There are substantial numbers of people training in the sector.
- The majority of these are studying part time by doing eg. SVQs and PDAs, whilst continuing to work in the sector.
- The Level 111 Early Years Care and Education is almost as popular a qualification as the HNC Childcare and Education.
- Playwork VQs are not nearly as readily available as Early Years Care and Education ones. This is particularly the case at Level 111 where there are only 11 registered training providers for Playwork as against 60 for Early Years Care and Education.
- The large number of providers for VQs in Early Years Care and Education indicates a substantial interest in this qualification from non College based training providers.
- The availability of specialist qualifications in working with children with additional needs is severely restricted.
- Training providers, on the whole, experience no difficulties in attracting students to courses in early education, childcare and playwork although there is some evidence that the calibre
of student coming forward may have gone down in recent years with the growth in Higher Education.

3.3 BALANCE BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

3.3.1 All key stakeholders saw value in both the theoretical and the practical elements of the current qualifications.

"However good you are theoretically is only evidenced through practical work. Theory and practice are fully intertwined" (Stakeholder G)

3.3.2 SVQs were perceived as being based in practice and other qualifications based in theory, but with strong practical elements.

"NC/HNC is more thematically based. What we need is a marry up between the NC/HNC approach and the SVQ. The type of candidate coming out of the VQ process is better equipped to work in the sector" (Stakeholder I)

3.3.3 However, 3 stakeholders identified potential difficulties with the practice elements of the VQ, its assessment and external moderation of these awards.

"One of the difficulties with the VQ is that it's only as good as the practice seen by the candidate. There is not the same opportunity for reflection on how the practice might be improved. If there was a better understanding of theory you would hope that you would get a more questioning practitioner" (Stakeholder F)

"If the VQ is well done and the assessment process is well handled then there will be a good balance (between theory and practice). It falls down if the assessment process is not as thorough as it should be. But if you give me a choice I will take the person with the VQ. A person with a well-delivered VQ is a well-rounded practitioner" (Stakeholder H)

"There needs to be a standardisation of approach to the development of SVQ portfolios. SQA External Moderation does not appear to be sufficiently standardised, with different moderators giving different advice to training providers" (Stakeholder E)

3.3.4 There was one stakeholder who held the view that there was not sufficient attention paid to theory elements of the awards.

"I would like to see more time given to theory to get a good grounding in it. Some staff don't know why they do things. There should be a greater emphasis required in qualifications on the theory that informs the practice" (Stakeholder B)
3.3.5 To the question of whether there should be a different balance there were varying responses amongst key stakeholders covering:

Placement range

"It should be written into the NC/HNC framework that students must have 4 placements - a primary school/nursery class, a baby or 0-3 experience, a family centre and a multi-cultural experience. It would create pressures on particular placements but it would be worth it" (Stakeholder I)

Theory and practice

"The VQ doesn't need to be changed. The higher the level of VQ the more intense the demonstration of knowledge and maybe that's as it should be" (Stakeholder H)

"A good balance of theory and practice can be got through a VQ" (Stakeholder F)

"There are issues with the theory being delivered in a workplace. There may not be the most appropriate people in the centre to deliver it. We have to have people coming together in small groups and discussing things in the classroom” (Stakeholder B)

“SVQs are concerning. Homework with books is not as good as peer learning. It builds confidence to have the chance of discussion with peers” (Stakeholder D)

“The answer to the question of balance between theory and practice lies in people’s perception of the status quo and then the substance of that. How do people learn best? How do people best approach that? Is it different for different people? We need to tap into research into this on a comparative basis across Europe and beyond” (Stakeholder F)

3.3.6 Amongst childcare providers themselves 72 of the 96 respondents thought that the theoretical work in the current qualifications equipped candidates either quite or very well for working with children. However, the most common complaint was that the qualifications were too theoretical.

3.3.7 When asked to suggest improvements to the current qualifications a clear desire for more practical work was expressed by 22 respondents. Comments included:

“There is too much time spent on theorists opinions”

“There is not enough practical application. Too much theory for older students/staff, especially those with reading/writing difficulties”
“There should be less emphasis on written work as many experienced and excellent staff are put off doing SVQ Level III because of the large amount of written work”

“I feel that the HNC in childcare and education is too focused on essay writing and not enough on practical skills”

3.3.8 However, this was balanced by a perception amongst some childcare providers (15) that students/candidates were ill prepared for putting theory-based learning into practice. Comments included:

“There should be greater periods of ground work training before placements”

“We need more time allocated for college based knowledge on a flexible basis”

“Some of the more recent qualifications appear to lack real depth”

“The SVQ could do with knowledge input. It is not just measuring what folk know”

“Some (qualifications) can be so very repetitive and quite frankly, simplistic i.e. common sense, that they are time wasting and insulting”

“Some students are unable to think this (the theory) into the hands-on work. Not enough input is given on how this happens”

3.3.9 Amongst students/candidates themselves, three quarters (75.2%) of respondents felt that the balance between practical and theoretical work was about right. Of the rest, most thought there was too much written work.

3.3.10 In contrast to the perception of childcare providers offering student placements that they were under prepared for placement work, 97.3% of students/candidates thought that the theory input from the training provider had prepared them well for work with children.

Key Points

- Generally, stakeholders and childcare providers felt that the theoretical aspects of awards equipped people sufficiently to deal with the practical elements of the work.
- Where there were concerns, particularly amongst childcare providers, these were, almost without exception, related to a desire to increase the practical elements of the awards.
- By contrast students/candidates were overwhelmingly happy with the balance between theory and practice.
- Amongst stakeholders the concerns centred around the difficulty of assessing theory based elements of the VQs in the workplace and the advantages, even for VQ candidates, of coming together to discuss theory and practice.
- Some childcare providers expressed concerns that students coming out of colleges on placement work were insufficiently prepared for putting the theory into practice.

3.4 USE OF PLACEMENT AGENCIES
3.4.1 Training providers were equally divided over any difficulties they had experienced with the provision of work experience placements for students with childcare providers. Placements are used by training providers to give practical experience in a work setting, particularly to college-based students doing HNCs and NC units,

3.4.2 6 providers reported no difficulties and explained this through such comments as:

“We have built excellent relations with our placements over the years. We have regular meetings with placements on an annual basis and have a twice yearly newsletter for placements” (Training Provider F)

“Block placements are easier to organise rather than a split week in a rural area” (Training Provider G)

“A placement checklist to check placements are able to offer assessment opportunities has helped because it helps placements understand the implications of taking on a candidate” (Training Provider K)

3.4.3 6 training providers reported difficulties that ranged across a number of issues -

Limited availability

“Problems relate to limited availability of placements in a rural area with poor transport infrastructure” (Training Provider C)

“It’s a juggling act August to December because schools are reluctant to commit to taking a student before the summer break because they’re uncertain of their own situation” (Training Provider E)

“Placements have been very strong but they can be very selective and refuse to take introductory level or NC students. Young students lack experience but placements want people who can work effectively” (Training Provider A)

“High numbers cause difficulties and competition from other training providers” (Training Provider D)

Inefficiency

“We have tried to expand our numbers using voluntary provision but we have to go through a field worker or committee member. The system is inefficient and time consuming. It is hard to make contact” (Training Provider L)

Excessive numbers of adults in the setting
“The number of classroom assistants employed has led to an overload of adults” (Training Provider E)

“Since the start of the Early Intervention Programme the number of adults normally working in a setting has increased and placements may be reluctant to take another adult in” (Training Provider G)

Standards of practice

“Standards in potential placements may not meet our selection criteria for placements which are based on an assessment of existing practice” (Training Provider A)

“The private sector is willing to take students but we have a variable experience. We don’t use private provision for HNC students because they don’t generally receive sufficient support” (Training Provider E)

“We have problems getting placements which allow access to 0-3 years old. The private sector is the only opportunity but some nurseries won’t take students and others we may not use because they are not good at supporting students” (Training Provider A)

3.4.4 When asked what they required from placement agencies in terms of input to students/candidates learning and assessment, training providers made the following most common responses:

Authentication of work (11)
Written reports (8)
Supervision and provision of assessment opportunities (6)

3.4.5 Training providers were broadly satisfied with the support from placement agencies for candidates’ learning. However 4 had reservations. Comments included:

“It depends on the emphasis the placement places on training. The best experience is when the HT recognises a student is coming and time is required to be allocated to the staff member to do the job” (Training Provider A)

“We need the placements and so sometimes we use placements we would prefer not to. We talk a lot about ethos in placements. It can be a good learning experience to experience poor practice but it is a fine balance” (Training Provider E)

“A supervisor can only go by their own expectation of good practice and sometimes their view of good practice in unacceptable” (Training Provider H)

“Changes in qualifications mean a lot of supervisors are not up to date. This makes it difficult to work with candidates” (Training Provider C)
3.4.6 Training providers expressed some significant reservations about the role of placement agencies in providing support and guidance (as opposed to learning) to students. Only 4 indicated that they were happy.

3.4.7 Concern expressed centred around:

**Perceptions of poor practice in the private and voluntary sectors**

“Local authorities cream-off the best students from college and students who have scraped through will be employed in the private sector and may then engage in practice that is not what you would want to encourage new students to engage in” (Training Provider E)

“Schools and local authority nurseries are very good. Private providers find it more difficult because they generally know and understand less about planning the curriculum. School based nurseries have higher expectations and are more critical of students’ work because they are in the education business” (Training Provider I)

“The candidate can often end up leading the way in terms of the development of good practice, particularly in a setting where the line manager is not qualified or experienced. The turnover of staff is very high and there is therefore no chance to build up effective teams. If staff would stay their experience would support the whole system” (Training Provider H)

**Lack of support for candidates who are already employed**

“Candidates coming in from employers get variable support e.g. policies in their work settings may not be good ones or they may not exist. Assessment can be difficult in these circumstances” (Training Provider C)

“It’s a difficult agenda when SVQ candidates are employed. The emphasis is on getting through. The big problem is that employers don’t want to release staff during the working day. Some employers don’t value what the candidates are doing and won’t make appropriate time for it” (Training Provider A)

3.4.8 In contrast to this view childcare providers reported no particular difficulties in meeting the requirements of the training providers with regards to the provision of support, both for learning and assessment, and for guidance and support. Where difficulties were experienced they included staff shortages and time pressures as well as concerns over the attitudes of students.

3.4.9 Childcare providers appear to have a strikingly different perception of their role as placement agencies from that of training providers. They perceive their roles as mentoring and support rather than directly related to the production of assessable work.
3.4.10 When asked what the expectations of the training providers were in relation to supporting students on placement childcare providers made the following most common responses:

- Supervision and advice (27)
- Provision of opportunities for practical experience (18)
- Encouragement and support (14)

3.4.11 Recording and reporting was only mentioned on 3 occasions, authentication of work was not mentioned at all and neither was writing of reports.

3.4.12 6 childcare providers instanced the provision of models of good practice as being part of their role.

3.4.13 However, there was a view that training providers did not prepare students sufficiently for coming into placement or support than effectively once they were there (11).

Comments included the following:

- “There is no preparation given at all. Students have no idea what nursery is really like and what is expected of them”
- “Often students have no idea what they will be expected to do on placement and sometimes don’t respect the necessity of good timekeeping”
- “Students are not made aware of what is required of them and are not often given the full support they need”
- “Work is not clearly or fully explained to the students. They are often left to muddle through on their own”
- “No longer take students. – Have found they vary a lot in attitude and they cause more problems”

3.4.14 Once again, this is not born out by student’s own perceptions of their readiness for doing placement work where 100% reported they thought the theory aspects of the course were well assessed and 98.1% that the practical elements were well assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Half of training providers interviewed described difficulties in organising placements, though there were no difficulties common to them all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There is significant dissatisfaction with placements amongst training providers in relation to the provision of support and guidance. However, placements report no difficulties in offering this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Training providers and placement agencies differed sharply as to how they perceived the role of placements for students, with training providers being more concerned with the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
production of evidence and placements overwhelmingly seeing their role as mentors.

- Concerns were expressed about the quality of practice and support for students in some private and voluntary providers.
- Placements complained about a perceived lack of preparedness of students for placement work.
- Students themselves were very satisfied with their preparation for placement.

3.5 CONTENT OF AWARDS

3.5.1 A breakdown of the mandatory content of the current awards against a list of 15 topics drawn from combined analysis of the new Care Standards and the Child at Centre indicates some considerable areas of commonality across the awards as well as some significant areas of weakness.

3.5.2 The mandatory component of all awards listed in Table 3 (see Appendix 8) currently offers content across the following topics:

- Organisation of children and young people’s play and learning
- Safety

3.5.3 If the SGA in Care at Intermediate 2 is omitted, the list increases to include:

- Organisation and resourcing of the learning and care environment
- Professional relationships

3.5.4 Other topics which are covered across the mandatory elements of a wide range of current qualifications include:

- Growth and development of children and young people (10)
- Health and care of children and young people (10)
- Play and learning (10)
- Engaging with the child/young person (9)
- Support for children and families (9)
- Ethos of the settings (9)
- Monitoring and evaluation of the service (9)
- Working with parents (8)

3.5.5 Topics which are covered by only a minority of current qualifications include:

- The child/young person in the community (4)
- Staffing and staff development (3)
- Service management (2)

3.5.6 We tried to access information that would give, for each award, a coherent statement of its purpose for comparison’s sake. However, it proved impossible to do so beyond a statement
which identifies, for example, the overall general target group for each level of the SVQ awards only.

### Key Points

- There appears, though there are differences in the level of difficulty of awards, to be a core commonality of purpose across them all, as indicated by Table 3.
- This core commonality will be important when considering how the current qualifications may be rationalised to create a more accessible framework for training that meets the developing demand for training to meet integrated service requirements.

### Section Three Conclusions

- In general the take up of existing forms of training is very high showing considerable commitment to training in the sector. However, there are key areas of the service that are not so well served and where opportunities to access training are restricted. This is particularly the case in playwork.
- There was general agreement that the current qualifications broadly provided training in accessible and appropriate form though there was significant concern at the degree of written/theoretical work in all awards.
- Placement provision is not sufficiently well defined, particularly in relation to the role of placement supervisors and/or the criteria to be met by placements for use as student placements. Work needs to be done to develop the role of the placement supervisors and to create clarity across Scotland on minimum standards for placement.
- Preparation for placement work requires to be defined and written into the awards.
- There are significant areas of overlap and important gaps in the current qualifications framework.
SECTION FOUR – THE CURRENT QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

‘There are those who feel that the qualifications structure in Scotland is too complex, and there have been calls for a single childcare qualification and for the integration of work related and work based approaches to qualifications….It is also clear that, as a matter of sheer practicality, the qualifications cannot be swept away overnight: the process of review and reform is gradual and consensual.’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

The previous section dealt with the range of qualifications currently available, modes of delivery from training providers and the take-up of these from within the current workforce.

In considering how take-up may be increased still further, through improvements to the qualifications themselves and to modes of delivery, it is important to review the framework in which these qualifications exist and to ask questions about their suitability, particularly in relation to integration of services and a use of staff skills and expertise which will require to be increasingly flexible.

4.1 RELEVANCE TO OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCIES

4.1.1 The changing nature of work in early education, child care and play work and the development of significant areas of new work, e.g. under the Sure Start initiative, demand consideration of whether the existing framework of qualifications remains relevant to the occupational competencies required, both now and in the future. Questions must relate, too, to the fundamental changes which will be forthcoming as health, education and social work services move towards the creation of a single service.

4.1.2 The National Care Standards, which all providers of childcare and early education registered with the Care Commission must meet, also impact on such considerations since they will inform the further development of occupational competencies.

4.1.3 The Child at the Centre describes a performance framework for all providers of pre-school education. This, too, impacts on occupational competencies.

4.1.4 The revision of existing occupational standards for the early years and childcare sector has been delayed as decisions are made as to where responsibility lies for such work, with the demise of the National Training Organisation and the emergence of Sector Skills Councils. The situation is further complicated by difficulties in identifying an appropriate Sector Skills Council to take this work forward in early years care and education.

4.1.5 This has led to delays in revision to the qualifications themselves, particularly the VQ based qualifications and to revisions occurring to other qualifications without the benefit of making reference to the occupational standards framework.
4.1.6 Nevertheless, respondents to the childcare providers' questionnaire (Appendix 4) expressed a broad satisfaction with the current qualification framework in terms of its relevance to the Care Standards and ‘Child at the Centre’. 65 out of 98 respondents thought the current content of awards related to the Care Standards either quite or very well. The figure for ‘Child at the Centre’ was very similar at 67 out of 96.

4.1.7 Caution was expressed by a small number (10) of Childcare providers in terms of their level of understanding of the Care Standards and Child at the Centre

"We are very early in our use of the Care Standards" (Childcare Provider A)

"It takes time for staff to understand how the Child at the Centre works" (Childcare Provider B)

4.1.8 It is safe to assume that this caution is currently shared by a significant number of providers, since both the Child at the Centre (introduced 2000) and the Care Standards (introduced 2002) represent very new quality frameworks for the sector.

4.1.9 Although broad satisfaction was expressed across the sector, there are significant areas of activity where concerns have emerged that the current framework of qualifications does not provide the competencies required or fit the needs of the workers, particularly in new areas of activity developed under Sure Start and the Childcare Strategy.

4.1.10 4 of the 10 key stakeholders interviewed, expressed the view that the development of work under Sure Start, for example, in providing family support where there are very young children, has thrown up a significant area of weakness in the current awards framework. One stakeholder (Stakeholder B) made the direct connection between lack of coverage in the current awards for this area of work and the possibility of poor quality practice.

"The family support element is not adequately covered. We cannot be sure of the quality of what children are getting" (Stakeholder B)

"Working with very young children, 0-3 years, has been devalued in the emphasis that has been given to the development of pre-school education. The current qualifications do not give the profile to this area of work that it deserves" (Stakeholder A)

"Many workers working with under 3s, particularly in Sure Start projects, find that parents' needs might be the priority. Life circumstances have to be dealt with before you can deal with positive parenting aspects. There are emerging gaps in the current qualifications in relation to dealing with social inclusion and family support issues" (Stakeholder C)

"It is still possible to qualify with an Early Years Care and Education qualification without any practical experience of working with babies and go out and do just that!" (Stakeholder D)
4.1.11 Another significant area of developing work where concerns were expressed amongst key stakeholders about the relevance of current qualifications was out of school care.

4.1.12 Key stakeholders expressed particular concern centred around the mismatch between the expectations of the Scottish Executive that out of school care should cover the age range 3-14 years (16 years in the case of children with additional needs) and the emphasis of the current qualifications on play.

