

Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce Plan

December 2017



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Overview of the Childcare, Play and Early Years in Wales Workforce Plan

A draft plan for the Childcare, Play and Early Years sector setting out our proposed 10-year strategic ambition for this workforce was consulted upon in 2014.

Since the consultation, there have been a number of significant policy developments relating to this sector, including the development of a new suite of qualifications for childcare and play and the Government's commitment to an enhanced government funded childcare provision for working parents of 3-4 year olds. Further work has been undertaken to assess the impact of these policy developments to ensure they strategically align with the aspirations of this plan.

This final plan sets out the direction of travel for the Childcare, Play and Early Years workforce over the next 10 years. However, its focus is on actions taking place within the first 3 years and aligned to the Welsh Government's National Strategy - Prosperity for All.

Further information

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Ministerial Foreword

As set out in Prosperity for All: the National Strategy, we want children from all backgrounds to have the best start in life. Those who care for and teach our youngest children play a vital role in helping us achieve this aim. The important role of dedicated childcare and play practitioners in providing a safe and stimulating environment for the children in their care is often undervalued. The Welsh Government's vision is to develop a highly skilled childcare and play workforce which in 10 years time, is highly regarded as a profession and as a career of choice.

We want to attract the right people into the early years and childcare sector with the skills and behaviours to provide high-quality care, education and play opportunities for children. We need to ensure training and qualifications are accessible for our workforce and are based on good practice and standards. We need training which supports the workforce to fully understand how children learn and develop, and we want to support the existing workforce to gain the skills they need to progress in their careers and access more employment opportunities. In return, we will expect those working in childcare and play to be proactive learners, managing their own career development with access to clear career pathways and continued professional development.

This plan sets out clear and tangible actions for this Assembly term to build the capability and capacity of the workforce and the sector to drive our ambitions forward. It also sets out a longer term vision which is ambitious, but also essential if we want to enhance the quality of care we offer our children and to fully realise the potential of this committed sector and its workforce.

Minister for Children and Social Care

Contents

Ministerial Foreword

1. Introduction

- Implementing the Workforce Plan
- Leading in Partnership
- What do we mean by the childcare and play workforce?
- Why do we need to develop the workforce?

2. Delivering our ambition in the next 3 years:

- Attracting High Quality Recruits
- Raising Standards and Skills
 - Developing Additional Skills and Specialisms
 - The Early Learning Workforce – Foundation Phase
 - Investing in Building Capacity and Capability

3. Delivering the 10 year vision

- Continuing Professional Development
- Professional Registration
- Integrated early education and childcare
- Building a Diverse Workforce
- Building a Bilingual Workforce

Chapter 1: Introduction

Our new national strategy, Prosperity for All, sets out our vision for the Early Years. We want children from all backgrounds to have the best start in life. Our aim is that everyone will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and lead a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling life, enabling them to participate fully in their communities and contribute to the future economic success of Wales. As part of this, we have committed to ensuring consistent regulation and delivery of pre-school provision. An important part of this work will be the way in which we can deliver a truly integrated early education and care system in Wales, including the workforce.

The Welsh Government's ambition is to develop a skilled childcare and play workforce, which is highly regarded as a profession and a career of choice and recognised for the vital role the sector plays in supporting our children's development. Our proposals are ambitious and we recognise that change will take time, but it is essential if we want to improve the early education and care of all children in Wales. For this reason, the plan is set out in two sections: Chapter 2 sets out clear, tangible actions we will take in this Assembly term.

We have developed these proposals across 3 key themes:

- Attracting High Quality Recruits
- Raising Standards and Skills
- Investing in Building Capacity and Capability.

Chapter 3 sets out our longer terms aspirations.

The plan will be a living document, so that we can adapt to changes over time.

Implementing the Workforce Plan

The Welsh Government will establish an implementation group, supported by our strategic partners to progress and monitor the actions in this plan. Figure 1 provides an idea of how we see the first three years of implementation. The work of the Group will be aligned with the 3 key themes of the plan.

