



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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**WRITTEN STATEMENT**  
**BY**  
**THE WELSH GOVERNMENT**

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**TITLE** Initial response to the independent Review of childcare and early education registration, regulation and inspection (the Graham Review)

**DATE** 18 September 2014

**BY** Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills and  
Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty

This is our initial response to the report of the independent *Review of childcare and early education registration, regulation and inspection* (the Graham Review) which was published on 15 August 2014 and contains 22 recommendations for consideration by the Welsh Government.

These recommendations include: development of a single quality framework for the 0-7 age group across childcare and the Foundation Phase underpinned by legislation; unified inspection of the 0-7 age group across all settings (both childcare and Foundation Phase); proposals for collaborative working across Welsh Government and local government; a number of recommendations which relate directly to the qualification levels of practitioners within the childcare, Flying Start and Foundation Phase workforce; development of a “free” early years assessment tool for use across professions, settings, agencies and sectors; and regulation of childcare that operates for less than two hours or for children over eight years of age.

We recognise that the workforce is crucial to the future development of the early years, childcare and play sector. We started an open dialogue with key stakeholders over the summer in relation to the workforce recommendations within the Review report, enabling us to include them in the proposals for a 10-Year Plan for the Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce which will go out to consultation later this month. The qualification recommendations are challenging for the sector, but fit closely with our current policy direction and aspirations to improve the quality of childcare and early education. The upcoming workforce consultation will help test the right approach for this important workforce in Wales in relation to minimum qualification levels, graduate leadership and continuous professional development. We are pleased that we are able to respond expediently to these Review recommendations as part of the wider workforce consultation.

Perhaps the Review's most significant recommendation is its call for a "single quality framework across early childhood care and education for the early years (0-7 age group)" - which would cover childcare and Foundation Phase education in schools and settings. We are already developing the Early Years Development and Assessment Framework and whilst we see the rationale for this single quality framework, it will require detailed consideration and discussions with stakeholders as well as consideration of potential legislative implications.

We recognise the importance of having effective regulatory and inspection arrangements in place that will drive improvements in the care, learning and well-being outcomes for children. The Review calls for Welsh Government to legislate for a single system of inspection of provision for both childcare (0-8 years) and Foundation Phase education (3-7 years). There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved. We are pleased that the inspectorates, CSSIW and Estyn, are already working together within existing systems, to develop and test a joint-inspection framework in non-maintained regulated care settings that also provide early education for children (before compulsory school age, where their inspection and regulatory functions currently overlap). The greater alignment of these existing inspection frameworks will help improve the quality of care and education in these settings. This joint-inspection model will aid consideration of the recommendation for

a unified inspectorate/inspection for childcare and education for the 0-7 age group across both the maintained schools and non-maintained settings.

The Review also recommends that in order to safeguard children and ensure quality of provision, all childcare that operates for less than two hours or for children over eight years of age is registered and subject to inspection. Consideration is being given to whether to extend the current system. This will be subject to consultation and any approach will need to be proportionate, with all costs and implications clearly examined and evaluated.

With regards to the other recommendations put forward by the Review, we will need to consider these alongside the outcomes of the Foundation Phase and Flying Start evaluations, the Curriculum and Assessment Review and other ongoing reviews. Together, it is intended that these findings will provide a broad evidence base to inform future policy development, drive quality and raise standards across childcare and early education in Wales.

We will issue a full response to Professor Graham's Review report once other ongoing evaluations and reviews have reported. We anticipate that this will be in early spring 2015. In the meantime, we are pleased that our inspectorates CSSIW and Estyn will be working together in non-maintained Foundation Phase settings. Importantly, we are also making early progress by consulting on the workforce recommendations for the sector through the 10-Years Plan for the Early Years, Childcare and Play Workforce which will go out to consultation on Monday 22 September 2014.