"The Playwork qualifications do not properly equip people to work with youths and yet the Childcare Strategy says we should be developing care up to 16 years" (Stakeholder D)

"The Playwork VQs, are not the correct qualifications for out of school care. They have little child development content and no real care or education elements to them. They fall between out of school care and out of school learning" (Stakeholder E)

"Should we be looking to a qualification which qualifies people to work with children and young people and which recognises the transferable skills which can be used across the whole age range? This is particularly the case in out of school care where the needs of people working across both a care and youth work value base are overlooked" (Stakeholder C)

4.1.13 The issue of transferability of skills and knowledge across a range of work settings was raised by 3 key stakeholders. The development of an award which recognised such transferability was appealing.

"Why are we 'sheep dipping' the whole flock every time? There are transferable skills that can be accrued e.g. in a rural area. The same person can be doing a range of jobs with the same core skills yet we give no credit for the transfer of those skills when it comes to gaining qualifications" (Stakeholder A)

"In an ideal world we would have a new qualification. A childcare and youth qualification that encompasses all children and that would allow people to have a career rather that a part-time job, almost like the Danish pedagogue system. Offer everyone a basic training and they can then pick a specialism and move on to a range of options" (Stakeholder E)

4.1.14 Other concerns expressed in relation to the continuing relevance of the qualifications framework related to:

a. the lack of reference to early intervention and a perception that the current qualifications were weak in relation to the development of early literacy and numeracy (Stakeholders B & F)
b. transitions between early education settings and primary and a view that these were not effectively addressed through current training (Stakeholder B)
c. training in working with children with additional needs, with a view that existing qualifications in this areas of work are not well understood or widely available and are not necessarily relevant as introductory qualifications. It was suggested that the Professional Development Award (PDA)
Certificate in Support for Learning Assistants was very much geared for Special Needs Auxiliaries working in a local authority setting and was of limited value to staff working with children with additional needs in other settings.

d. the use of ICT in early years contexts (Stakeholder B)

e. the lack of attention paid to the core skills, particularly as these relate to the continuing professional development of people working below managerial/professional levels. This was seen to be a social inclusion issue (Stakeholder J)

4.1.15 An interesting, though not typical view was put forward by Stakeholder I who suggested that the qualifications framework itself was not the issue. The suggestion was made that interpretation of the awards is the key and lack of awareness amongst training deliverers is the difficulty.

"The current awards do offer the opportunity for a holistic approach to working with children but there is a lack of awareness and understanding on the part of training providers themselves. The current deliverers are not necessarily the right people to deliver. They are recruited from a fairly narrow base of ex primary and nursery school teachers who have not necessarily kept pace with change in the sector" (Stakeholder I)

4.1.16 Childcare providers themselves make some interesting comments through the survey questionnaire (Appendix 4) in the context of how relevant the current framework of qualifications is to their requirements.

In relation to the developing area of creche work -

"We need a qualification suitable for our creche workers before SVQ level, but which would count towards accreditation" (Childcare Provider C)

In relation to the enormous expansion of out of school care -

"Often people come into after school care with early years and nursery qualifications. They can find (jobs with) older children first" (Childcare Provider D)

In relation to the uneasy fit between the work of child minders and currently available qualifications -

"I have recently gained my SVQ III. This qualification is supposed be home based but to cover some elements I have to do a lot of work at my local playgroup. This is not always possible for candidates" (Childcare Provider E)

4.1.17 In contrast, students/candidates currently studying were asked in the questionnaire survey (Appendix 5) to give a view as to how well they thought the theory aspects of the qualifications they were doing prepared them for working with children. Almost all (97.3%) thought that they were well prepared and (92.9%) that there were no important gaps in the theory aspects of their work to gain a qualification.
However, one interesting, though atypical, comment was made in relation to the bias of the awards towards older children –

‘There is a lot of information for pre-school age. Not a lot of information given about under 2s and babies’

4.1.18 Perhaps the difference in view between childcare providers and students/candidates can be explained if the profile of student/candidate respondees to the survey (Appendix 5) is considered. The majority (57.5%) were in full time education. Their experience of the sector, therefore, was through workplace practice experience in a placement. Workplace experience placements are selected by training providers because they allow appropriate opportunities for assessment against the requirements of the qualifications. It would be hoped, therefore, that student/candidates would regard the theory aspects of the awards as providing for the practical competencies required in placements. This seems to be borne out by their comments.

Key Points

- Childcare providers are broadly satisfied that the current qualifications framework encompasses the requirements of the Care Standards and the ‘Child at the Centre’.
- However, some childcare providers express caution about their level of understanding of either performance framework.
- Key stakeholders have concerns about the coverage of qualifications currently available in relation to new and emerging areas of work eg under Sure Start. These centre around family support work, working with very young children and out of school care for older children and young people in particular.
- Student/candidates are happy that the qualifications provide appropriate knowledge and understanding to underpin the work in their placements.
- Key stakeholders are interested in the possibilities offered by developments in the qualifications framework for recognising and giving credit for transferable skills across a range of work with children and young people.

4.2 LINKS BETWEEN TRAINING PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS

4.2.1. Training providers interviewed linked into networks of employers in both formal and informal ways.

4.2.2 Descriptions of informal links included:

- contact with individual childcare providers when used as placements for students (Training Provider B)
- invitations to Career Days held in college for students (Training Provider D)
- invitations to personnel staff of large employers to address student groups (Training Provider F)
- newsletters to placement providers.

4.2.3 Training providers described formal links to their local enterprise companies, expressed through agreements to provide specific types of training to particular client groups (Training Providers L, F, K & H)

4.2.4 Two training providers have formal links with local Social Inclusion Partnerships where they work co-operatively with local employers (Training Providers K & F)

4.2.5 The most common formal links to employers identified by training providers were through the local Childcare Partnerships. 8 training providers identified membership of the Childcare Partnership as an important formal link to employers (Training Providers A, D, E, F, G, H, I & L)

4.2.6 2 training providers said they had no formal links with employers (Training Providers B & C)

4.2.7 Only 1 training provider described links which were specifically designed by the organisation to give ongoing formal opportunities for exchange of information and development of training with employers through the development of Liaison Groups (Training Provider A).

Key Points

- Training providers look to opportunities provided through other fora eg. Childcare Partnerships, for making formal links with employers.
- Training providers do not appear, in the main, to be proactive in seeking formal links with employers through their own offices.
- Informal links with employers appear plentiful but not necessarily fully comprehensive of the range of employers involved in the sector or enabling of a strategic approach to the development of local training opportunities.

4.3 UNDERSTANDING OF FRAMEWORK BY EMPLOYERS

4.3.1 Amongst key stakeholders there was a unanimous view that the current framework of qualifications was poorly understood by employers.

4.3.2 General concern was expressed in relation to the complexity of the process of accessing qualifications and the prevalence of what they described as ‘jargon’.
"Workforce development issues are not given the high priority they should be. This is reflected in the lack of understanding and motivation to understand the qualifications framework. SQA needs to take responsibility for that. It is bureaucratic and uses impenetrable language. The process from SQA is not an accessible one” (Stakeholder J)

"The jargon is not well understood. Employers find it confusing" (Stakeholder D)

4.3.3 There was also a view expressed by 1 stakeholder that there was confusion as to what was meant and accepted by the term 'qualified worker'.

"We get tied in knots as to what is a fully qualified worker. Different authorities are setting different standards. Some require full registration with the Scottish Childcare and Education Board and others accept the qualification itself. Some just accept the HNC and others accept either the HNC or the SVQ Level III" (Stakeholder F)

4.3.4 There is also a perception that employers are confused as to the meaning of some of the newer awards and look to the past for a 'Kitemark' they recognise in the SNNB.

"In general terms employers don't understand the different awards and where they fit together" (Stakeholder B)

"Employers are still looking back to the NNEB because of a lack of awareness of what the new qualifications are about. This is why it is important that they are involved in the redevelopment of new qualifications" (Stakeholder I)

"There is still misunderstanding of what VQs are about and they are disregarded by employers who have a lack of appreciation of what is entailed in getting the qualification and the huge output made by candidates" (Stakeholder I)

4.3.5 Where employers have begun to grasp the changes the perception amongst stakeholders is that there is a negative view held of the SVQs as opposed to the college based qualification by some key employers. This view was expressed by 6 of the stakeholders, although it was tempered by a view that perceptions were beginning to change.

"Employers are not sure of the quality and consistency of the VQ model" (Stakeholder D)

"Employers go for what they perceive is best i.e. college based qualifications. There is a reluctance to accept VQ based training. The colleges are not sold on the VQs and so were not, until recently, promoting them" (Stakeholder A)

"There is a mixed reception across the country for the validity of the VQ as opposed to the HNC. Employers are reluctant to accept the competence-based route. It is not seen as academic enough, although attitudes are changing" (Stakeholder H)
"It is felt that the HNC has more underpinning knowledge than the VQ and the Education Department, particularly, favours it, though it doesn't preclude SVQ trained staff and has used the SVQ route to get its own staff qualified where it has been easier than returning to college" (Stakeholder G)

"So many authorities don't recognise the VQ but it is turning around. Workforce development funding from the Executive has made that happen" (Stakeholder E)

4.3.6 There is a view that employers in the private and voluntary sector will use whichever they perceive as the easiest route to staff achieving qualifications.

"Employers favour whichever route is easiest to access and use. In the full day care sector they prefer the VQ because it allows people to continue to work" (Stakeholder C)

4.3.7 In general terms stakeholders consider that much needs to be done in helping employers to recognise the relative strengths of the various qualifications and the ways in which candidates may access them.

"A lot more needs to be done in promoting the different pathways and the parity of esteem for the outcomes no matter what the route. There needs to be equal validity for VQs and college based qualifications" (Stakeholder H)

4.3.8 Training providers, when asked to consider the same question were also unanimous in their view that employers had a poor understanding of the general framework of qualifications.

4.3.9 They accepted that the framework was difficult to understand and that the terminology used to describe qualifications was confusing and could even be misleading.

"Employers don't have a clear picture. NNEB is still regarded as the standard qualification in Childcare. Partnerships are helping to develop a proper understanding of the framework" (Training Provider G)

"There is a plethora of qualifications and employers contact college for clarification. They often don't understand the certificates and the units described and what they qualify the person to do" (Training Provider D)

"It's a minefield, particularly amongst the PDAs. They are at completely different levels and that is not understood" (Training Provider E)

"The system seems complex and paper driven" (Training Provider B)

"There is confusion over the amount and type of qualification available. There are complications and a lack of understanding over the role of the Scottish Childcare and Education Board and the regulatory requirements under the Care Commission" (Training Provider A)
4.3.10 Training providers too, pointed to the perception amongst some employers, particularly in the statutory sector, that the college based qualifications were better than the VQs.

"SVQs are accepted by the Council now but there is still a lot of political unease about it" (Training Provider G)

"There is confusion regarding the relative status and acceptance of the HNC and SVQ Level III amongst local authorities. If local authorities have such poor understanding what understanding do the private and voluntary sector have?" (Training Provider F)

4.3.11 However, it is interesting to note that the evidence from childcare providers themselves indicates that the VQ is a commonly held qualification, with 30% of those surveyed (Appendix 4) currently employing staff with SVQs, which is slightly more than the number of employees with HNC qualifications.

4.3.12 In addition to this, the number of employees currently working towards SVQs far exceeds those studying towards HNC qualifications. (72% of employees currently working towards a qualification are working towards a VQ compared with only 11% working towards the HNC in Childcare and Education.) However, this may be because the SVQ is specifically designed for people in work whereas the HNC requires study in College and therefore either attendance full time, or at evening classes or time away from work.

4.3.13 Childcare providers did not report the lack of understanding about the qualifications ascribed to them by key stakeholders and training providers. 69% said that they either fully or mostly understood the current qualifications framework. Of those that had specific problems, most of these, they reported, were due to a lack of information about the qualifications.

4.3.14 Key stakeholders agreed that poor communication/information and lack of information sharing were important elements in helping employers understand the Framework.

4.3.15 When asked what needed to be done to improve understanding comments included:

'Better communication and consensus so people know what they are talking about in the first place' (Stakeholder F)

'A totally comprehensive booklet with descriptions of all the awards and send it out to all the providers' (Stakeholder D)

'Promotional material produced by SQA should be distributed more effectively. A channel for getting information out to potential candidates and employers could be the Partnerships' (Stakeholder E)
‘It’s not just about the employer. It goes back into schools, careers guidance and umbrella organisations. They need to explain to pupils and staff the different routes and what suits in each type of circumstance’ (Stakeholder H)

‘There needs to be a point of contact to get impartial advice and it shouldn’t be the training providers. Careers Scotland should be taking a leading role’ (Stakeholder C)

4.3.16 Other issues raised by key stakeholders in relation to improved understanding were concerned with simplification of the Framework itself and creating greater clarity in terms of routes into and through the Framework.

‘The whole training framework needs to be simplified and it needs to be clear at each step what (a particular qualification) allows you to do’ (Stakeholder C)

‘The qualifications need revision. There is potential for gathering of feedback from the sector itself and incorporating the sector’s thinking into the revisions’ (Stakeholder I)

‘There has to be clarity of routes and the information that people need has to be succinct, accurate and give answers to questions. If at the end of the day we can come up with a single qualification that all the rest feed into then it would help the process’ (Stakeholder B)

4.3.17 In the Highlands, a particular concern was expressed by Inverness College regarding the desire for an award based in the Gaelic language.

"There are no Gaelic medium assessors to assess in Gaelic medium provision. There is a desire for a different type of qualification which embraces total immersion in Gaelic” (Inverness College)
Key Points

- Training providers and key stakeholders are almost unanimous in their belief that employers have a very poor understanding of the qualifications framework.
- Reasons given include the complexity of the framework, the impenetrable language used in SQA documents, the confusing and bureaucratic process and also a perceived lack of consistency across awards, particularly in relation to PDAs.
- In contrast, only a minority of employers (childcare providers) reports poor understanding themselves.
- Lack of good quality, impartial advice that was readily available was also seen as a key reason for poor understanding.
- Both stakeholders and training providers described a lack of faith amongst employers in the VQs and a perception that the Level 111 Childcare and Education, particularly, was not equal in value to the HNC.
- They described employer concerns as centring round the perceived lack of theory content in the VQs and issues related to consistency of the quality of delivery of these particular awards.
- Despite these concerns the VQ is a commonly held qualification by a substantial number of staff working in childcare and there are large numbers of employees studying for it.
- A small number of respondents held the view that the perception of VQs was beginning to change as colleges, particularly, began to deliver them and promote them more.
- Scottish Executive funding through the Workforce Development initiative was seen to have been helpful in encouraging this change.

4.4 DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRAMEWORK TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS OF THE SECTOR

4.4.1 Amongst key stakeholders there was general appreciation that the framework, as it stands, falls short of meeting the current needs of the sector and this is only likely to be exacerbated by the development of new areas of activity and the acceptance of such approaches as integrated service delivery, as these roll out across local authority areas.

“If we are training people to work with children 0-5 years it has to be the full range of work that is covered and a holistic approach taken to working with children and families” (Stakeholder I)

“Too much emphasis is paid to the difference between care and education. Staff should be able to work across a diverse range of settings. Diversity isn’t recognised in the current framework” (Stakeholder C)

“Employers will be demanding a skilled early years workforce to help with delivery of the service within an integrated childcare and education setting. There is a danger the qualifications don’t move on. The changing needs of childcare and society must impinge on the relevance of our qualifications” (Stakeholder B)

4.4.2 As earlier, stakeholders identified particular needs in terms of the development of the framework to meet new areas of activity:
Family support

“We could do with a qualification that specifically supported the whole area of working with families and providing family support. Staff working in this area usually have a qualification that hasn’t much relevance to the work” (Stakeholder G)

“A lot of the work that is done in family support in social work children and family centres is done by staff with lots of experience but they have picked it up on the job. There is no course for this type of social work therapy” (Stakeholder C)

Out of school care

“Out of school care now incorporates wrap around care for 3-5 years olds. The current qualifications in playwork do not reflect this. It is also moving up the age range to provide care for older children and young people. This takes out of school care into the realms of youth work which has a different emphasis and value base to play work. The current qualifications are not reflective of that shift” (Stakeholder E)

Child Minding

“We have to recognise that child minders work in an unsupervised position. There should be a compulsory, accredited training, which is regulated regarding its quality. Even preparation training for child minders is not compulsory and its content varies across Scotland. We need a Scottish version of the award awarded by CACHE to child minders in England” (Stakeholder C)

Working with children with additional needs

“Special needs is a developing area that is not reflected in the current awards framework, particularly the move towards integration into the mainstream” (Stakeholder D)

Working with 0-3 years old

“An emphasis on stimulation and education for 0-3 years olds has led to a requirement for a different area of expertise. An award is required to provide the training for working with 03 year olds in the expanding and changing work in children and family centres” (Stakeholder I)

Management
“The original qualification of e.g. a nursery nurse doesn’t give the management training required to hold down a management job e.g. a depute of an early year centre” (Stakeholder B)

4.4.3 The question of tranference of skills, raised in response to a previous question about competencies was also mentioned in relation to future development of the framework. The example given demonstrates the point -

“A child minder can go into a school and become a classroom assistant or into a hospital and became a play worker or into respite or residential care. All of these have a set of core skills that are transferable but this is not recognised in the qualification framework” (Stakeholder A)

4.4.4 There was also a view expressed by one stakeholder that, if qualifications are to be more accessible they need to be available on an incremental basis. However, currently available funding tended to be tied to achievement of whole qualifications and this made such an approach difficult. (Stakeholder H)

4.4.5 One of the difficulties in moving forward with the development of the framework to take account of the changing needs of the sector was identified as the current uncertainty as to where responsibility for sector skills development lies.

“The last review of the Occupational Standards was pre 1998. There is a need for ownership of the Standards. The early years part of the skills sector work is uncertain. Revision of the standards should be part of the ongoing review of the Occupational Standards for Care. Awards currently being revised/developed are in danger of going outwith the framework of the Occupational Standards because these are out of date” (Stakeholder F)

4.4.6 Training providers appeared on the whole to be further behind in assimilating the changing needs of the sector in terms of development towards integration of service delivery or the increasing emphasis on work with 0-3 year olds and family support work. They looked at development of the framework in terms of creating pathways to the achievement of qualifications.