Leading in Partnership

The Welsh Government has a key role in ensuring the sector is regulated and supported. This plan has been developed taking a cross Government approach, joining up our policies and delivery programmes to support provision across the early years sector. To implement this plan, Welsh Government will work in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including:

Local Authorities

Local authorities play a key strategic leadership role in ensuring the provision of local childcare, working in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent community and education sectors. The Childcare Statutory Guidance revised in August 2016, sets out the roles and responsibilities of local authorities to shape and secure children's services.¹

Social Care Wales

From April 2017, the Care Council for Wales was renamed Social Care Wales and gained new powers to lead the improvement of social care and childcare in Wales. Social Care Wales will work with Welsh Government to support the implementation of this plan. Initial implementation will focus on:

- Management of future analysis for workforce planning and data forecasting;
- Developing, in partnership with Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales, the new suite of Child Care, Learning, Development and Play (CCLDP) qualifications for introduction in September 2019;
- Supporting the Welsh Government to develop and introduce a national quality framework for training, working with the sector and others to ensure employers and practitioners receive the support they need;
- Supporting employers and practitioners by working with the Welsh Government, the Regional Skills Partnerships, Business Wales and others to ensure employers and practitioners receive the right support to assist their capacity and capability development.
- Representing the sector as part of its sector skills council role on the new implementation group (set out in Figure 1).

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/circulars/wagc1308childcareact06/?lang=en>