“There should be a developing pathway from introductory level non certificated up to HN” (Training Provider L)

“We need a progression route up to management level that is simple and consists of a core plus options” (Training Provider G)

“We need a more diverse qualification that can support all age ranges” (Training Provider D)

4.4.7 Three training providers were keen to place responsibility for development of the framework on to employers.
“We have to decide what kind of skill mix we are moving towards and what kind of minimum qualification we need to reflect that” (Training Provider D)

“The role of the nursery nurse in the local authority sector is narrow. Someone coming from the local authority sector would not be able to cope in the private sector. Fully qualified staff in the local authority sector are still not used effectively” (Training Provider G)

“Ownership of training must be with employers who need to begin thinking how best to make use of the skills and experience of the staff that they have” (Training Provider G)

4.4.8 There was a view that the practical nature of the National Certificate level courses should be preserved.

“We’ve got to be careful that the NQ level remains practical because the job is a practical one. We have to value other than just academic talents” (Training Provider I)

Key Points

- There is a recognition amongst most key stakeholders that the development of training requires to encompass new ways of delivering services which are beginning to take a more holistic and integrated approach.
- Stakeholders were particularly concerned that new training opportunities should take account of new developments in family support, out of school care, childminding, working with children with additional needs and working with very young children.
- Stakeholders are concerned at the delays in revisions to the Occupational Standards caused by the lack of a Skills Sector Council to take the work forward.
- Training providers regard the creation of simple and accessible pathways towards achievement of qualifications as a priority.
- Training providers also see the involvement of employers in the development of qualifications as being of central importance.

4.4.9 In general, both key stakeholders and training providers were very receptive to the idea of a broad-based introductory qualification for all people working with children. The only reservations came from two of the key stakeholders, where concerns centred on practicalities related to the scope of such a qualification.

4.4.10 However, there was no real consensus amongst childcare providers on creating a new, broad-based award, with 33 thinking there would be scope, 21 respondents seeing no scope for it and 41 being undecided.
4.4.11 Amongst key stakeholders and training providers there were two clear interpretations of what an introductory qualification would be for:

The largest group (7 training providers and 6 key stakeholders) saw the course as a qualifying course in its own right and a replacement for existing initial qualifications in the current framework. This was seen to fit with the developing training needs of the sector. Comments from training providers included:

"We need to discuss with employers and policy groups what the sector will look like in 10 years time and recognise we need a multi skilled workforce. Workers need the opportunity for wider access and a generic course would equip students with a range of competencies across a wide range of settings and age range of children” (Training Provider G)

"Having a basic broad based qualification which allowed you to go on into a range of specialisms would do a lot to answer the current confusion around qualifications. It would acknowledge areas of expertise that are currently ignored” (Training Provider A)

"Looking at the range of opportunities in the childcare field now it seems reasonable to think of a qualification that had a general core and then a range of specific options” (Training Provider F)

"It might be good to have a generic core of knowledge and understanding which cut across work in all childcare and early education settings and then a series of options or strands to cover specialist areas of work” (Training Provider L)

"The BA Early Childhood Studies is a generalist degree that allows a broad range of choices. That should be mirrored at an introductory level to give wider choice” (Training Provider I)

Comments from key stakeholders reflected the view that such a course would have a positive impact on the status and profile of the sector as a whole:

"A broad based introductory course would help people to realise what working with children was about” (Key Stakeholder H)

"Its value would be that it would be a qualification that stood wherever you went and whatever work you did and would be recognised by employers in terms of the skills it represented” (Key Stakeholder B)

"It would increase the attractiveness of the sector to people coming into it because it would give people scope to move around and also offer opportunities for building full time job equivalents because they could work across a range of different settings/areas of work” (Key Stakeholder E)
"It would create a flexibility in the use of staff not currently there" (Key Stakeholder G)

"It would give a broader knowledge of a wide service and give a more general perspective of how the service fits together" (Key Stakeholder J)

The second and smaller group, (4 training providers and 3 key stakeholders) saw such a course as providing an introductory 'taster' to the sector which would require to be followed up by additional training to produce a recognised qualification.

"If the SPRITO 'Making Choices' programme was formally assessed and accredited, it would give a useful first step to the sector" (Training Provider K)

"The Scottish Progression Award should be looked at as the basis for a mandatory introductory course at foundation level but its purpose and function would be to act as a taster. It would have to be followed up by other training" (Training Provider D)

"An introductory course like 'Making Choices' would give people the information to make real choices about the specific direction they want to go in" (Training Provider C)

One key stakeholder saw the value of such a pre-qualifying course in increasing awareness of the vocational area in schools-

"It could be done in conjunction with secondary schools to introduce school leavers to the vocational area and therefore improve retention of students/candidates on qualifying courses” (Key Stakeholder I)

The same stakeholder saw that such a qualification could be used to help recognise and value the contribution made by volunteers working with children.

4.4.12 Both training providers and key stakeholders held views on what should be the content of a broad based introductory qualification for working with children.

4.4.13 There was general agreement about the importance of certain key topics such as child development (14), health and safety (11), play (10), working with families (9), principles and values (8), and child protection (7)

4.4.14 Training providers placed much greater emphasis on the importance of core skills and interpersonal/social skills (11) than key stakeholders (5).

One key stakeholder was keen to emphasise that:

"Core values should inform the content of the training. These are the fundamentals. They are what makes a good worker, what makes a good service. These are the starting points” (Key Stakeholder C)
Key Points

- Both stakeholders and training providers are receptive to the idea of a broad based introductory award developed to meet the changing emphasis in service delivery. In contrast, childcare providers have no clear, collective view.
- Key stakeholders and training providers are divided as to what could be the purpose of an introductory award. The larger group (13) see it as an initial qualification in its own right that would provide entry to a large range of jobs in early education, childcare and playwork. The smaller group (7) see it not so much as a qualification as a taster to working in the sector. It would not lead to direct access to employment but would lead to making properly informed choices about initial qualifications.
- There was general agreement about the content of a broad based award although training providers placed greater emphasis on core skills including IT, numeracy, literacy and interpersonal/social skills.

4.5 SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

4.5.1 Work underway to develop the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is designed to create a single credit based framework for all qualifications across all vocational and academic areas in Scotland. Eventually the plan, articulated in documentation from the SCQF, is that this framework will link to other similar frameworks in the United Kingdom and Europe.

4.5.2 The Framework will "clarify entry and exit prints and routes for progression within and across education and training sectors. It will also maximise opportunities for credit transfer” (An Introduction to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework: SCQF 2001, p v)

4.5.3 It will describe the programmes of learning that lead to the various qualifications and support the development of routes to progress from qualification to qualification.

4.5.4 It will ascribe whole awards and their component units to one of 12 different levels, depending on assessment against an agreed set of descriptors which set out the characteristic generic outcomes at each level.

4.5.5 It will award Scottish Credit Accumulation and Transfer (SCOTCAT) points to each unit and each award. These will be based on a credit value associated with the average time it would be expected it would take to achieve the outcomes.

4.5.6 The value of such a Framework in the context of early education, childcare and play work qualifications is clear and is associated with many of the issues and concerns expressed by training providers and key stakeholders interviewed.
A clear relationship between qualifications with clearly defined routes of progression and transferability of knowledge and skills would:

a. reduce the current confusion over the appropriateness of particular qualifications  
b. improve understanding amongst employers and workers themselves of where qualifications fit in the overall framework  
c. bring clarity to workers and to employers as to progression routes for staff undergoing further training  
d. ease the transfer of workers from one area of work to another through accreditation of prior learning  
e. reduce the barriers to higher education by giving appropriate recognition to vocational awards through the SCOTCAT system of points.

Key Points

The Framework will:

- Clarify links between awards.
- Allow comparison of levels of awards
- Allow transference by accreditation of prior learning through the SCOTCAT points system.
- Make entry into HE easier for those with appropriate FE qualifications.

Section Four Conclusions

? New areas of activity are opening up in relation to work with very young children, family support and playwork with older children and young people. The current framework needs to be reviewed in light of these changes.  

? Our fieldwork suggests that the current framework is inflexible, fragmented and includes inbuilt barriers to transference of knowledge and skills across the sector which will not meet the need for a highly mobile and broadly skilled workforce an integrated service will require. This will need to be taken into account in any revision of the framework.  

? Our interviews with training providers and with key stakeholders suggested that links between training providers and employers vary between institutions with the majority of the training providers seeing links with Childcare Partnerships as a means of connecting with the sector. This needs to be recognised and the links between training providers and Childcare Partnerships strengthened to enable a more strategic approach to workforce development and training.  

? The continuing perceptions of differing value attached to the SVQ Level 111 compared to the HNC in Childcare and Education introduce unnecessary confusion in relation to available qualifications.  

? Our interviews identified a certain lack of clarity regarding information available on the qualifications framework and the needs of the sector and a perception that more needed to be done to ensure that careers and guidance staff were appropriately informed to ensure that the right people were recruited onto courses.
Key stakeholders identified a number of gains to be had from the development of a broad based introductory award leading directly into employment in any part of the service. This was seen as particularly important as the sector develops and we move towards an integrated approach.
SECTION FIVE - CURRENT ACCESS TO TRAINING

No matter what the framework of qualifications might look like, for the workforce to be able to benefit from training opportunities available they need to be accessible and of high quality.

We considered the forms of training available and we asked candidates/students about their experience of accessing them.

5.1 APPROPRIATENESS OF MODELS OF DELIVERY TO THE NEEDS OF THE SECTOR

5.1.1 A wide variety of models of delivery are used by training providers when delivering the range of qualifications.

Table 5 below, taken from information supplied by 9 of the 12 training providers interviewed, shows that the most popular mode is part time, during the day and in the evening and at weekends. Almost half of the total of 67 qualifications offered by training providers interviewed offered on this basis. There were more part-time courses available than full time courses.

Table 3  Mode of delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of delivery</th>
<th>Number of qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part time (day)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time (evening/weekend)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible learning</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open/distance learning</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2 Alternative modes of delivery such as flexible and distance learning were being employed by a number of training providers. However, none had, as yet, begun to deliver qualifications on an online learning basis.

5.1.3 Given the high numbers of students/candidates working part time towards qualifications it is perhaps unsurprising that the issue of work/life balance was mentioned by students responding to the survey.

5.1.4 Of those respondents with childcare issues, only 10 found it quite or very difficult to arrange childcare. In contrast, 31 found it very or reasonably easy. Once childcare arrangements were in place, 34 respondents were satisfied with them, with only 6 being dissatisfied.

5.1.5 When asked about fitting studying around other commitments, for example employment, 50.9% (n=57) indicated that they found it quite difficult to balance their studying with the rest of their lives. There was an indication that many respondents had work and domestic responsibilities on top of studying and this made for lack of time. Comments included –
I have a full time job, 2 children and a house. It can be difficult to find time to sit down with the work"

“(It’s difficult) finding the time to study while looking after 2 kids, a home and working full time”

42.5% (n=48) of students/candidates surveyed were working in childcare settings while completing qualifications.

5.1.6 Amongst childcare providers surveyed a total of 209 staff (33%) were currently studying towards a qualification. This indicates a high commitment to professional development in the sector.

**Table 4  Numbers who are currently studying**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Numbers who are currently studying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVQ II Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ III Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ II Play work</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNC Childcare and Education</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Childcare and Education</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ III Play work</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Support for learning Assistant</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.G.C.E or other teaching</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Classroom Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.7 The high numbers studying for SVQs in our sample suggests that, though there are currently a smaller percentage of staff who had these qualifications in comparison to the HNC, they are gaining in popularity. This may be associated with their ease of access for those who are already working in the sector.

5.1.8 In total 67 of the childcare providers who responded to the survey had staff currently studying (56%). As Table 7 shows, flexible, part time (evenings and weekends) and open learning were the most common modes of studying for qualifications.

**Table 5  Modes of Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of study</th>
<th>Numbers of respondents using mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part time (evening and weekends)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open or distance learning</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time (day)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day release</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.9 To consider the impact on the setting of staff studying, childcare providers were asked to indicate how involved other staff were in supporting their colleague's study.

Table 6 Impact of supporting colleagues on the work of the centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact of Support</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not much of an</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly more than half reported a significant impact. However, when asked to detail this impact there were very many positive comments, both in relation to the work of the team and in relation to working with childcare. Comments included:

In relation to the work of the team (16)

"It develops good working relations and enables staff to plan more efficiently from the courses studies"

"It helps to bond staff together as a team. It also keeps qualified staff on their toes. A little time consuming though"

"Making the time to give extra support to answer questions and to go over work makes you re-examine your own practice"

"It raises standards within the team and allows for more shared knowledge and good practice. It encourages staff to improve their personal development"

In relation to the work with children (20)

"It ensures staff are up to date with new research and approaches and allows children to benefit from developing skills and fresh thoughts"

"The children benefit from the raised standards in the quality of care as more knowledge comes into the workforce"

5.1.10 Where negative impact was reported this related to:

- Having to make extra time (11)
- Discontinuity of care for children (6)
- Having to find and pay for the staff cover (5)
- Stress on staff (3)
5.1.11 The general experience of having staff studying across a range of qualifications and accessing these by a variety of modes of delivery seems to be felt to be a positive one.

**Key Points**

- There is a wide variety of modes of delivery employed by training providers.
- The most commonly accessed mode of delivery is part time.
- High percentages of staff working in the sector are studying.
- Work/life balance is very hard to achieve when studying part time at the same time as working.
- Lack of time is the most common complaint from student/candidates.
- Childcare does not appear to be difficult for most people to organise and students/candidates report few concerns about their childcare arrangements.
- Having staff in the setting studying is overwhelmingly perceived to bring benefits to settings for children as well as staff.

### 5.2 Barriers to access

5.2.1 When asked what suggestions childcare providers would make to improve the current qualifications the single greatest concern was to improve the accessibility of awards (21).

5.2.2 Allied to this was a desire to see greater consistency in the awards and the way in which they are delivered (12).

"To ensure that all colleges follow the same guidelines and don't change the goal posts half way through the working term"

5.2.3 However, childcare providers did not mention pre-entry qualifications as a significant barrier to accessing qualifications.

5.2.4 Information obtained from training providers we interviewed regarding pre entry requirements for the awards on offer indicated a large number of courses which were accessible with no pre entry requirements at all

#### Table 7 Type of qualification required for entry to award

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>No entry requirements</th>
<th>Standard Grade</th>
<th>Highers</th>
<th>Previous Course</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVQ Early Years Care &amp; Education (Level II)</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>2*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC Childcare &amp; Education</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td>1*</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ Early Years Care &amp; Education (Level III)</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNC Childcare &amp; Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>2*</td>
<td></td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Classroom Assistants</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1*</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Childcare &amp; Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Support for Special Needs Learning</td>
<td>4*</td>
<td></td>
<td>1*</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Half of the qualifications provided by training providers do not require qualifications for entry. However, a high number (21) do require candidates to have completed a previous course.

5.2.5 It would seem reasonable to assume that since childcare providers did not highlight qualifications as a problem, they do not consider the existence of any existing entry requirements for qualifications as either unreasonable or insurmountable.

5.2.6 Better modes of delivery including more flexible hours and home study were mentioned by several childcare providers (11) as being required to make qualifications more accessible.

"To make these less time consuming. ‘A’, who is doing her SVQ, has found it hard fitting this around her job and her children"

5.2.7 This was backed up by the considerable number of students/candidates (57), as in 5.1.7, who indicated difficulty in finding time to study. Comments included –

“Between part time evening job and keeping up with household duties it is difficult knowing which to give priority first”

“Studying is usually done late at night”

“I had a part time job last year but I had to give it up due to not being able to cope with all the demands on my time”

“Run own business with husband and have 3 very active young children – very little time available to me to study while still alert”

5.2.8 Allied to this was a plea from Childcare providers that qualifications are less paper driven with fewer written requirements and the framework for the awards simplified to create less bureaucracy (17). As one provider put it very succinctly - "Less writing!!"

5.2.9 Again, this is also reflected in student/candidate comment. There were several remarks (14) in relation to reducing the written content of the awards.

5.2.10 Greater consistency in the awards with a more simplified framework of awards also attracted support from childcare providers (19). This included an expressed wish from 7 providers for a single award.

5.2.11 Affordability of doing qualifications was referred to by 9 childcare providers as a barrier to access. Most suggestions related to helping staff accessing training with assistance costs e.g.
childcare. 2 providers suggested staff be paid to do training. For one provider the funding issue related to staff retention.

"Our facilities are not subsidised by local government. We experience great difficulty in funding staff to do qualifications. They train, they gain qualifications and then they leave to work for the local authority who tend to offer higher rates of pay. I feel this needs to be considered".

5.2.12 However, students/candidates currently studying reported, overwhelmingly, that their studies were being paid for by grant/bursary (52.2%) or employer (16.8%) or other means. Only 4.4% were self-funding. This would seem to indicate that lack of funding was not a significant barrier for these candidates, although they were not asked how easy or difficult it had been to access this funding and, as they were candidates already in training, it seems reasonable to assume they had, in the main, managed to resolve any funding difficulties.

5.3 **RELEVANCE OF TRAINING TO THE NEEDS OF THE SECTOR**

5.3.1 Aside from the questions of accessibility, affordability and the suitability of the framework itself childcare providers had a very positive view in relation to the content of the awards and the increase in knowledge, understanding and skills these brought into the workplace.

5.3.2 When asked to consider the benefits to their workplace of staff engaging in training childcare providers highlighted the following:

**Bringing in new ideas and fresh approaches (15)**

"These staff are bringing new ideas into the nursery all the time, creating an ever stimulating environment. It also allows staff who have qualified some time ago to refresh their memories and develop new ideas"

**Increased awareness and understanding of the work including being evaluative in approach (14)**

"Because we can always learn from students, if they are receiving high quality input from college lecturers, and we are committed to giving students the best training experience we can, this keeps us continually evaluating and reviewing our own work with children"

**Building morale and confidence in the team (9)**

"It makes our service better as we have more knowledge and confidence about what we are doing"

"Gaining the qualification helps build morale and confidence"

"They get "hands on" experience and it helps to bond the team"
Providing an improved service (9)

"Meeting other like minded people discussing their practice. It stops any of us getting into a rut"

"Training staff are able to bring new ideas and practice into the nursery"

For one childcare provider training was an investment in the future health of the company

"As a growing childcare company it is vital to our organisation to keep qualified/skilled staff by offering career opportunities and promotion possibilities. Today's play workers are the future in childcare management"

5.3.3 The overwhelming view of childcare providers appears to be that accessing training brings many positive benefits both to staff and to the service offered to children and their careers. The total of 59 positive comments were matched by just 3 negative comments and one of these was lamenting the fact that the respondent was the only one studying.

Key Points

- Improving access to training is a major concern of childcare providers.
- Pre entry qualification requirements are not seen as a barrier to training. Many courses are on offer with no pre entry qualifications required.
- Flexibility in delivery and more home study opportunities are seen as an advantage.
- Pressure on time and balancing study with other priorities is perceived as difficult to deal with.
- Written work is seen as being too prominent a feature of awards.
- Affordability is perceived to be a barrier but only by a relatively small number who had no external source of financial support.
- The qualifications available were seen as being very relevant to the sector by childcare providers who valued the new ideas and improved understanding they brought to the setting and the increased morale of the staff team.

5.4 DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING AND DELIVERY TO MEET SECTORAL NEEDS

5.4.1 A number of issues in relation to the future development of training both in terms of content and delivery emerged from the survey of childcare providers.

5.4.2 In relation to content, childcare providers want to see:
  - more practice based activity
  - more emphasis on placement work
  - more emphasis on working with very young children, 0-3 years

5.3.4 In relation to delivery, childcare providers want to see
greater flexibility in service delivery:
more opportunities for financial support to access training, including payment for staff cover
a more coherent and simplified qualifications framework which gives opportunities for skills transfer
more and better information about awards and greater promotion of the childcare sector in general
better and more effective use of assessor staff including the development of work based assessment

**Key Points**

- Ideas for future developments in qualifications are seen in terms of both content and delivery.
- Ideas for developments in content centred on a desire for greater practical work, particularly in placement and working with very young children.
- Ideas for developments in delivery centred on improving access, better information and better use of work based staff for assessment.

**Section Five Conclusions**

- Although there is already a high degree of flexibility in modes of training delivery available there is scope to develop into more and better use of IT based training.
- Students/candidates who are struggling to achieve work/life balance because of study need to be enabled to find modes of study that fit better with their other responsibilities.
- More ways should be investigated to capitalise on the enormous amounts of good will and positivity there is around training and the benefits it brings to the workplace. This could be achieved by giving workplaces a much more active role in the provision of a total learning environment for candidates through the expansion of the role of supervisors, for example.
- Methods of assessing learning need to be found that rely less on the written word and more on demonstration of good practice.
SECTION SIX - AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING AND LINKS TO RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STAFF

The early education, childcare and playwork sector is often perceived to be low status, with no clearly defined career structure and little opportunity for professional growth and development, and is poorly paid.

We attempted to find out if these perceptions impacted on recruitment and retention of staff.

‘Higher level qualifications are unlikely to prove attractive in the long term…unless there is an accompanying expansion of higher level job roles and positions of increased responsibility (offering enhanced pay) within childcare employment….At present, possession of such qualifications by no means guarantees the holder opportunities for a higher level job role.’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

6.1 ISSUES RELATED TO RECRUITMENT OF SUFFICIENTLY QUALIFIED STAFF

6.1.1 When asked if they felt there were issues related to the recruitment of sufficiently qualified staff, all but one key stakeholder felt that there were.

6.1.2 The one key stakeholder without any issues reported no difficulty in getting qualified people for their area of activity.

6.1.3 There were few common threads in the issues cited, though low pay was a concern for 6 respondents and low status for 3.

6.1.4 However, when taken as a whole the issues raised have a cohesion and represent a major barrier to the recruitment of appropriate staff into the sector.

6.1.5 Issues included:

- no career progression
- not enough qualified people
- not enough access to training
- low investment in the sector from business
- part time nature of the work
- childcare problems (for out of school care workers)
- impact of local economy
- increasing demand on an expanding sector
- no men

6.1.6 All of these reasons, coupled with low pay and low status, combine to give a negative image of the sector as a whole, in employment terms.

As Orkney Childcare Partnership said:
"We are currently not drawing in the brightest kids because it's not valued and we're doing it on a shoe string, although in Orkney, even a show string costs a lot".

This situation was perceived to be exacerbated, by both training providers and key stakeholders, by careers advisers and guidance staff in schools having a perception of childcare and early education work that did not accurately reflect the complexity of the work and, as a consequence, making inappropriate referrals to training providers.

6.1.7 There is an acceptance that the sector itself can do something to tackle some of these issues:

"Nurseries themselves need to improve their own practice to improve their image of the sector. It's not just 'mindin' the weans'. They need to consider the salaries they pay. If an area manager of a chain of nurseries is paid £10,500 how good is that area manager?" (Stakeholder I)

However there are problems in doing this:

"We have lots of contact with members and the biggest problem they have is recruitment of staff but voluntary management committees will not 'vote for Christmas' and put up staff salaries because they'd then have to hike the fees to themselves" (Stakeholder E)

6.1.8 The issue of getting more men into the sector is seen as both an economic one, linked to low levels of pay and lack of value, and an equal opportunities one.

"It is affordable childcare which facilitates the economic and social inclusion agenda and there are increasing demands on the sector as more parents go out to work. Low levels of remuneration and lack of value attached to the sector make it less attractive as a career choice, particularly to men" (Stakeholder F)

"There is an issue of getting more men into the sector. It opens up the job market to a wider group. There is also the question of equal opportunities. It is not right that childcare is seen as a female responsibility. Men coming in would bring a male perspective into the provision of the service" (Stakeholder J)

6.1.9 For one stakeholder the question of recruitment into the sector should be considered at a much earlier point with adequate counselling of potential candidates leading to more appropriate training choices.

"Within secondary schools, when young people consider career options, a significant number are guided into early education and childcare without realising the difficulty of doing this work. It is seen as a soft option. Good recruitment at the training stage is the key" (Stakeholder B)

6.1.10 Movement within the sector itself was seen as a potential difficulty.
"Some employers are able to cream off qualified staff because they can offer attractive pay and conditions. It's the larger employer that attracts the best workers" (Stakeholder C)

"The local authority has recruited a lot of staff from the private sector and the private sector is very unhappy about it" (Stakeholder D)

6.1.11 The final issue identified by one key stakeholder as impacting on recruitment concerned the Care Commission and the new requirement to register.

"The new paper work from the Care Commission is scary. It scares the life out of new people coming into the sector. The initial reaction is not to believe it. People still come in thinking 'it's only children and I'm just minding them'" (Stakeholder A)

Key Points

- The low pay and low status of childcare are perceived as being linked to recruitment difficulties.
- Lack of career progression opportunities is seen to be a key issue.
- Voluntary management committees of parents are seen as a weakness in tackling low pay and low status because they are also users of the service and therefore keen to keep it as cheap as possible to use.
- Getting men into the sector is seen to be important in raising the status of the work.
- Projecting the right image of childcare to school pupils is seen as important in recruiting the right people into the sector.
- Local authorities are perceived to be able to recruit the best workers because of offering attractive pay and conditions.

6.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RECRUITMENT AND ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE TRAINING

6.2.1 Key stakeholders all saw the relationship between appropriate training opportunities and the resolution of some of the issues related to recruitment they had identified.

"If we get the training right we can add to the perception of value and raise the profile - a virtuous circle. The public needs to value quality childcare as being essential to the future of their children. The Care Standards should raise the profile of the work in the same way as the whole Pre 5s Initiative did" (Stakeholder F)

"Improved training, value and pay all hang together. Social attitudes are changing slowly and largely because if the direction and investment given to the work by the government" (Stakeholder G)
6.2.2 Creating a trained and professional workforce was seen as having value in promoting a positive image of the sector.

"Staff that are properly trained are better motivated and can give more positive messages about the profession to the general population. People are attracted to professions where they know they will be trained" (Stakeholder J)

"We need to install pride and professionalism and promote the professional image of the work. If we promote training properly and people achieve a qualification there should be pay scales for workers that reflect increased competence" (Stakeholder E)

6.2.3 Decisions around the direction we wish to take the workforce were seen as crucial to resolving issues to do with career progression and salary.

"Career progression is currently stymied because of the lack of opportunities for movement. We need to decide what we want from our workforce and have clearer expectations of what is required of a worker" (Stakeholder B)

"Currently, if there are opportunities for people to gain a qualification they will do so and move out, because there are not the qualifications to train into operational leadership, management and development jobs. If these qualifications were available that would help" (Stakeholder C)

"Everyone who is involved in educating others should be re-educating themselves and opening up their own thinking but the sector itself doesn't recognise good practice in terms of the salary it pays. People move out of practice into desk work because it's the only way to get extra money. Men will not come into childcare because they are often still the main breadwinner in the household and can't afford to accept poor wages" (Stakeholder I)

6.2.4 Creating building blocks for workers was also seen as a lateral exercise which involved putting together opportunities into job 'packages'.

"We need to hook in other workers and have a joined up approach because there aren't enough people to go round. An auxiliary during school hours can be a play worker after school hours. We need to try and give different opportunities in different settings" (Stakeholder D)

Key Points

- Key stakeholders saw a clear relationship between the provision of appropriate training opportunities and solving the recruitment problems.
Trained staff were seen as promoting a positive image of the sector which helped recruitment.

Lack of opportunities for movement in the sector were seen as linked to a lack of clarity about the future direction for the workforce as a whole and, consequently, workers were training and then moving out when they achieved a high level of competency.

One suggestion to tackle the lack of progression possibilities up the way was to provide opportunities laterally through putting together job ‘packages’.

### 6.3 ISSUES RELATED TO RETENTION OF STAFF

6.3.1 Retention of staff both within and across the sector was perceived by key stakeholders to be an issue of major significance.

> "The whole thing stems from how society views the workforce and how employers look at the framework for progression. Is there enough opportunity for progression or is it stagnation that causes them to walk away?" (Stakeholder A)

6.3.2 There was recognition that for many people leaving the sector was associated with stage of life decisions.

> "Part time jobs suit when your children are young but needs change. Staff look for a full time job and they take their qualifications with them. It may not be to another childcare job. Tesco pays better wages for stacking shelves. Where’s the value? We’re looking after your children and being paid less than you are for stacking shelves" (Stakeholder E)

> "There is a high turnover of staff. People take these jobs to bide their time when their children are young. It fits with their life style at the time but when their children are older they look to go back into full time working" (Stakeholder H)

> "Retention must acknowledge that people make life stage decisions which affects why they leave e.g. child minding. People come in for life stage reasons and leave for the same. We need to do some work to establish why people make their choices and why they can’t/don’t come back" (Stakeholder C)

6.3.3 Job security, fulfillment and better pay and conditions are seen as key ingredients in retaining staff and local authorities, were seen as being in a better position to offer this.

> "Most people are looking for job security and fulfillment. Local authorities keep their staff because they offer opportunities. Small organisations can only keep their staff if they have loyalty to the job" (Stakeholder D)

> "Retention is better in the local authority sector than in the private sector. The hours of work are more favourable if you have young families. Some local authorities value"
continuing professional development for staff. There is a need to gather together a workforce development profile which cuts across all sectors” (Stakeholder F)

"There are now more opportunities for people to move across the sector for better pay and terms and conditions" (Stakeholder H)

6.3.4 Access to training and qualifications was seen as a key to retaining staff. However:

"If people want to upgrade their qualifications they currently have to do it through part time study. We're making it hard for people. It is difficult to sustain and people have left because they can't do it" (Stakeholder B)

Key Points

- Retention of staff is unanimously perceived to be a major issue for the sector by stakeholders.
- The sector is perceived to suffer because people come into it at certain times in their lives, because it suits their life circumstances at the time, and then leave once their life circumstances change.
- Providing better job security and pay and conditions were seen as important in improving retention.
- Training is considered important but reservations were expressed about the feasibility of combining work with part time study.

6.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RETENTION OF STAFF AND PROVISION OF QUALITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

6.4.1 It was recognised that a framework for training in the sector could make a significant contribution to the resolution of the retention problem in the sector but that it was not the whole answer.

"Training helps anchor people and helps them to see career progression but only if there are career prospects there" (Stakeholder G)

"Staff salaries are affected by a huge range of issues and being qualified doesn't necessarily lead to better prospects. Development of training is not the whole answer" (Stakeholder E)

6.4.2 However, training was seen as having an important role to play in maintaining the morale for the sector.

"We need an infrastructure to support the area of work so that we can maintain morale and reduce stress levels of staff. It helps if people can see that they are part of a bigger picture and making a contribution to a bigger picture" (Stakeholder D)
6.4.3 Creating more flexibility in the careers structure supported by training was also seen as important.

"The qualifications structure for the sector must allow flexibility of movement either across or up. It would create a broadening of the options. There is too much rigidity built into the current career structure and erroneous perceptions of who is suitable to do what work" (Stakeholder A)

"We don't have a career progression for staff and that is a big problem. Where do people with a PDA Childcare and Education go? How can they move up the career ladder?" (Stakeholder B)

6.4.4 Providing the appropriate support for people to access training and recognising the value of a properly trained member of staff were regarded as important.

"Opportunities for training and development should be built into job descriptions. The advent of the Care Commission will help this. A good staff training policy will encourage people to stay. The policy should cover such things as childcare expenses, time to study, payment for training" (Stakeholder H)

"Time and financial resources are important. An employer needs to appreciate that his/her staff member will be of much better benefit as an employee, because s/he is better qualified and provide the time and financial resources" (Stakeholder B)

**Key Points**

- Training is not perceived to be the whole answer to retention problems, although it is seen as making a contribution. Proper pay and conditions are seen as an integral part of any package to improve retention.
- Progression in the careers structure and flexibility in the qualifications framework are seen as potentially very helpful.
- Valuing and recognising trained staff and supporting continuous professional development for staff is seen as key to retention.

**Section Six Conclusions**

Recruitment and retention difficulties are inextricably linked to a perceived poor image of the sector in terms of status, pay, terms and conditions and career progression opportunities. There is a requirement to tackle these issues before the sector can begin attracting and retaining high calibre staff.
The availability of training is seen as only a partial answer to the problem, though its importance is recognised and accepted.
SECTION SEVEN - REQUIREMENTS OF THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL

‘Qualifications lie at the heart of any initiative to raise skill levels. Vocational qualifications are industry led. They should reflect the sector’s view of competent performance in relation to a given set of job roles.’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

As recruitment and retention are highly problematic concerns for the sector it was important to test out the perceptions of key people and organisations as to the likely impact of the Scottish Social Services Council on the stability of the workforce and on its profile.

7.1 IMPACT ON RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

7.1.1 Key stakeholders recognised that, in the longer term the advent of the SSSC will be a positive development. Whether, in the short term, it is likely to have an impact on recruitment and retention, they were unsure.

"In the long term SSSC will contribute to a competent, confident workforce. In the short term we need to pick up issues that, if they have been understood, have been neglected e.g. qualifications structures and the understanding of employers - before we even think about whether the framework is right for the workforce" (Stakeholder F)

"It all hangs on decisions they make about what qualifications they will require for registration" (Stakeholder G)

"One of things we are worried about is the unqualified more mature women working in full day care centres. They are very competent but don't want to qualify. It would be a huge loss if they leave because they can't register" (Stakeholder C)

7.1.2 The stakeholders lack of understanding about the functions of the SSSC is reflected in the number of key stakeholders who indicated they knew little of the Council’s work/remit. (4).

"There is a lack of information and a fear out there in the field that the demands of the Council will mean people can't register. 'If they make me do a Level III, I can’t do that and so I'm leaving!' The council needs to recognise that some jobs require a Level II and some require a Level III" (Stakeholder E)

7.1.3 There was a particular concern expressed by 3 stakeholders in relation to the registration of child minders.

"It will depend on the debate that takes place in relation to roles and responsibilities (whether there is an impact on recruitment and retention) but it is important that child minders become registered with the Council" (Stakeholder A)
"We are already losing child minders because they are running scared of what the Council will require. Our Childcare Information Service is reporting reductions" (Stakeholder D)

"Child minders, if they are required to have qualifications to register, won't register. We need to tread gently to keep them. It's hard to get child minders let alone keep them. Parents are looking for a good competent person to look after their child. The fact that she may not have a qualification isn't an issue, though the fact that, as unregistered provision, parents may be unable to claim Working Families Tax Credit, would be an issue" (Stakeholder G)

7.1.4 Some stakeholders felt that if the SSSC was to take responsibility for overseeing the development of training and continuing professional development, this would be seen to be of value in relation to the status and value attached to the work.

"Will the Council determine the fitness of the person and also track continuing professional development? If so, it gives the person a professional status that has application for employers and the person themselves. It gives them enhanced status” (Stakeholder H)

"If there is a body that oversees training and development and has codes of practice for trainers and employers that will raise the whole profile of this work and give people rights in terms of their continuing professional development that would be very positive” (Stakeholder C)

7.1.5 In relation to the development of training opportunities to allow initial registration, one stakeholder suggested that mixed messages were being received by the sector.

"We are sending out confusing messages about training. Partnerships are saying, - We are offering free training. Please do it because by 2005 you might not have a job! Some umbrella organisations are saying something different. We need to sing the same song" (Stakeholder D)

7.1.6 There did not appear to be general and clear understanding of the intentions of the SSSC in relation to initial registration and some expectation that the Council would be rigid in its requirements from the outset.

A reassuring message was put out by the Council itself:

"The Council will register in ways that don't destabilise the workforce. It will not be the case if you don't have the qualification you can't register. People will be able to join the register as full registrants on the understanding that they obtain the specific qualification within the time before they next register. There is no agreement as yet, with the Scottish Executive as to the full range of staff to register” (Scottish Social Services Council: January 2003)
7.1.7 Overall there appeared to be hope amongst key stakeholders in SSSC's potential to raise the status of work in the sector and improve recruitment and retention.

"It's about time we had a national register of all early years workers. It should help recruitment. If someone says they are registered with the Council that should demonstrate that they have achieved a competence that is recognised to be of sufficient standard to work in early years" (Stakeholder H)

"It is about raising standards and so, in the longer term it will be positive because it will lead to a profession that is recognised and valued. It will have better status and will build people's confidence" (Stakeholder D)

"Once registration starts it will help people to see that the sector is valued. Regulations should help people to see that we need responsible people to look after children" (Stakeholder F)

Key Points

- Key stakeholders have a positive view of the long term impact of the Scottish Social Services Council on the sector.
- However, a surprising number of key stakeholders felt insufficiently informed of the work of the Council to give an opinion.
- Concern was expressed about the position of childminders regarding registration with the view that clear benefits would accrue from registration but a counter view that childminders themselves were ‘running scared’.
- There was a view that the Council should take on the training and development functions of the Sector Skills Council as being complementary to its registration function.

Section Seven Conclusion

- The Scottish Social Services Council needs to begin promoting and explaining its work to the sector so that confidence in and understanding of its role and function can begin to influence the sector’s view in a positive way.
SECTION EIGHT - STANDARDS AND QUALITY

‘Users of qualifications, whether employers or employees, need confidence that there are reliable systems in place for monitoring the occupational standards – the demands of the job for skills and knowledge, - in light of which qualifications are designed.’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

Whilst the role of the SSSC appears not to be sufficiently well understood, at this early stage, for people to feel confident of making informed comment it seems that there is better understanding of the importance of the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’. There appears to be an appreciation of the potential of these quality frameworks to drive up the quality of provision. However, there is also a recognition that it is early days for these too.

8.1 IMPACT OF CARE STANDARDS / ‘CHILD AT THE CENTRE’ ON QUALITY STANDARDS IN SETTINGS

8.1.1 Childcare providers in their survey returns, were asked to give a view on the links between both the new Care Standards and the 'Child at the Centre' and the qualifications of staff and students in the setting.