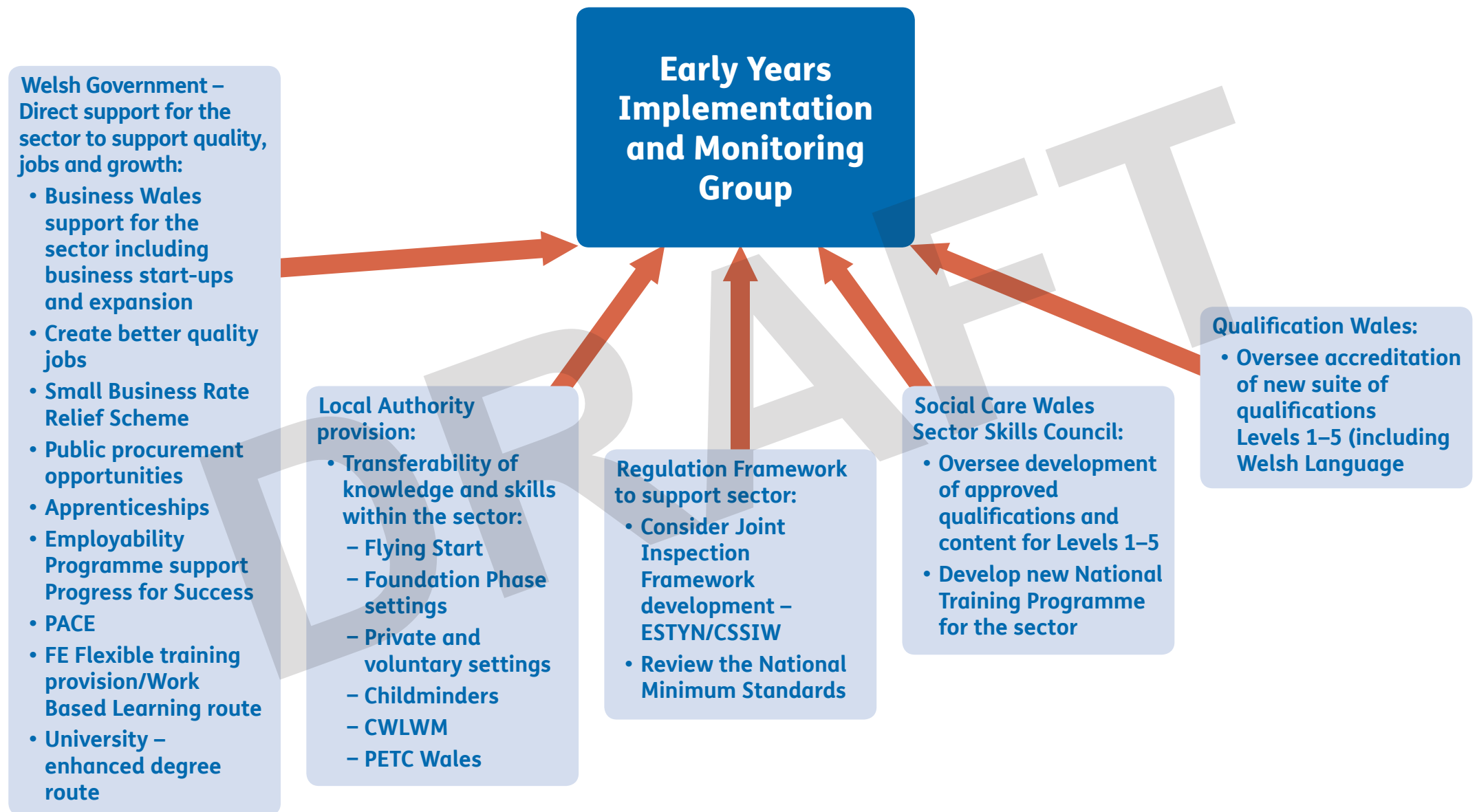
CWLWM

The Childcare Wales Learning and Working Mutually (CWLWM) consortium is comprised of the five main childcare organisations in Wales. Collectively, these organisations form the key stakeholder organisations who support the sector. CWLWM will work closely with Welsh Government, local authorities and Business Wales to support the needs of the childcare and play sector. This work will help ensure the sector can access the help and advice it needs.

PETC Wales

In Wales, the play sector is represented by the Playwork Education and Training Council for Wales (PETC Wales). It provides a forum to agree broad strategic actions and make recommendations for playwork education, training, qualifications and National Occupational Standards. PETC Wales also acts as a conduit for advice and guidance between the sector skills council, Skills Active, and the playwork sector. The Council disseminates information, advice and guidance to the sector and makes recommendations to PETC UK and advises it on issues related to the Welsh context.

Figure 1: Implementation plan for the initial three years of the Workforce Plan for Childcare, Play and Early Years



This diagram is for illustrative purpose only and is subject to change.

What do we mean by childcare and play workforce?

This plan is primarily focused on supporting individuals who work within childcare or play, covering children in the age group 0-12.

The workforce includes childcare practitioners and managers, childminders, leaders and assistants of playgroups and out-of-school clubs, and Flying Start practitioners. It is also intended this plan will apply to Early Years Health Support Workers and Foundation Phase leaders within education settings including consortia, local authorities leads.

While the professional standards, training and development for teachers are outside the scope of this plan, we are working towards delivering a truly integrated early education and care system in Wales, and this will include the workforce.

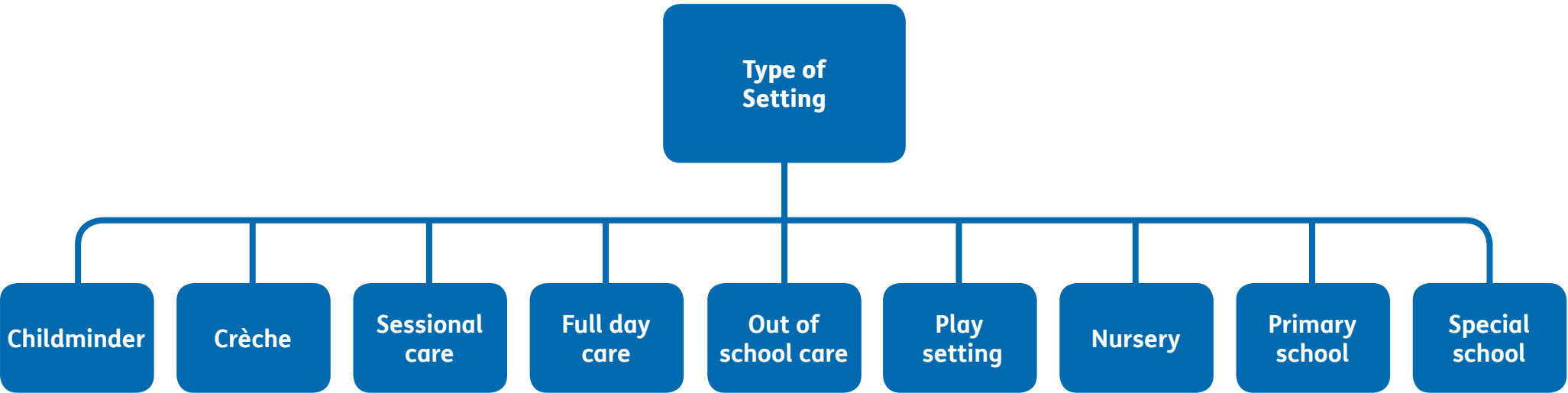
What do we know about the Childcare, Play and Early Years Sector?