8.1.2 Comments received indicated that the childcare providers are in the process of coming to grips with both frameworks but have not yet fully worked through how to implement them or the implications for their practice.

"As a playgroup leader, Care Standards are very vague (to me) and I don't think even as a current HNC student, I really understand the standards fully"

"Only if you have dealings with the performance indicators of the 'Child at the Centre' could you understand what the Care Commission are asking for"

"We do understand the Standards and have a committee member working on this in particular, however I do feel (they) are aimed at large organisations, not us"

8.1.3 Childcare providers also commented that students coming on placement were often unaware of the standards of the 'Child at the Centre' as a quality assurance framework.

"There is no recognition of the Standards from students (on placement)"

"To my knowledge students haven't seen or worked towards the 'Child at the Centre’”

"Students have been made familiar with the Care Standards by nursery staff"
8.1.4 Key stakeholders generally had a very positive view of the potential impact of the Care Standards and the 'Child at the Centre' on quality standards in the sector. Some felt they were already making a difference.

"The Standards are already causing improvement. People are looking at what the service is and making major changes - most obviously in policies and procedures. If it makes a difference in that alone it is worthwhile" (Stakeholder E)

"'Child at the Centre' has been used to effect improvements and change associated with the self-evaluative nature of the framework" (Stakeholder H)

8.1.5 Two dissenting views were expressed, although the organisations recognised that the long term impact would be a positive one. Both expressed their concerns in terms of lack of clarity and functions and the interpretation of the Standards themselves.

"The situation will improve in the longer term but I don't know if it's going to make much difference at the moment. A lot of 'responding' is required from settings but there is not the clarity of roles of agencies etc. The resulting confusion will mean that there will be no immediate impact of the Care Standards and the 'Child and the Centre'" (Stakeholder B)

"There needs to be agreement about the Standards themselves and their implementation. The Care Commission will do a far better job once they get into it. It causes chaos when settings are given conflicting advice and unreasonable demands are made. The potential is great but there needs to be standardisation of messages coming from the Commission, the HMIs and local authority under 5's officers. There is still too much room for differences of interpretation" (Stakeholder I)

8.1.6 Stakeholders were particularly interested in the impact of the self-evaluative approach enshrined in 'Child at the Centre'.

"Self evaluation is a whole new ball game. Providers are having to look differently at what they provide and look at how to improve practice" (Stakeholder E)

"It can only help to improve standards as people get used to using performance indicators as enabling tools. Quality assurance is beneficial because it makes people more reflective of their practice. They become more responsive as practitioners to whatever the need is" (Stakeholder F)

8.1.7 There was an acceptance that there was a relationship between people's understanding, both of the Standards themselves and of the process, before there could be any real impact on quality standards in the setting.

"Self assessment is one thing but people need to understand what is good and what is bad. Providers need to understand what the Standards mean from the perspective of the child" (Stakeholder C)
"(Standards) will improve once the level of understanding as to the use of the Care Standards has increased. Once people understand, they can take ownership and can then be accountable. It should be seen as an opportunity not a threat" (Stakeholder A)

8.1.8 There was appreciation that for the impact to be a positive one the process of inspection itself had to be positive.

"Inspection should be an enabling experience. It shouldn't be a bureaucratic process and certainly not perceived as a threat. The Commission can be challenged if people don't agree with them. You can get flexibility into the system. Our experience has been that Commission officers are finding it hard to change their thinking towards outputs, rather than inputs" (Stakeholder D)

8.1.9 One stakeholder saw the potential for implementation of standards to be a developmental one.

"One of the things we don't do is look, not only at the need to take people out to do training but at development within the centre. e.g. we could take one of the aspects from 'Child at the Centre' and work that through in the nursery (as a staff development initiative). Care Commission officers could take this role on. The impact of the Standards on the management and culture within the centre is the most important thing and that is best facilitated in the centre itself" (Stakeholder C)

**Key Points**

- There is still work to be done to improve childcare providers understanding of the Care Standards and the Child at the Centre.
- Childcare providers, as well as students in training, are not fully familiar with the frameworks.
- However, some key stakeholders thought the two frameworks were already having an impact on quality of provision.
- Self evaluation was seen to be a useful tool, although there was a view that this was only really possible if providers could differentiate between good and bad practice.
- The inspection process from the Care Commission was seen to hold the potential for being a developmental experience for childcare providers.
8.2 IMPACT OF CARE STANDARDS/CHILD AT THE CENTRE ON DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING

8.2.1 Stakeholders were clear that the Care Standards and 'Child at the Centre' would have a fundamental impact on the development of training in the longer term though there was a general view that the impact to date had been minimal.

"(The Standards) clearly show service users the standards they can expect. If that is the expectation of the Executive, the regulator and the user, then people need to be equipped to provide that" (Stakeholder C)

8.2.2 One of the difficulties appears to be the lack of clarity as to whose responsibility the revision of occupational standards will be, though the expectation is that the SQA will take a lead role in the development of training.

"The occupational standards have not yet been matched to the Care Standards. It is not clear whose role that it because there is not currently a Sector Skills Council for this area of work. This is a problem because Councils must be UK wide and cover a workforce of 500,000 to be viable. Tensions and difficulties between operations in England and Scotland made a UK wide perspective difficult in this area" (Stakeholder F)

"I hope (The Standards) will have a substantial impact on the development of training. SQA is the awarding body and there is an expectation they will be fully up to date on development (in this sector) and take an integrated view. If there is to be an impact there needs to be proper communication and networking between SQA, training providers and childcare providers. There is a responsibility on all to keep themselves up to date and consult with each other" (Stakeholder I)

8.2.3 The last comment points to a view shared by other stakeholders, that because the Care Standards are to be applied across a wide range of settings and areas of work with children they provide a push towards a more integrated approach to training.

"(The Care Standards) will create a demand for a different kind of training. In the long term I hope that there will be a whole new thought as to what the qualification should be. A Danish student we had recently was able to work across nursery, babies and out of school care and felt totally comfortable about doing it" (Stakeholder E)

8.2.4 However, it was recognised that work needed to be done in terms of cross referencing the two frameworks, tying them into other quality assurance frameworks and establishing a baseline.

"There are tensions between the two sets of standards. Joint inspections may well be the way forward but there needs to be considerable training of both sets of staff to
make it work. Are Care Commission officers and HMIs looking for the same thing? It's not necessarily the case at the moment. The two sets if indicators are used for different things and each brings different perspectives” (Stakeholder B)

“Some work has already been done to cross reference our organisation’s quality assurance framework to the Care Standards and 'Child at the Centre'. They support and complement each other with significant overlap, although the terminology may be different. There are also large correlations across the underlying principles and cross-referencing can be done to Level III. A lot of elements (from the award) match the Care Standards and could be evidenced in terms of doing 'Child at the Centre’ or our own system” (Stakeholder H)

“The Care Commission has a legal duty to improve quality. They need to establish a baseline this year to measure from and provide both qualitative and quantitative information which should be used to inform the development of training” (Stakeholder C)

8.2.5 2 key stakeholders were concerned about the work that still required to be done in exploring the meaning of the Standards and in equipping providers to be able to meet them.

“There still needs to be exploration as to what the Standards actually mean in each of the settings. The evidence will differ though the end point, in terms of the child’s experience, will be the same. Training has to be appropriate and delivered in a way that is meaningful to the client group. It's about matching expectations with outcomes” (Stakeholder A)

“A lot of providers, without training, will have difficulty in meeting the Standards. The Standards are good but some providers will struggle. It will be important that they (the Standards) be incorporated into awards” (Stakeholder G)

Key Points

- Stakeholders felt that the two frameworks would have a fundamental impact on the development of training in the longer term but the impact so far had been slight.
- Some stakeholders felt that the lack of a body to take lead responsibility for the revision of the occupational standards and the absence of a Sector Skills Council for early years work is holding back the development of training in this field.
- The Care Standards are seen as being complementary to the development of integrated service delivery and therefore act as an impetus to a different kind of training which offers more holistic methods of working with children and families.
- A need for a baseline for quality assurance was recognised so that improvements could be measured year on year.
- For childcare providers to properly appreciate and understand the two frameworks it was suggested they needed to be incorporated in the awards.
8.3 DEVELOPMENT OF TRAINING TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF CARE STANDARDS/CHILD AT THE CENTRE

8.3.1 Training providers gave a view as to how well they felt the competencies required for the Child at the Centre and the Care Standards were incorporated into current awards.

Surprisingly, 4 training providers did not feel competent to offer a view, indicating that they had a lack of information/understanding in this area.

8.3.2 Of those that did comment a number had not yet begun to insert the frameworks into teaching.

“We’ve done a course on Child at the Centre and we have a copy of the Care Standards but we’ve not looked at incorporating them into the teaching yet”. (Training Provider E)

8.3.3 However, others had taken account of them.

“We have incorporated the Standards and the Child at the Centre into the awards as we deliver them” (Training Provider K)

“The NC/HNC were written before either the Child at the Centre or the Care Standards. However, we can’t ignore them. We make a conscious effort to make the Child at the Centre fit into the awards and we make similar acknowledgement of the Care Standards” (Training Provider F)

“Having local authority staff on secondment in teaching posts helps us keep up to date. Our students are aware of the new Standards and Child at the Centre but that’s because of staff being there not because it’s a requirement of the qualification” (Training Provider G)

8.3.4 Poor awareness of frameworks was also alluded to:

“The Care Standards are not well understood and there is not sufficient awareness of them (existing qualifications) We make no reference to them”. (Training Provider H)

“Some advance PDA students who come from local authority schools are not aware of these frameworks until they come across them in College because they are excluded from the planning process in schools” (Training Provider G)

8.3.5 Many of the training providers interviewed pointed out that the existing qualifications, particularly the NC and the HNC are out of date.

“The basic competency requirements of the Care Standards are in the awards but we constantly need to update these. The terminology of the awards is well out of date and why we have to explain why x is no longer y to students on an on going basis” (Training Provider A)
“The older qualifications badly need updated and don’t reflect the Care Standards or the Child at the Centre at all. There are no specific slots in the NC/HNC to teach self evaluation based on the new quality assurance frameworks. There has been no clear guidance on what’s to be required of candidates in the future, either from the Social Services Council or elsewhere” (Training Provider C)

8.3.6 The concept of self evaluation was one that training providers found important.

“The concept of self evaluation is useful. We need to become reflective practitioners and make sure we keep up to date” (Training Provider D)

“The ethos of self evaluation needs to be pulled into everything we do in Childcare. It isn't currently there” (Training Provider A)

8.3.6 In considering the future development of training in the sector concern was expressed at the lack of a leading organisation to take development forward.

“The National Training Organisation is being disbanded. No development is taking place” (Training Provider B)

8.3.7 Concern was also expressed at the lack of communication between the Care Commission and training providers.

“There is not good enough communication between the Care Commission and the umbrella organisations and training providers to make sure they have been supported in their interpretation of the Standards. You cannot monitor/evaluate something you are not familiar with. People don’t see the links between what they do and the Standards. They are there but they need support to realise that” (Training Provider H)

8.3.8 Finally, there was the view that new developments in training had to increase flexibility so that training could respond to change.

“New qualifications need to build in flexibility to incorporate change rather than slavishly following descriptors. Change is endemic. Descriptors must be flexible to allow for change and development” (Training Provider I)
**Key Points**

- Training providers are not particularly well informed about Child at the Centre and the Care Standards.
- A significant number had done nothing to incorporate the frameworks into teaching for awards.
- Training providers complained that the awards had been written before the advent of the frameworks and were out of date for the most part, particularly the NC/HNC.
- Training providers complained too about the disbanding of the Early Years National Training Organisation (NTO) with nothing to replace it as yet.
- Poor communication between the Care Commission and training providers was sited as a difficulty.

**Section Eight Conclusions**

- The Care Commission and HMIE need to consider how to use the opportunities presented by joint inspection to create developmental experiences for providers and their staff.
- There is wide acceptance and understanding that both quality assurance frameworks have the potential for driving up quality.
- Training providers need to be encouraged to find ways of incorporating both quality frameworks into teaching, even before awards are redesigned.
SECTION NINE – FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION

‘Qualifications frameworks should not be rigid: they need to respond to changes in occupations, in skill requirements, in employer and employee expectations’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

If there is to be seamless transition from further education into higher education to drive quality standards up even higher, if proper recognition is to be given to prior learning at higher education level and if we are to create a highly mobile and flexible workforce able to work across a broad range of settings then the role of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework must be crucial. Equally, links between FE and HE need to be strong.

9.1 SCOTTISH CREDIT AND QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

9.1.1 The development of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework represents a positive step forward. Once the various awards in this vocational area are leveled to the Framework it will introduce clarity in relation to the relative credit values of awards and also on the relationship between awards.

9.1.2 It should also mean that the process of transference and progression will be based on a nationally recognised and clearly defined set of criteria with proper accreditation of prior learning.

9.1.3 Finally, it should make for improved linkages between further and higher education qualifications.

9.2 RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

9.2.1 Key stakeholders welcomed the increasing links between Further and Higher Education and saw the benefits as being linked to increased flexibility and movement across jobs in the sector, greater recognition and status for the area of work, the creation of clear career pathways and easier access to training.

“Funding is going to move in the direction of greater transferability of resources between Further Education and Higher Education. The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is at the frontline of trying to bring the two sectors together. Although career shifts have been favourable for those who have done a BA in Early Childhood Studies, particularly into management and the reasons related to increased self esteem have been important, people need to ask themselves why they want a degree and come up with satisfactory reasons” (Stakeholder F)

9.2.2 For some stakeholders the value of increasing links between Further and Higher Education lay in the greater weight that would be given to the area of work.
“SCQF should have a positive impact because it will give weight and credibility to the VQ. Higher Education Institutions will not be totally tied in but some universities are already starting to pick up on VQs. It is important because the Higher Education sector is such a big provider just in terms of capacity” (Stakeholder J)

“Childcare is not even put forward to school leavers as a Higher Education option. To be worth intelligent people’s while and for the value attached to the work to change, we need to see universities offering pedagogy courses” (Stakeholder G)

9.2.3 Several stakeholders welcomed what they saw as the possible creating of better pathways into Higher Education through developing links between Further and Higher Education.

“We need a clear pathway for those who want to move into Higher Education and it needs to be nationally agreed and uniformly applied” (Stakeholder C)

“If we had a single qualification then you could create building blocks into Higher Education but it would take a long time. SCQF might help but there needs to be a lot of negotiation and understanding of equivalence and values of the two awards (HNC/SVQ Level III) for the route to be smoother” (Stakeholder B)

“It is going to be easier to move on and up than it has been because Higher Education is beginning to recognise qualifications it might not have done previously. There are more and more articulation agreements between Further and Higher Education to allow people to move across” (Stakeholder D)

9.3.4 Credit transfer is also seen as holding considerable potential in terms of creating flexibility and movement in the training field.

“Flexibility and transferability. There lies the opportunity - credit accrual allows people the space to take time out and come back without having lost too much in the way of credit. The concept of SCQF is really good. The financial investment in training is not being lost because people are not having to go back to the beginning all the time. People don’t have to be pigeon holed too soon so they can move in and out and not lose” (Stakeholder A)

9.3.5 There was a view held by two stakeholders that increasing links between Further and Higher Education also offered opportunities for greater movement once careers had started.

“Tremendously similar life skills can be brought to a range of areas of work and yet barriers are put up to people moving across vocational areas” (Stakeholder A)

“The value of a degree to the field would be broad based and allow people to move between leisure, youth work and play work” (Stakeholder E)
9.3.6 However, a note of caution was given by one stakeholder who gave the view that the ultimate value of access to Higher Education had to be that it led to greater possibilities for those who went for it.

“Higher Education training is only good if it leads to career progression. The BA Early Childhood Studies is really good but, at the current time, where does it get you? You’ll be a really good nursery nurse! It doesn’t lead anywhere in terms of status, salary and recognition” (Stakeholder I)

Key Points

- Key stakeholders were very welcoming of links between FE and HE. They see these as providing increased flexibility and movement across the sector, greater status for the work and better clarity re career pathways and access to training.
- The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework is seen as providing a clear route in to Higher Education.
- Credit transfer is seen as offering potential for greater flexibility.
- However, career progression opportunities are seen as requiring to sit alongside the opportunity to access Higher Education, otherwise there is a fear that the sector will lose its highly qualified staff.

9.3.7 8 out of 11 training providers who responded to the question regarding formal links with Higher Education providers indicated they had formal articulation agreements with an HE provider.

9.3.8 All of these were in relation to progression on to the BA Early Childhood Studies.

9.3.9 2 of these were in the Highlands and Islands area and were members of the University for the Highlands and Islands.

9.3.10 Articulation agreements were in place with a total of 6 universities and, interestingly, early work under way to establish a degree in Playwork (involving SPRITO and Glasgow Caledonian University).

Several training providers reported difficulty in getting universities to give due weight to the HNC and the PDA Childcare and Education.

“A lot of work needs to be done to clarify where a PDA/HNC sits in relation to a degree” (Training Providing F)

“If Higher Education institutions abided by the SCQF framework that would be useful but many universities don’t currently recognise the HNC. Universities should look more carefully at the content of the HNC because it is heavily academic compared to other HNCs” (Training Provider E)
9.3.11 One training provider had reservations about links to Higher Education being developed through online learning.

“Degrees online deny people a proper university experience and don’t suit everyone. It is very expensive to run because the set up costs are so high and the students numbers low. Mature students benefit but, for younger students, they need the experience of growing up and going away” (Training Provider I)

9.3.12 An interesting development is occurring where one training provider is looking to a joint development and joint delivery of units for the BA Early Childhood Studies with a university.

“There are problems related to who owns/who’s going to do what and competition for students but there is an overarching willingness to work together on this” (Training Provider A)

Key Points
- The majority of training providers interviewed have formal articulation agreements with a range of universities.
- All of these are for access to the BA Early Childhood Studies.
- Even so, several training providers reported that universities were not recognising the HNC or the PDA Childcare and Education for pre entry qualification requirements.
- A model for the development of joint training could involve the joint delivery of degrees by both FE and HE staff, as one stakeholder is currently working on.

9.3.13 Views on the likely impact of links between Higher and Further Education and on the range and quality of childcare mainly focused on the impact on the workforce itself. However there were a couple of interesting perspectives given to the impact on service delivery.