Around 23,300 people work with our youngest children in childcare settings and Foundation Phase settings². The majority of the workforce is aged 25 to 40³. There is an average of eight female staff to one male worker in each setting, although this ratio is less extreme in play settings where there are, on average, between three and four men to nine women. As Figure 2 illustrates, the childcare and play workforce encompasses a wide variety of occupations and job roles. This plan aims to tailor proposals to the needs of each part of the sector, while ensuring that the whole workforce is moving towards the same goal of providing higher quality care and early years' education for children.

² Dallimore, D. *The Early Years & Childcare Workforce in Wales: 2012* (Care Council for Wales, 2012). This figure also includes the 5,800 Foundation Phase classroom assistants.

³ with the exception of Out of School Childcare which currently employs more under-25s.

Figure 2: The core early years childcare and play workforce across Public and Private and Voluntary Sectors by Setting



Flying Start and the Foundation Phase may be delivered in a variety of settings.

By occupation

Childcare and early years	Play and out of school care	Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Childminder• Assistant practitioner• Practitioner/supervisor• Manager• Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playworker• Playworker in charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning support staff• Higher level teaching assistant

Why do we need to develop the workforce?

The provision of affordable, accessible, quality early years provision, available at the times parents need it, plays an essential role in the expansion of our economy, helping parents, especially mothers, to return to work and creating further employment opportunities within childcare itself. This provision continues to be important as children reach school age as it allows working parents to continue to support their families financially, knowing that their children will be cared for, kept safe, and involved in positive activities.

Research tells us that high-quality early education and childcare produces greater long-term benefits for our children and strongly influences their future life chances. Where the workforce is equipped with the knowledge, skills and behaviours to provide high-quality childcare and play, the effects on children can be profound, with particular benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or children who are disabled or have additional learning needs.

Chapter 2: Delivering our Ambition in the next 3 years.

Over the next 3 years we want to support the sector to be able to offer a service which is:

- Quality – with settings offering a high quality experience which complements other early years provision, and recognises the value of those we trust to give our children the best start in life;
- Accessible to parents and carers, and meets the needs of children requiring additional learning support and access to Welsh-medium provision;
- Affordable for parents and carers, allowing them to enter or remain in work by accessing affordable high quality early education and care; and
- Flexible for parents and carers, but also recognises the development needs of the child.

We have developed these proposals across 3 key themes:

- Attracting High Quality New Recruits
- Raising Standards and Skills
- Investing in Building Capacity and Capability.

Attracting High Quality New Recruits

Key actions to attract high quality new recruits:

- Develop a **Recruitment Framework** to promote a career in childcare and play and ensure up to date and accurate career advice.
- Enable **Skills Gateway** to provide information to the sector as a single access point for skills and employability support.
- Maximise support available to those wishing to enter and remain in work through our **Parents Childcare and Employment programme**.
- Pilot projects to provide short term work experience within a childcare setting.

Wales already has a dedicated and highly qualified childcare and play workforce, but we know that we can do more to change perceptions about a career in the sector and to ensure it is an attractive career choice.