“If you look at the national agenda, which is focussed on disadvantaged and on an integrated approach to the delivery of services and then you look at practice and theory about supporting a wide range of families, it becomes about how existing settings can evolve into family support. If Further and Higher Education are working together that is more likely. Higher Education will lead on research and relationships need to be such that research is carried out and then findings are shared. Practice then becomes based in current theory” (Stakeholder C)

“The quality of pre school would be a great deal better. Children’s attitude to their school experience from then on would be different e.g. behaviour/social skills (A high quality pre school experience) would have a fundamental impact on the whole way society knits together. What you do with very young children effects how they think about society and what they value” (Stakeholder G)

9.3.14 Views on the impact on the workforce were concerned with raising quality.
“We’ll have a better skilled workforce that is more knowledgeable and confident and could match any in Europe. The qualification we need to develop, which would be a single qualification, might or might not be a degree. It would be based on what we decide our workers need to know” (Stakeholder B)

“It offers the potential for a highly skilled qualified workforce that values continuing professional development. It may bring in people who may not have thought of a career in early years because it would be more valued as a career option” (Stakeholder H)

9.3.15 One stakeholder suggested that Further and Higher Education links may do a lot to stabilise the workforce.

“It would give a broad ranging competent workforce that would be committed to staying in this sector. A broad qualification might give people a better understanding of the quality of the work and lead to people valuing the work undertaken” (Stakeholder A)

9.3.16 Two stakeholders were more cautious about the value of Further and Higher Education collaboration and particularly didn’t want to see any resultant dilution of pre 5’s work.

“To be fully qualified in a nursery and do a good job an HNC/SVQ level III is enough as long as there is continuing professional development. We don’t want nurseries to become ‘mini schools’. (Links between Further and Higher Education) would raise understanding, knowledge, skills and abilities of the sector but we mustn’t lose the fact we’re dealing with under 5’s. Continuing professional development is really important but does a nursery nurse working on the floor really need a degree?” (Stakeholder I)

“Where will people go with a BA? Will they go into teaching and will we lose them out of the childcare sector? There needs to be something at the end. They won’t want to stay where they are! Having had the ambition and drive to do it you would want to go on” (Stakeholder D)

9.3.17 Overall, there was general acceptance and enthusiasm for the development of training and study opportunities across Higher and Further Education as being in the long term interests of the sector.

“In the longer term there will be a profession in early years and childcare where people are clear about what they provide, clear about its value and there is higher status” (Stakeholder F)

9.4 FLEXIBLE, DISTANCE AND ONLINE LEARNING
9.4.1 Only one training provider mentioned on line learning as a significant way of providing learning and this was in a negative context of it being no substitute for classroom based or work based learning.

9.4.2 Nevertheless, for those whose circumstances make attendance at a centre for classroom based learning difficult, there is great potential for increasing access to learning by taking this approach.

The most frequently mentioned and significant difficulty experienced by students/candidates in accessing training and in making progress in achieving awards was not, as might have been expected, lack of affordable childcare, but time to study. Balancing study and other responsibilities was cited as the single biggest problem. Access to forms of on line learning, which could be developed through use of home based computer links, would seem to offer possibilities for flexible learning more suited to the needs of students/candidates with other work and family responsibilities.

### Key Points

- Benefits related to better working links between HE/FE were seen to be in the areas of workforce development and, to a lesser extent, service delivery.
- In service delivery the benefits were seen to be related to greater understanding rooted in research.
- In workforce development all benefits were concerned with raising quality, although there was one comment related to greater stability created by greater commitment of trained staff.
- Caution was expressed about the need for an improved career structure to go hand in hand with the development of greater access to HE.
- On line learning would offer considerable benefits to candidates trying to juggle work/family responsibilities.

### Section Nine Conclusion

The development of Higher Education opportunities will only be beneficial to the sector if there are perceived to be benefits to staff in having HE qualifications, whilst remaining in the sector. Without these, such qualifications will simply cause a drift away from the sector of highly qualified staff.
SECTION TEN – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

‘The development of policy and practice towards more integrated services may generate a need for a more broadly based initial qualification than is currently available.’ (Childcare: The Training Challenge, SEED, 2000)

Whilst the state of rapid change and development in the sector and its impact on the development of training has been thoroughly explored in previous sections a measure of the health of a sector is the perceptions of those involved in it as to what the future holds. We therefore asked for views on perceived opportunities and threats over the next 5-10 years.

10.1 THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

10.1.1 Both key stakeholders and training providers were asked to consider where they felt the opportunities lay for the future development of training to meet the emerging needs of the sector and what they perceived to be threats to the ability of the sector to rise to the challenge.

10.1.2 Opportunities for the future were seen by both training providers and key stakeholders as lying clearly in workforce development but with an inevitable impact on quality of service provision.

10.1.3 There was an interesting correlation between people’s hopes for the future, as they described these in terms of opportunities, and those aspects of working in the sector which they had earlier described as issues in relation to recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

10.1.4 Respondents feel positive about the opportunities they consider are presented by such developments as the Care Commission, the Scottish Social Services Council and developing links between Further Education and Higher Education. There is awareness that this will address some of these issues:

? A more appropriate and streamlined qualifications structure that offers good progression – ‘Simplify the maze!’
? An increasing clarity about the various currencies of the awards – the advent of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework
? A chance for a new approach to developing training to meet the changing needs of the sector
? A chance to create a qualifications framework that allows transference and multiple entry and exit points and progression into higher education
? Up-skilling of the workforce through increasing creative links with Higher Education.
? An opportunity to recognise practical competencies as well as academic achievement through implementation of the Care Standards
? Raising of quality and improvements in the status of the work through regulation under the Care Commission
Creating a career structure for workers with progression that rewards people for their work and for engaging in continuous professional development

A growth of employment opportunities and an opportunity for workers to explore their potential in new and developing areas of activity e.g. Sure Start projects, Early Intervention and Home Link work

Consideration of pay and conditions for nursery nurses as the role of the teacher changes and opportunities for an examination of competency requirements for early education are considered in relation to an expanding role for nursery nurses

Development of continuing professional development opportunities to assist career progression

A reduction of the differentials in value attached to ‘care’ and ‘learning’ created by the opportunity to take a holistic approach to providing a service.

An improved ability to retain the workforce through more exiting career opportunities, greater status and better remuneration.

10.1.5 Other opportunities quoted were more clearly aspirational and related to wider agendas around inclusion, social justice and citizenship. They included:

- Contributing to creating strong, resilient, active, Scottish citizens
- Valuing children as "our future"
- Creating better life circumstances for children and families
- Providing an expanding, well run service which provides economic benefits to society

10.1.6 Perceived threats centred around issues which had also, in some cases, been highlighted as opportunities. People consider we are at a crossroads in terms of the future development of the service. The direction will be determined by how we handle such developments as the Care Commission and the Scottish Social Services Council. Whilst people welcome these developments and are optimistic about them, they also see the potential for a negative impact.

10.1.7 Threats listed included:

- The use of "regulations as a stick to beat people with"
- The implications of the Scottish Services Council in terms of a possibly shrinking workforce
- Impact of a reduced pool of workers on the ability to deliver a quality service
- No career structure
- Putting time and energy into qualifications with no reward at the end
- Fragile management of much of the sector, particularly in the voluntary sector
- A lack of highly qualified staff in the sector to provide mentoring and a quality training experience at higher levels
- A complex qualifications framework that no one understands
- A widening gap between people with old and new qualifications
- The undermining of childcare by poor pay and attendant recruitment and retention problems
- Gender imbalance in the sector
- Removal of teachers from pre school leading to reduction in standards
- Prevalent attitudes relating to a lack of acceptance of the need for qualifications
- Loss of small private providers because they can’t offer the same career opportunities as local authority providers
- Possibility of funding drying up to support training delivery, especially SVQs, much of which are funded using EU funding
- Lack of funding to develop new qualifications
- Variations in standards of training provision

Key Points

- Opportunities are perceived as lying in workforce development but with an impact on service development.
- There is a clear correlation between peoples’ hopes for the future and those aspects of working in the sector which stakeholders and training providers described earlier as issues in relation to recruitment and retention.
- There is hope and a great deal of optimism regarding the advent of the Care Commission and the Scottish Social Services Council with the expectation that both will have a positive impact in the long term.
- Stakeholders and training providers feel positive about the development of links between Further and Higher Education.
- All this hope and expectation is tempered with a small amount of scepticism that bodies such as the Care Commission and the Scottish Social Services Council will be able to deliver on their remits. This is particularly the case against the backdrop of poor pay and conditions, low status and lack of career development opportunities in the sector.

10.1.8 Whatever the opportunities and challenges might be for the future development of training to meet the emerging needs of the sector, they must begin with an examination of what the current qualifications contain and how they relate to each other and to the new competency requirements. The creation of the database was designed to facilitate that process.

10.2 INFORMATION FROM THE DATABASE

The database was designed to allow comparisons in the content of all the relevant awards in early education, childcare and playwork. It was set up to establish where there were areas of overlap and where there were gaps in training against an agreed set of topics drawn from the Care Standards and ‘The Child at the Centre’.

Interrogation of the database establishes the following:

10.2.1 Award content against the 15 key topics:
Growth and Development of Children and Young People/Play and Learning

There is content against Child Development across all awards at all levels. However, those that are particularly strong are the Early Years Care and Education VQs at all levels.

The most comprehensive coverage of Play also comes with the Early Years Care and Education VQs, which are strengthened because of their considerable additional references to the learning aspects of play. Although the Playwork VQs should have a major element related to play, in fact this is not substantially the case with each only having two units specifically devoted to play and with little reference to the learning aspect.

Both the NC and HNC have strong elements of play but the rest of the awards do not feature it as major components.

Organisation of Children’s and Young People’s Learning

The strongest awards again are the VQs in Early Education and Playwork because of their emphasis on the planning, implementation and evaluation of the early years curriculum, though, apart from the Level 1V, they suffer because they were written before the recent developments in this area of education.

The NC and the HNC in Childcare and Education also have major content around the early years curriculum. However, it too is restricted because it makes no reference to many of the recent developments in curriculum planning and evaluation.

Other awards make only passing reference to planning and organisation in the context of learning because they do not equate play with learning in any formal sense.

Professional Relationships

In most college based awards the content relating to professional relationships is embedded in the units for workplace practice experience except for the PDA Childcare and Education, which has a strong unit on leadership.

However, there are some units from the Level 111 VQs in both Playwork and Early Years Care and Education which have considerable content around professional relationships.

Health and Care of Children and Young People

This topic is not particularly well served by any of the awards. However, the best units appear to be from the Early Years Care and Education VQs at Levels 11 and 111, though they tend to emphasise health and care of very young children.

The NC has a substantial unit on child health

Support for Children and Families
This topic is primarily concerned with the provision of services to support children with special needs and their families.

The most comprehensive award in this sphere of concern is, of course, the PDA Certificate in Support for Learning. It has content that is better suited to the sector than the HNC/HND Support for Learning because it was specifically written for those who work with children. The HNC and HND were written with both children and adults with special needs in mind.

However, even the PDA has limited value because it is clearly targeted at auxiliaries working in schools rather than the wider workforce working with children with special needs.

Other awards all have specific units which are designed to give insight into this area of work. However, only the VQs have it embedded throughout the content for the entire awards, which makes inclusion an ever-present aim for those doing these awards.

**Ethos of the Setting**

The VQs are considerably stronger in content which is designed to create the right ethos around a clear set of values. This is particularly the case for the Early Years Care and Education VQs where the values are explicit and fully underpin all parts of the awards.

These VQs also have embedded within them a strong thread related to anti discriminatory practice.

The promotion of positive behaviour in children is a subject present in all awards though it is only the Playwork VQs which broaden out the scope of positive behaviour to include all people in the setting in an explicit way. However, there are many other units which hold positive working relations as implicit in their content.

**Engaging with the Child/Young Person**

This topic is not particularly well served by any of the awards with relatively poor content, particularly in terms of the significance of high quality intervention. College based awards have content related to this subject within the workplace experience units.

Again, the most useful awards seem to be the Level 111 VQs in both early Education and Playwork.

**Working with Parents**

Most awards have fairly substantial content relating to working with parents, with both the NC and the HNC encompassing units in this subject area.

However, the Level 111 and 1V Early Years Care and Education VQs have the most comprehensive coverage.
The Playwork VQs, at both levels also have useful units on developing positive relations in the setting.

**Organisation and Resourcing of the Learning and Care Environment**

Once again, although the other awards have content on this topic, particularly the NC/HNC Childcare and Education, the strongest with the most useful coverage seem to be the VQs, particularly the Early Years Care and Education at both Level 11 and 111.

**Safety**

All awards include separate units related to safety as well as having safety issues embedded at appropriate points throughout. This topic is very well covered across all awards.

**Staffing and Staff Development**

Aside from the Level 1V Early Education and Childcare VQ, which has extensive coverage of this topic, the best award is the Level 111 Playwork which has 4 units all with substantial coverage in this topic area.

It is particularly worrying that there is practically no content in any of the awards on the regulations to be complied with re Staffing.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of the Service**

Again, aside from the Level 1V Early Education and Childcare VQ, the award with the strongest content in relation to this topic is the Level 111 Playwork, though the PDA Childcare and Education has a good unit relating to quality and quality assurance.

The Level 111 Early Years Care and Education VQ has 2 units which relate to the evaluation of learning. The HNC also has content relating to the evaluation of learning and of the curriculum. However, the only award to widen the scope of monitoring and evaluation to cover the whole service is Playwork VQ at Level 111.

**Involving the Community/Other Services**

The Early Years Care and Education VQ at Level 111 and the Playwork VQ at Level 111 provide the best coverage of this topic though it is not covered particularly strongly, even by these awards.

The other awards hardly refer at all to involving the community, though involvement with other services tends to be embedded in health and special needs based units.

**Service Management**
The award with the most obvious and the strongest content against service management is, of course, the Level 1V VQ in Early Education and Childcare. However, there is a surprising amount of material related to service management in other awards, particularly at Level 111. Once again the Level 111 Playwork is the strongest with many out of the optional units being centred around management issues.

It is worth noting that the age range covered by the VQs in Early Education and Childcare is 0-8 years and, for the Playwork VQs it is 5-14 years. They only overlap in terms of age for a matter of 3 years and yet much of the coverage is broadly similar.

10.2.2 Key similarities and differences in awards at the same level eg HNC/SVQ 111:

VQ based qualifications appear to be substantially more comprehensive in their coverage of the key topics than the other awards, even where these awards should be directly comparable, eg the HNC Childcare and Education and the SVQ Early Years Care and Education.

The PDA Classroom Assistant and the PDA Certificate in Support for Learning Assistant awards are broadly similar in content, with considerable overlap in the units which make up each.

The VQ Early Years Care and Education at Level 111 is very much a practitioners award with the emphasis on working directly with children and contributing to their development and learning, albeit at an advanced level. The Playwork VQ, in contrast, has a heavy emphasis on organisation and management of the setting.

However, the content of the Early Years Care and Education Level 111 award is considerably greater and at a higher level of difficulty than the Playwork Level 111 and yet they are both named as level 111 awards. This does not appear to be consistent.

The PDA Childcare and Education is a post-qualifying award that is challenging and demanding, even for those who have completed an HNC. It bears no comparison to the other 2 PDAs for Classroom Assistants and Support for Learning Assistants, which are initial qualifications and pitched at a much lower level. The naming of these awards is confusing in that sense.

10.2.3 Areas of overlap and gaps in coverage of the key topics:

Topics where there is considerable overlap include:

- Organisation of Children and Young People’s Learning – across all levels
- Growth and Development of Children and Young People – across all levels
- Support for Children and Families – particularly at Level 111
- Play and Learning – across all levels
- Ethos of the Setting – particularly at Level 111
- Service Management – at level 111
Working with Parents – across all levels

Topics where there are significant gaps include –

Professional Relationships – at level 11
Health and Care of Children and Young People – at level 111
Monitoring and Evaluation of the Service – at level 11
Involving the Community/Other Services – at all levels
Staffing and Staff development – at level 11
Engaging with the Child/Young Person – at level 11.
SECTION ELEVEN – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 CONCLUSIONS

11.1.1 The research has clearly identified that, in the proliferation of awards in recent years, there has been insufficient regard for a strategic approach to tackling the training needs of the sector as a whole. This continues, with the recent launches of the Scottish Progression Award in Playwork and the SVQ for Classroom Assistants and the early development work underway to establish a degree in Playwork.

11.1.2 The lack of a clear strategic vision for further training and development in the sector is further exemplified by the short life given to the Early Years National Training Organisation and the continuing debate as to the appropriate Sector Skills Council to take its place.

11.1.3 Interrogation of the database reveals that, within the framework of qualifications, there is considerable overlap in terms of content and there are also significant gaps.

11.1.4 The allied survey and interview research leads us to conclude that the current qualifications framework is in some respects complicated and confusing. Further to this the framework:

- has yet to fully encompass the sector’s new and developing needs, particularly in relation to work with very young children, education, family support and integrated services
- creates some difficulties in the transference of knowledge and skills across the sector leading to difficulties in maximising the potential of the workforce
- is not well understood by those working in the sector because of perceptions about its complicated nature
- creates some difficulties in encouraging professional development, both in relation to accreditation of prior training and learning and in relation to access to higher education.

11.1.5 Concerns were raised over the various modes of delivery and of teaching, learning and assessment in the current qualifications some of which were perceived to be unsatisfactory, with evidence from the field research indicating that:

- just under 23% of childcare providers surveyed feel that there is over emphasis on written work/evidence, even in the SVQ based awards though stakeholders did not generally share this view, with several highlighting the problems in assessing practice elements of awards.
- some childcare providers are concerned over the extent to which the theoretical components of training prepared students for practical work.
- the links between training providers and employers are generally underdeveloped, such that training providers are not, as a whole, properly aware of
the changing needs of the sector or up to date with developments in quality standards
- the negative perceptions of VQ based awards, particularly in Early Education and Childcare, on the part of some employers may be creating barriers to career progression for some workers
- the mismatch between the training providers’ expectations of supervision in the work experience placements, who expect centres to be involved in assessment, and the perception of placement staff, who see themselves in a support and mentoring role, dilutes the potential value of the workplace experience for students
- lack of resourcing for placements or their staff in terms of training or time allocated for mentoring/support reduces the ability of placements to make a significant contribution to the student/candidate experience and leads to lack of ownership of the training experience by the placement provider

11.1.6 The field research also indicates that there may be benefits to the creation of a new coherent career structure and improved pay and conditions of service for those working in this sector. Lack of career progression opportunities and poor pay were cited repeatedly as the explanation for the sector’s poor record in recruitment and retention of staff and its low status in the employment market. Restricted career opportunities, poor pay and conditions and the consequent image of the sector as an all female employment area have all served to constrain the development of the sector as a desirable long term career choice, particularly for those who can make a choice between further and higher education. It was also suggested that this may be a deterrent to male participation.