We need to challenge the perception that a career in childcare and play is a suitable employment route for school leavers who are less interested in other, more academic careers. It is misleading to present working with children as an easy career option. We recognise too, that individuals enter the childcare and play sector through a variety of different routes and at various life stages. Those who wish to change career can bring fresh perspective and a range of experience to the workforce.

We want to help the sector attract and retain quality staff, to achieve high standards of childcare and develop a workforce that is skilled enough to meet the challenges of the next decade and beyond.

Career Advice

We will ensure that those wishing to pursue a career in childcare and play are able to obtain up to date and accurate careers advice. Social Care Wales acts as a lead for careers information for the childcare sector. In partnership with Social Care Wales we will develop a Recruitment Framework to attract recruit and retain high quality new entrants into the sector.

Skills Gateway

The Skills Gateway for Adults is the single access point for individuals seeking skills and employability support in Wales. The service is delivered through Careers Wales as part of the all Wales advice and guidance service for individuals aged 18 plus.

The Skills Gateway for Business, hosted by Business Wales, is the on line engagement and signposting resource that underpins the delivery of, and provides access to the wider integrated portfolio of employment and skills provision. Being a vital source of intelligence on skills and employment it provides a key mechanism for helping businesses determine their needs and identify relevant support.

Parents Childcare and Employment (PaCE)

Our PaCE programme is helping parents to improve their employment prospects by providing childcare so that they can undertake training or work placement opportunities. PaCE is also encouraging those with an interest in working in the childcare and play sector to access employability programmes, working with local authorities, the Department of Working Pensions, Work-Based Learning providers and others. The PaCE project will run until March 2020.

Encouraging a Career in Childcare

We are working with the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Cymru to pilot their “Childcare Works” project. The project will consist of two pilot programmes targeting those aged 18-24 and those aged 50 and over to undertake short term work experience within a childcare setting to gain the skills and work experience required to enter the childcare sector. These projects will operate in south east and north Wales during 2017 and 2018. The project in south east Wales has been developed as part of the “Our Valleys: Our Future” delivery plan.

We will consider how projects such as this one can be expanded to other parts of Wales.

Raising Standards and Skills

Key actions to raise standards and skills

- Offer a structured training and development route based on a **new suite of qualifications** for the sector.
- Review the **National Minimum Standards** to ensure they respond to the changing needs of the sector.
- Support transferability across sectors with **optional training modules**.
- Embed competency into Early Years and Childhood degrees.
- Develop a career pathway for childminders and home carers.

The quality of childcare and play provision is crucial. The Sutton Trust's Sound Foundations report⁴ concludes that while early years provision has: "significant potential to narrow the attainment gap and improve outcomes for children, the research evidence is clear that developmental benefits will only be achieved if children are able to attend good quality provision".

Practitioners require a range of skills to ensure our children receive the right learning and development support to reach their full potential. We want to support practitioners to acquire a wide range of appropriate qualifications and raise their skills levels, with a universal approach to standards and qualifications across public, private and voluntary settings. In this respect, we want to support managers of all settings to aspire to and reach level 5. We will support the sector by developing appropriate progression routes to achieve these qualifications and to access structured training and career paths.

National Minimum Standards

We need a regulation and inspection system that ensures the experiences children enjoy in childcare are of good quality and reach the necessary standards. We also need a system that ensures children are safe and that parents have clear contracts and recourse when problems arise. The National Minimum Standards (NMS) for

⁴ Mathers, Sandra et al, Sound Foundations: A Review of the Research Evidence on Quality of Early Childhood Education and Care for Children Under Three. Implications for Policy and Practice, The Sutton Trust (2014): pp. 4 and 13.

regulated childcare apply to all registered childminders and providers of day care for children up to 12 years of age. To ensure children across all types of provision receive high quality care, the Welsh Government extended the upper age limit for childcare and play from 8 to 12 years in 2016.

We are reviewing the National Minimum Standards (NMS) to ensure they are fit for purpose and that they provide the necessary assurance to parents and carers about the quality of the childcare and play provision which their children receive and they respond to the changing needs of the sector.