11.1.7 On this basis we conclude that there is a need to develop policies which aim to:

- create a framework that is fully comprehensive of the needs of the sector and has the flexibility to absorb and reflect changing needs as these further develop towards integrated health, education and social work services
- create greater cohesion in the qualifications framework in a form that can also facilitate skills transference
- make strong links between school based qualifications and further education opportunities that promote a positive image of the sector as a career choice
- develop strong and dynamic working partnerships between training providers and employers so that the needs of the sector continue to inform the development of training and the knowledge, skills and expertise of practitioners is incorporated into the training experience for students/candidates
- reflect a practice based approach to the construction of awards which maximises the value attached to experience in the workplace and resources workplaces to take on a significant role in training staff
- develop clear and accessible information on the awards framework and career opportunities in the sector
- consider how to develop a career structure for the sector that allows for progression, long term prospects and a consequent stabilisation and further professionalisation of the workforce.
11.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR A BROAD BASED INTRODUCTORY AWARD

It is very difficult, at this point, to make any definitive judgements about the possible content of a broad based award which could act as an introductory qualification to employment in early years education, childcare and playwork. However, the findings of this research suggest a number of ways forward.

11.2.1 There are a small number of units from existing awards which seem, through interrogation of the database, to be key units in terms of their coverage of core areas of study for such an award. These units might be worth considering in constructing the framework for any new award. However, all would have to be revised to take account of the full age range 0-14 years which any new award would have to cover.

The units are:

- From Playwork Level 111:
  - Promote Children’s Development Through Play D1NTO4
  - Contribute to Improving Personal and Organisational Performance D1NSO4
  - Promote Positive Relations in the Play Environment D1NVO4
  - Provide a Child Centred Play Environment D1NWO4
  - Develop Opportunities in the Community D1NLO4
  - Work with Colleagues in a Team AK8MO4

- From Early Years Care and Education Level 111:
  - Plan, Implement and Evaluate Learning Activities and Experiences B72X04
  - Plan and Equip an Environment for Children B72W04
  - Establish and Maintain Relationships with Parents B72Y04
  - Plan, Implement and Evaluate Routines for Children B73704
  - Work with other Professionals B73604
  - Provide a Framework for the Management of Behaviour B72P04

- All of the units relating to Child Development
11.2.2 It is suggested that a single, entry level qualification for the early years education, childcare and playwork sector should:

- encompass all topics at level 1 in the database which relate to the topics from the Care Standards and the Child at the Centre.
- use material from existing qualifications where this is appropriate
- be a 2 year full time equivalent programme of study
- be practice based. including practical experience across the full age range of 0 – 14 years.
- include practical experience in both universal and targeted services across education, social work, some health services and leisure services
- emphasize holistic approaches to supporting children and families and meeting need
- emphasize integrated and high quality approaches to service delivery
- emphasize on personal and professional development and team working
- offer opportunities for specialisation in a chosen age range/work area, for example special needs or work with very young children

11.2.3 The development of any such qualification should consider:

- a standard minimum entry level qualifications to apply uniformly across Scotland.
- links between the qualification and the revised occupational standards (when available and where appropriate)
- the development of a workplace mentor to provide the underpinning support required by candidates
- the development of on-line support materials for students to underpin the theoretical aspects of the award
- options for funding both employers and employees to allow for continuous training of existing staff
- the development of a set of criteria to assess the suitability of placements for supporting students / candidates on placement.
- The creation of a post-qualifying probationary period to provide ongoing support to newly qualified staff.

11.2.4 A clear framework to entry of the course should be developed. Entry level qualifications could include:

- Early Education and Childcare Higher
- Intermediate 2 in Care
- A broad based Scottish Progression Award to cover the whole sector and linked to the new award.
- A Summer School programme

11.2.5 Similarly the framework should consider future progression for those who qualify in the introductory award. This progression could include:

- SVQ Level IV qualification
- Degree level courses as progression opportunities. Whilst it is not within the brief of this research to consider qualifications at teacher ‘professional’ level it is recommended consideration be given to how this qualification should relate to those operating at ‘professional’ level and consider it in this context.
– Continuing Professional Development Framework for the sector which allows for extended practice development and opportunities to grow into other employment areas in the sector.

11.3 OTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

11.3.1 The creation of a Sector Skills Council to allow the sector to facilitate work required to meet the major challenge of developing a flexible, integrated system of qualifications.

11.3.2 The establishment of Working Groups within Childcare Partnerships to plan workforce development strategies for their areas, to ensure that training opportunities available meet the requirements of the sector and that the role of employers in providing continuous training environments for staff is effectively supported.

11.4 FINALLY

11.4.1 We would like to conclude by saying that, despite the obvious shortcomings in the qualifications framework and the difficulties the rapidly expanding early education, childcare and playwork sector is experiencing in meeting changing needs and increased regulatory requirements, the sector is extremely vibrant. It is also overwhelmingly positive about the opportunities and challenges the next few years presents.

11.4.2 The development of integrated children’s services, particularly as they relate to early years, offers exciting opportunities to think about the real needs of children and families. Our research indicates that, despite some well expressed reservations, there is a willingness, if not a healthy appetite for grasping these opportunities and exploiting them. This can only augur well for the future.
APPENDIX 1: TRAINING PROVIDERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Children in Scotland
for The Scottish Executive

AWARDS IN EARLY EDUCATION, CHILDCARE AND PLAYWORK
Interview Schedule: Training Providers

Note – this supplements the questionnaire sent out prior to the interview and to be available at the interview.
A preamble statement will cover anonymity, confidentiality etc and confirm permission to tape record the interview.

Name of Provider________________

Interview Date________

Name of interviewee _________________________

A: RECRUITMENT

1. How easy or difficult do you find it to attract appropriately qualified applicants for places on each of the award programmes which you offer [Check against Flashcard 1]

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

B: KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING

2. To what extent do you think the knowledge and understanding elements of each award underpin the occupational competencies required?

3. What do you see as any significant gaps between knowledge and understanding and competencies?

4. To what extent and where do you think there is duplication in the knowledge and understanding elements of the award?

5. In terms of providing appropriate knowledge and understanding which appropriately
underpins competencies, which awards would you see as the **most** successful and why? *If possible, take interviewee down to level of specific units*

6. In terms of providing appropriate knowledge and understanding which **appropriately** underpins competencies, which awards and which units of which awards would you see as the **least** successful and why?

7. Do you think that in these awards knowledge and understanding is assessed in an appropriate way using appropriate tools? *Encourage expanded comment where appropriate*

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8. Do you think assessment of knowledge and understanding could be improved and if so, how?

**C: PLACEMENTS**

9. Have you experienced any difficulties with the provision of work experience placements?

10. What do you require from placement agencies for each award in terms of input to student/Candidate learning and assessment?

11. *How well do you think your placement agencies meet this demand?*

12. How well do you think your placement agencies support and guide students/candidates for each award and what problems do you encounter – if any?

13. How well do you think the competencies assessed as part of the awards relate to the Care Standards and Child at the Centre?
14. Do you have any views on how award programmes might be changed so that placement agencies might be used more effectively to support the learning and assessment of students? *Encourage expansion on any relevant comments.*
D: RELATIONSHIPS between AWARDS and JOBS

15. Which current awards do you see as appropriate for the following jobs? [Enter codes from Flashcard 1 and encourage expanded comments on appropriateness]

Childminder

Nanny

Playleader in play group

Play assistant in playgroup

Playleader in children’s and families centre

Play assistant in children’s and families centres

Playleader in private/day nurseries

Play assistant in private/day nurseries

Playleader in OOSC project

Play assistant in OOSC project

Nursery nurse – local authority

Senior nursery nurse

Classroom assistant
Special needs auxiliary

Senior playleader

Centre manager

Other (please specify)//
Other (please specify)

16. Do you think the current range of awards could or should be changed in any way to help meet the occupational competency requirements as these are developing?

YES ____ NO_____

Encourage development of comments…

17. Do you see any scope for developing a broad-based introductory award suitable for a wide range of jobs in the childcare, early education and playwork spheres?

YES ____ NO_____

Encourage development of comments…

If respondent sees such scope: What do you think should be included in such an award?

Encourage development of comments…

18. What % of candidates for each award you offer do not go on to work with children?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

19. What do you see as the main reasons for people not going into work in childcare after attaining an award?

E: RELATIONSHIP with HIGHER EDUCATION
20. Do you currently have or are you hoping to have any formal or informal links with an HE institution in the field of childcare etc.

NO____
YES [obtain details]: ____

21. How generally do you see relations with HE Providers developing in the fields of early education, childcare and playwork over the next few years?

F: RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYERS

22. Do you currently have any formal structure for developing links with local employers in the field of childcare?

NO____
YES [obtain details]: ____

23. Are you aware of any difficulties amongst employers in understanding the current qualifications framework in childcare etc.?

NO____
YES [obtain details]: ____

24. What do you see as key opportunities and threats in the development of awards in childcare etc in Scotland over the next 5 to 10 years?

G: OTHER COMMENTS etc

25. Finally, do you have any other comments in respect of the aims of the research that you would like to see incorporated in the research report or taken into account when it is being written?

25. We may wish to come back to you to check details of our transcript and – perhaps – to ask supplementary questions. May we do so? Could this be done by email?
If yes, confirm email addresses ________________________________

Thank you etc.

APPENDIX 2: TRAINING PROVIDERS PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE AND REPORT

BACKGROUND

In December 2002, training providers providing training in early years childcare, education and playwork were sent a brief questionnaire to gather basic information on the qualifications currently
available. These questionnaires were followed by in-depth interviews. This report outlines the findings from these questionnaires.

The questionnaire, and the analysis that follows, focused on individual qualifications rather than training providers as a whole. Of the 12 training providers that were sent questionnaires, 9 were returned representing a 75% response rate. In total 67 different qualifications were being offered by these training providers and therefore all percentages within this report refer to the qualifications on offer rather than the training providers.

**AWARDS ON OFFER**

Table 1 below shows that there are a large number of different qualifications in early years education, childcare and playwork. The most common qualifications on offer are the SVQ in Care and Education (both level II and level III) and the NQ in Childcare and Education. Playwork qualifications were less common than other qualifications which include an element of education.

At the time of survey none of the training providers were providing the Scottish Vocational Qualification in Care and Education (Level IV).

**Table 1 Number of qualifications available**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number providing</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Care and Education (Level II)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Qualification in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Care and Education (Level III)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award in Classroom Assistants</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development Award in Support for Learning Assistants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Group Award in Care (Intermediate 2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Playwork (Level II)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Vocational Qualification Playwork (Level III)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Certificate in Supporting Special Needs Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQ Intermediate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both Lauder College and Inverness College deliver 11 of the 12 qualifications identified, all training providers offered 5 or more qualifications, with the mean number of qualification on offer being 7.4%.

**ENTRY TO QUALIFICATIONS**
Table 2  Type of qualification required for entry to qualification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Standard Grades</th>
<th>Highers</th>
<th>Previous Qualification</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVQ Care and Education (Level II)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NQ in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ Care and Education (Level III)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNC in Childcare and Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA in Classroom Assistants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA in Childcare and Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA in Support for Special Needs Learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGA in Care (Intermediate 2)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ Playwork (Level II)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ Playwork (Level III)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNC in Supporting Special Needs Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Half of the qualifications provided do not require qualifications for entry, and of those who do these qualifications are unlikely to be Standard Grades of Highers. However a high number of qualifications (n = 21, 33%) do require candidates to have completed a previous course, particularly in qualifications such as the SVQ care and Education Level II, the PDA in Childcare and Education and the HNC in Childcare and Education.

There is some consistency over the entry level for the Professional Development Awards, which do not require qualifications for entry into the Classroom Assistants course or the Support for Special Needs Learning (with one exception) but do require a previous course to have been completed before entry to the PDA in Childcare and Education. None of the Scottish Group Award in Care require qualifications or previous courses to be completed. However, the entry for other qualifications varies considerably depending on the training provider attended. For example, the majority of SVQ Childcare and Education Level II qualifications do not require qualifications, but in two cases these are required. Similarly, there are variations in the requirements for the NQ in Childcare and Education, the SVQ Care and Education (Level III) and the HNC in Childcare and Education.

In addition, one college (Lauder) reported that in 10 (out of 11) qualifications they would take account of previous experience when assessing students applications.

**CANDIDATES**

In total, the training providers were teaching 2209 students, with an average of 36 on each qualification and a median of 31. These students were recruited using a variety of methods (see table 3 below).
### Table 3  Methods of recruiting students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer referrals</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-referrals and mature students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From previous qualification</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>84</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of qualifications relied on traditional methods of recruiting students, through referrals from employers, schools and self-referrals. Only a very small number (n = 7) referred to advertising as a method of recruiting students.

In relation to competition for places, the majority of qualifications (n = 37, 55%) had a ratio of applicant to places of 1:1, with a small number reporting ratio’s of 2:1 (n = 7, 10%) and only one reporting a ratio of 3:1 (the SVQ in Childcare and Education Level II at Stevenson College). While demand did not outstrip provision in Dundee, Jewel and Esk, and Banff and Buchan, there were higher ratios at Dumfries and Galloway, Stevenson and Lauder colleges.

Training providers reported, in total, 182 potential students who were (at the time of survey) on waiting lists for qualifications. The mean number per qualification was 3.5 but this masks large variations. The majority of qualifications do not have waiting lists (n = 40, 60%). Of the 12 who reported waiting lists for qualifications, the median number of students on waiting lists was 15, though one qualification reported that 40 students were on awaiting list (PDA Classroom Assistant course). The number of waiting lists was evenly spread across the different awards on offer.

### METHOD OF TEACHING

A wide-variety of teaching methods were used by the training providers when delivering the various qualifications. Table 4 (below) shows that the most popular method of teaching were part-time, both during the day and at the evening and weekends with almost half of the 67 qualifications offered on this basis. There were more part-time qualifications available than full-time qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent (out of 67 qualifications)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part-time (day)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time (evening / weekend)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible learning</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open / distance learning</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>130</strong></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents gave multiple answers

New methods of teaching, such as flexible learning and open or distance learning were being employed by a number of the training providers, however none had, as yet, begun to deliver qualifications on an on-line learning basis. Flexible learning is available for the majority of qualifications at Dundee (66.7%), Lauder (64%) and Inverness (90%). In contrast, open / distance
learning is available in all but two colleges (Lauder and Dundee), though to varying degrees. Only one (out of 10) qualifications on offer at Inverness College can be studied using open / distance learning while the majority of qualifications at Stevenson (n = 4, 67%) and Dumfries and Galloway (n = 4, 67%) were offered on this basis.

In relation to the type of awards on offer, the National Qualification in Childcare and Education, the HNC in Childcare and Education and the Scottish Group Award in Care are all offered on a full-time basis, as well as on a part-time (day) basis. In contrast, the SVQ Level II and Level III in Playwork are both only available on a part-time basis as is the PDA in Childcare and Education.

The SGA in Care is the only award not to be offered on a flexible basis by any training provider, while no training providers offer open or distance learning for those who want to study the HNC in Supporting Special Learning Needs or the SVQ’s in Playwork.

COMPLETION RATES AND NEXT STEPS

Completion rates for qualifications in early education, childcare and playwork varied considerably, with only 13 qualifications reporting completion rates of 100%. There were a large number of missing cases (n = 33) within this category, suggesting that this information is not systematically collected by all training providers.

Of the 21 qualifications which reported completion rates of less than 100%, only one was below 50% (the SGA in Care at Dundee College, the college representative who responded to the questionnaire stated that they felt this was because the qualification was too hard.

Completion rates for the HNC in Childcare and Education and the PDA’s in both Support for Learning Assistants and Childcare and Education were all above 80%. However, some qualifications in the SGA in Care (n = 3), NQ in Childcare and Education (n = 5) had completion rates of under 80%.

All of Dumfries and Galloway’s qualifications have less than 100% completion rates and the majority of Dundee College’s qualifications have low completion rates (n = 6, 67%). Reasons give for non-completion centre on personal reasons of changing circumstances (table 5 below). Of note are financial reasons for non-completion and issues of workload and the level students are expected to work at.

Table 5    Reasons given for non-completion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job / career change</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial reasons</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications too hard</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of assessor support</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaturity of students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of those who do complete the qualification, the majority are working in the childcare field within six months, with 27% of qualifications boasting 100% rates. It should be noted that training providers were unable to provide information for a large number of their qualifications (n = 36, 54%) which suggests that these figures are not systematically collected. Of the 11 qualifications with less than 100% rates for those working in the child care sector after completing the qualification, 7 had rates of less than 80%. Of the 5 with 50% or less, two were SGA in Care awards (one with an employment rate of just 20%), indeed of the 5 SGA’s on offer, 3 had reported rates of 50% or less with the remaining 2 missing the question out.

ASSESSMENTS AND PLACEMENTS

For qualifications where students are expected to go on placement, arranging these placements was not a significant problem for the majority of qualifications, with around a third (n = 21) saying there was sometimes difficulty arranging them but only 3 citing them as ‘very difficult’. This question was not applicable to 11 of the qualifications under consideration.

Stevenson College and One Plus describe some level of difficulty in arranging placements for all their qualifications, while Inverness, Banff and Buchan and Glasgow Nautical do not report any difficulty.

A range of assessment methods are used, (see table 6 below), with most qualifications assessing students through a mixture of methods. The most popular of which are portfolios. Observation, diaries and witness verification.

Table 6  Methods of assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>As a percentage of qualifications on offer (n = 67)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diary / reflective account</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness / verification</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short answer questions</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child study</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical demonstration</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

A number of key points can be drawn from this survey:
a. A wide variety of methods involved in teaching and assessing students in early years education, childcare and playwork rather than a uniform standard or method across Scotland.
b. A lack of coherence over entry level qualifications suggests that gaining access to a qualification depends on the training provider rather than according to a criteria such as qualifications.

c. The types of qualifications offered, such as part-time or distance learning, show that flexible and accessible methods of teaching have been adopted within this field though availability varies across the country.

d. Training providers did not seem able to lay their hands on reliable statistics on completion rates and graduate prospects.
### APPENDIX 3: LIST OF TRAINING PROVIDERS INTERVIEWED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson College</td>
<td>Head of Childcare, Education and Social Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banff-Buchan College of Further Education</td>
<td>Sector Manager Creative Arts and Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow College of Nautical Studies</td>
<td>Head of School, Childcare, Education and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumfries and Galloway College</td>
<td>Programme Manager, Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee College</td>
<td>Team Leader, Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauder College</td>
<td>Curriculum Manager, Childcare and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen College</td>
<td>Curriculum Manager, Childcare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inverness College</td>
<td>Head of School, Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewel and Esk Valley College</td>
<td>Sector Manager, Service, Health and Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth College</td>
<td>Programme Leader, Childcare and Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Plus</td>
<td>Training Manager/ Childcare Section Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of School Care Federation for Highlands and Islands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In December 2002, 200 childcare providers were sent questionnaires which covered the extent and impact of training and qualifications in the Early Education, Childcare and Playwork field. The 200 providers included 40 childminders, 40 play groups, 40 out of school clubs, 40 day nurseries and 40 nursery schools. Telephone calls and a repeat mailing of those who had not responded were carried out in January 2003 to increase the response rate.

A total of 110 responses were received, a response rate of 55%.

### SIZE AND TYPE OF ORGANISATIONS

As table 1 shows, voluntary organisations were not only the large number of respondents to our questionnaire (n = 34, 31%), they also cared for the largest percentage of children (n = 1312, 40%). Private or commercial organisations also cared for a significant amount of children. In contrast, childminders constituted 18% of our respondents but card for only 2% of the total number of children.

The total number of children being cared for by the respondents was 3256. The average number of children cared for was 46.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>Percentage of total respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary Organisation</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private or Commercial Organisation</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Childminder</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Centre</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common age range was 3-4 (n=2104), as shown in table 2 below, though a substantial number of children of primary school age and over are also being looked after by childcare providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Age of children in childcare provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 2 years old</td>
<td>840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – 4 years old</td>
<td>2104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 11 years old</td>
<td>1545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 + years old</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted that not all respondents answered all the questions, which has lead to some discrepancies in the total numbers of children cared for.

**SESSIONS OFFERED AND UPTAKE**

As table 3 shows, 70% of respondents offered half day sessions (n=110). After school care, school holiday cover and all day care were also offered by at least 40% of respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number offering sessions</th>
<th>Percentage of services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before school care</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school care</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All day care</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half-day care</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School holiday care</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sessions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58% of respondents provided 2 or more types of care. The median number of services provided was 2 (n=110)

**NUMBER OF STAFF AND QUALIFICATIONS OF STAFF**

The organisations that responded to our survey employed a total of 654 staff, 637 of whom worked directly with children. On average, each respondent employed 8 staff members, of whom 7 worked directly with children.

Of those working directly with children and young people, the majority of staff (n = 520, 82%) held some type of qualification relating to childcare. The most commonly held qualification was the HNC in Childcare and Education (n=122, 23%). PGCEs or other teaching qualifications were the second most common qualification (n=54, 13%). See table 3 for further details. The SVQ Level 2 in Playwork, the PDA in Childcare and Education and the PDA Classroom Assistant were not commonly held.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number who currently hold qualifications</th>
<th>Number who currently hold</th>
<th>% of those holding qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HNC Childcare and Education</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE or other teaching</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ III Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ II Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ III Playwork</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ II Playwork</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Childcare and Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Classroom Assistant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Support for Learning Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are not significant differences between the total number of qualifications held and the type of organisation responding. This may well be due to lack of data.

A total of 209 staff (33%) currently working directly with children were studying for childcare qualifications. Staff were most often working towards obtaining the SVQ Level 2 in Early Years Care and Education (n=62, 30% of those studying) and the SVQ Level 3 in the same subject (n=52, 25%). Though few staff currently held these qualifications, the high number studying for them suggests they are gaining in popularity.

### Table 5  Number who are currently studying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Number studying</th>
<th>% of those holding qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVQ II Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ III Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ II Playwork</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNC Childcare and Education</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Childcare and Education</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ III Playwork</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Support for Learning Assistant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGCE or other teaching</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Classroom Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>209</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TYPE OF STUDY AND IMPACTS OF TRAINING

In total 67 of the childcare providers who responded to the survey had staff who are currently studying (56%). As table 4 shows, the flexible, part time (evenings and weekends) and open learning were the most common methods of studying for qualifications.

### Table 6  Method of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number of respondents using method</th>
<th>% of respondents with students using method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part time (evenings and weekends)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open or distance learning</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time (day)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day release</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of those responding (58 out of 67) indicated that staff were either quite or very involved in supporting colleagues during their training.

### Table 7  The impact of supporting colleagues on the work of the centre
37 respondents (55%) indicated that had a significant impact on the running of their centre (table 7). However, when asked to detail this impact, 15 spontaneously provided positive responses in relation to the work of the team (8 references to new ideas and 8 to better team work) and 20 in relation to working with the children (8 references to new ideas and 13 to a better quality of care being provided):

*Keep all staff up to date with new ideas and current thinking in pre-school education.*

*Extra support, more paper work but brings new activities into the setting (along with fresh ideas).*

This positive picture of staff training is borne out by the fact that 60 of the 65 (92%) that responded to the question “Are there benefits to colleagues studying?” said yes. Again, new ideas and better quality of care were the most common benefits cited:

*The children benefit from the raised standards in quality care as more knowledge comes into the workplace.*

Where respondents indicated there were negative aspects to staff training, these tended to be disruption (n=13) and additional costs (n=12).

**AWARENESS OF THE SVQ LEVEL 4**

Only 53% of those responding were aware of the SVQ Level 4 (n=105). 10 organisations were gaining approval to run the SVQ Level 4 and another 9 were intending to do so in the next year. Reasons given for not intending to run the SVQ Level 4 were primarily that the respondent didn’t know about it (n=16).

*We are unaware of this qualification at present. May have plans in the future, depending on staff roles. Would like more information on this.*

The next most common reason was that staff had not yet reached a high enough level (n=11).

When asked what sort of jobs the SVQ Level 4 was intended to support, 51% indicated that they didn’t know (n= 56). Of those who answered, only 33 indicated that they thought it was designed for management roles. A further 11 provided answers which did not included mention of management or supervisory roles. 9 Respondents thought that the SVQ Level 4 would be well suited to providing competencies for these roles, 6 didn’t know.

**Table 8**  **Expected demand for SVQ IV**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High demand</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate demand</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low demand</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No demand</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>99</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

41 respondents didn’t know what sort of level of demand there would be for the SVQ Level 4. 46 thought that there would be moderate or less demand. Only 13 thought there would be high demand for the new qualification.

**PLACEMENTS**

42 respondents took students from local training providers (38%). On average each of these organisations had taken 2 students as placements in the last year. These organisations often got students from HNC courses in Childcare and Education (n=22) and NC courses in Childcare (n=17). Students were received from 35 different institutions. Two of the training providers interviewed in the qualitative phase of this research were not represented in this list. (Himats and One Plus.)

The most common requirements by training providers was that the childcare providers offered support and guidance (n=26) and provided opportunities for their placements to get practical experience (n=17). 40 of the 43 respondents felt that their staff understood what was required by the training providers.

39 of the 41 respondents did not have difficulties in providing the support for the students expected of them by the training providers. Where difficulties were experienced they included staff shortages and time pressures as well as concerns over the attitude of students.

*No longer take students – have found that they vary a lot in attitude and they can cause more problems.*

32 of the 43 respondents were satisfied by how prepared the students they received were. Where they were unsatisfied, the reasons were largely split between feeling the preparation was inadequate (n=7) and the students themselves were inadequate (n=4).

*Many students have little or no understanding of time keeping, turning up when they are supposed to be involved in specific activities, or the poor impression given to paying parents through sitting with ’arms folded’!*!

**VIEWS ON EXISTING QUALIFICATIONS**

72 of the 96 respondents who responded to this question thought that the theoretical work in the current qualifications equipped students either quite or very well for working with children (75%). The most common complaint was that the qualifications were too theoretical (n=8).
Though some concerns were raised over how courses were delivered.

As a childminder I have recently gained my SVQIII Early Years Care and Education. This qualification is supposed to be home based but to cover some elements I had to do a lot of work at my local play group.

65 out of 98 respondents thought that the current content of the available qualifications related to the care standards either quite or very well. Similarly, 67 out of 96 felt that the current qualifications related to the Child in the Centre either quite or very well.

69% of respondents either fully or mostly understood the current qualifications framework (n=101). Of those that had specific problems, most of these were due to a lack of information regarding the qualifications (n=8).

66% thought they would find a database of the current awards helpful (n=102). Common requests were that this database be user friendly (n=8) and available on-line (n=6).

There was no real consensus on creating a new, broad based childcare award, with 21 respondents seeing no scope for it, 33 thinking there would be scope and 41 being undecided. Child development was the most common aspect which respondents thought should be included in any broad based qualification (n=6). Behaviour, play, health and safety and first aid were also common (n=4 in all cases).

When asked to suggest improvements to the current qualifications, a clear desire for more practical work was expressed by respondents (n=22). Flexible hours of study were also popular (n=10) as was more affordable or subsidised training (n=10).
APPENDIX 5: STUDENT/CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

In January 2003 a survey was issued to the twelve training providers interviewed earlier in the project. These providers then distributed the survey to 15 students currently studying for an award in early education, childcare or playwork. The completed surveys were then returned to Children in Scotland by the training providers. A total of 113 surveys from 9 different training providers were received, a response rate of 62.8% of those issued by Children in Scotland.

RESPONDENT DETAILS

The most common age group taking part in the survey was “over 35 years old”, (n=41, 36.6%) with both “16-19 years old” and “25-34 years old” accounting for almost a quarter of the total respondents (n=28, 24.8% in both cases). See table 1 for further details.

The sample was overwhelmingly female, with 108 of the total respondents (95.6%) indicating they were female. Only two respondents indicated that they were male.

Table 1 Age of respondent by sex of respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>TOTAL (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16 – 19 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28 (24.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16 (14.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 34 years old</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28 (24.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 35 years old</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41 (36.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (%)</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>113 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49.6% (n=56) of respondents had children, which were primarily of school age (n=61, note that as respondents could provide multiple answers for this question, the number of responses is greater than the number of respondents with children). Only 9 respondents indicated that they had children of pre-school age.

62.8% (n=71) of respondents were about half way through their qualification at the time of the survey. 10 (8.8%) were at the start, 15 (13.3%) a quarter of the way through and 17 (15%) were nearly finished.

CURRENT STUDY AND PREVIOUS QUALIFICATIONS

The most commonly studied for qualification in the survey was the HNC in Childcare and Education (n=38, 33.6%). Also common were NC Units (n=29) and the SVQ Level 2 in Early Years Care and Education (n=18, 25.7%). Some respondents indicated that they were studying for more than one qualification (n=9, 8%). See table 2 for more details.
Table 2 Qualifications being studied and previously completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Currently studying</th>
<th>Previously completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HNC Childcare and Education</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC Units</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ 2 Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ 3 Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ 3 Playwork</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Support for Learning Assistant</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Classroom Assistant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ 2 Playwork</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDA Childcare and Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVQ 4 Early Years Care and Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In total, 55 respondents (48.7%) already held previous qualification in the early education, childcare and playwork fields. The most common was some form of NC Units (n=34, 61.8% of those with previous qualifications). Other than this, only the SVQ Level 2 in Early Years Care and Education had more than ten respondents indicating that they already held it (n=12, 21.8% of those holding previous qualifications). No respondents held the PDA in Childcare and Education or the Level 3 SVQ in Early Years Care and Education. See table 2 for more details.

QUALIFICATION COSTS AND MODE OF STUDY

The majority of respondents were having their qualification costs paid for by a grant from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) (n=59, 52.2%). 16.8% (n=19) were having their fees paid completely by their employer. Only 4.4% (n=5) were totally self funded. It should be noted that only the HNC course is eligible for SAAS support and the number of students indicating they are supported by SAAS is greater than the number currently studying for the HNC. It is assumed that this discrepancy arises from respondents confusing SAAS grants with bursaries provided by their college.

More than half of the respondents were studying full time for their qualification (n=67, 59.3%). The remainder were primarily studying part time, either during the day (n=12, 10.6%) or during evenings and weekends (n=19, 16.8%). See table 3.

Table 3 Mode of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of study</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time (evening/weekends)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time (day)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open/distance learning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREVIOUS AND CURRENT EMPLOYMENT IN CHILDCARE

Slightly more than half of the sample were employed in childcare before starting their qualification (n=57, 50.4%). Those currently employed in childcare while studying their qualification was only slightly lower at 42.5% (n=48). Of those currently employed in childcare, only 8 are studying for their qualification full time.

STUDY-LIFE BALANCE

Of those respondents who had to arrange childcare, only 10 found it quite or very difficult to do so. In contrast, 31 found it very or reasonably easy. See table 4. Once childcare arrangements were in place, 34 respondents were satisfied with them, with only 6 being dissatisfied.

Table 4 How difficult was it to arrange childcare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Easy</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonably Easy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite Difficult</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Difficult</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked about fitting studying around other commitments, for example, employment, 50.9% (n=57) indicated that they had found it quite or very difficult to balance their studying with the rest of their lives. There was an indication that many respondents had work and domestic responsibilities on top of studying and this made for a lack of time.

“I have a full time job, 2 children and a house it can be difficult to find time to sit down with the work”

ADVICE ON QUALIFICATION CHOICE

62.8% (n=71) of respondents felt that they had received quite a lot of information about their options before deciding which qualification to undertake. Only 1 thought they had received too much information, with the rest (n=39, 34.5%) feeling they had not received enough information.

48.7% (n=55) had received specific advice from another person when making their qualification choice, the most common of which was their employer (n=25, 44.5%). See table 5.

Table 5 Who provided advice on qualification choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/training advisor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers advisor</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance teacher</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
69 respondents felt that the advice and information they had received had been either very or quite useful. Only 4 thought it had not been helpful.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL WORK

Three quarters of respondents felt that the balance between practical and theoretical work was about right (n=85, 75.2%). Most of the rest thought that there was too much written work (n=20, 17.7%).

Almost all respondents thought that the theoretical work they were doing was necessary (n=110, 98.2%) and prepared them well (n=108, 97.3%) for working with children. They did not think there were any important gaps in the theory they were being taught (n=104, 92.9%). All of those responding indicated that they thought that the theoretical work was well assessed (n=110, 100%). 98.1% (n=104) thought that their practical work was well assessed.

FUTURE PLANS

Respondents felt that their qualifications, in general, equipped them to do the less high ranked jobs. Only a few respondents indicated that their qualifications would equip them to take on more senior roles. See table 6.

Table 6 Which jobs does your qualification equip you for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number who felt their qualification equipped them to do this job</th>
<th>Percentage who felt their qualification equipped them to do this job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play group play assistant</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom assistant</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childminder</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery Nurse</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanny</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/family centre play assistant</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private/day nursery play assistant</td>
<td>55.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school group play assistant</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play group play leader</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private/day nursery play leader</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child/family centre play leader</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of school group play leader</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special needs auxiliary</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Nursery Nurse</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior play leader</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre leader</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other jobs</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most common future intention of candidates was to find a job in a childcare setting (n=51, 45.1%). Continuing on to further training (n=48, 42.4%) and remaining in the same job (n=25, 21%)}
22.1% were also common. Few respondents intended to seek promotion (n=16, 14.2%) or move to a different aspect of childcare (n=15, 13.3%).

**CHANGES TO THE QUALIFICATIONS**

There were four main themes which came through when students were asked about possible changes to their qualifications. 17 thought that the qualification should lead to higher pay and status than it currently does, 17 wanted less written or more practical work, 14 would like to see study time being built into the qualifications and 12 wanted more emphasis on Additional Support Needs.
APPENDIX 6: KEY STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A. THE QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK.

1. How well do you think the current framework of qualifications in early education, childcare and playwork covers the training needs of the sector?

2. Are there significant areas of work with children where the current qualifications do not cover the occupational competencies required? Yes/No 
Encourage comment.

B. UNDERSTANDING OF THE FRAMEWORK.

3. How well do you think the current framework of qualifications is understood

   By employers?___________________

   By potential candidates?___________

   If respondents indicate problems-
   What do you think needs to be done to improve understanding?

C. Relationships between awards and jobs.

4. Do you think there is an appropriate qualification to underpin the full range of jobs in early education, childcare and playwork? Yes/No 

   If respondents indicate problems –
   In which jobs do you think there are difficulties in candidates accessing an appropriate qualification?

5. Do you think the current range of awards could or should be changed in any way to help meet the occupational competency requirements, as these are developing? Yes/No 
Encourage development of comments.

6. Do you see any scope for developing a broad based introductory award suitable for a wide range of jobs in the early education, childcare and playwork sphere? Yes/No 

   If respondents see such scope –
   What do you think should be included in such an award?
D. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

7. Do you see any issues related to the recruitment of sufficiently qualified childcare staff? Yes/No Encourage comment.

*If respondent indicated there are issues -*
How would you think the development of training can contribute to resolving these issues?

8. Do you see any issues related to the retention of sufficiently qualified childcare staff? Encourage comment.

*If respondent indicated there are issues -*
How do you think the development of training can contribute to resolving these issues?

9. What impact do you think the establishment of the new Scottish Social Services Council will have on recruitment and retention of staff in early education, childcare and playwork?

E. STANDARDS AND QUALITY

10. What impact do you think the Care Commission’s Care Standards and/or The Child at the Centre will have on the development of training in early education, childcare and playwork over the next few years?

11. How do you think that will effect quality standards in childcare settings?

F. THEORY AND PRACTICE

12. Do you have any views over what should be the balance between the theory aspects of the current awards in early education, childcare and playwork and the practical elements assessed in the workplace?

13. Do you have any views on how the delivery of qualifications might be changed to reflect a different balance?

G. LINKS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

14. What are your views on how the relationship between HE and FE courses will develop in the fields of early education, childcare and playwork over the next few years?

15. How do you think these developments will impact on the range and quality of childcare available?
H. THE FUTURE

16. What are the most important opportunities and threats offered by the development of training in early education, childcare and playwork over the next 5-10 years?

   Opportunities__________

   Threats________________

17. Other comments
   
   *Same as training provider’s questionnaire.*

   Thanks etc
APPENDIX 7: LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDER ORGANISATIONS INTERVIEWED

Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
Edinburgh Childcare Partnership
Fife Childcare Partnership
Learning and Teaching Scotland
Orkney Childcare Partnership
Scottish Childminding Association
Scottish Independent Nurseries Association
Scottish Out of School Care Network
Scottish Qualifications Authority
Scottish Pre School Play Association
Scottish Social Services Council
## APPENDIX 8: CURRENT MANDATORY AWARD CONTENT BY KEY TOPICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Current mandatory award content against key topics identified for the relational database</th>
<th>SVQ</th>
<th>SVQ</th>
<th>SVQ</th>
<th>SVQ</th>
<th>NC</th>
<th>HNC</th>
<th>SGA</th>
<th>HNC</th>
<th>HND</th>
<th>PDA</th>
<th>PDA</th>
<th>PDA</th>
<th>SGA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>Int 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Growth and development of children and young people</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Care and health of children and young people</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Play and learning</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Engaging with the child/young person</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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APPENDIX 9: REFERENCES


Early Years National Training Organisation (2000) Development of a Sector Workforce Development Plan for the Early Years Care and Education Sector, EYNTO


Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) (2001) Introduction to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework. SCFR


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