Induction

As part of the wider training support, every early years setting will be expected to provide an induction for all new workers to help them understand the importance of child-centred practice and the values that underpin work in early years. Social Care Wales are developing the Early Years Induction Framework for Wales to support a values based induction into the sector. This framework will provide settings with a robust structure for induction and ensure new workers are clear about the knowledge and skills they need to be able to evidence in their first six months of employment.

A Structured Training and Development Route

We are working in partnership with Qualifications Wales and Social Care Wales to develop new qualifications for childcare and play which will remove the current complexity in the system and address structured progression routes for learners.

Qualifications Wales⁵ undertook a review of childcare and play work qualifications in 2016. It⁶ concluded that the landscape of qualifications and qualification systems was confusing and complex and recommended the development of a new suite of qualifications. It is envisaged that the qualifications will be ready for teaching from September 2019 and will cover levels 1-5 with optional career pathways. The new qualifications will offer a vocational learning and progression route for the sector.

⁵ Established under the Qualifications Wales Act 2015, Qualifications Wales is sponsored by the Welsh Government as the new regulator of non-degree qualifications for Wales.

⁶ Sector Review of Qualifications and the Qualifications System in Health and Social Care including child care and play work 2016

Level 1 Children's Care, Learning, Development and Play (CCLDP) will provide an introduction to the sector and will be embedded at all levels. It is also intended to develop a GCSE qualification.

Level 2 CCLDP Core qualification, will provide learners with an understanding of the key concepts in Children's Care, Learning, Development and Play. Learners will complete this prior to or alongside other Level 2 or 3 qualifications within the new suite. It aligns to the All Wales Induction Framework in Early Years and Childcare which is currently being developed by Social Care Wales to support a high quality, consistent induction process.

Level 2 will be available for those new entrants to the workforce who may need longer to achieve a level 3. It will provide a valuable introduction to childcare for those working under supervision as assistant practitioners and a first step on a continuous professional learning pathway.

For those wishing to build on their learning, level 3 will offer a vocational pathway to up skill to levels 4 and 5, as well as a route to undertaking a formal degree.

Alongside the development of the new suite of qualifications, we will improve the assessment process to ensure consistency and quality are built into the delivery of the qualifications. Social Care Wales maintain ownership of the required list of qualifications for the sector. This list will be a live document and will continue to be reviewed as part of this plans implementation.

The list of required qualifications can be accessed below.

<http://www.ccwales.org.uk/list-of-required-qualifications-to-work-within-the-early-years-and-childcare-sector-in-wales/>

An illustration of the new qualifications structure is at Figure 3.

Child minders and Home Carers

We are working with Social Care Wales and PACEY Cymru to develop new pre-registration units for child minders based around the current CYPOP5 award. We

will consult on the best way of developing an appropriate career pathway for child minders, to offer the scope and ability to progress within the wider sector as part of our plans to introduce new qualifications.

The workforce requirements for a home child carer (nanny) will be aligned to those for child minders. To be accepted onto the Childcare at Home Voluntary Approval Scheme a home child carer will be required to hold the same minimum qualification as a child minder, currently CYPOP 5.

Early Years and Childhood Degrees and Higher Education

We are working with Social Care Wales and Higher Education Institutes to embed practical competency into degree qualifications. Historically, there has been a concern that early years and childcare degrees in Wales do not contain the necessary work based competency to enable graduates to be employed as practitioners on leaving university.

By September 2018, degrees will be available across Wales which embed the addition of the required practical competence. Social Care Wales in partnership with Higher Education Institutes in Wales have agreed the current recognised degree routes and have included them in Social Care Wales's recognised list of qualifications.

We will also be working with Business Wales-;; Social Care Wales and Universities to support graduates who may want to consider starting their own childcare businesses as part of their career development.

Developing the Playwork Workforce

The Welsh Government places great value on play. The Welsh Government's 'Wales – a Play Friendly Country' (2014) recognises the importance of an appropriately skilled workforce both for those working face to face with children and for those whose work impacts on wherever children may play.

This plan focuses on the Playwork workforce as defined in 'Wales – a Play Friendly Country' and covers those who work in childcare settings as well as such settings as after school clubs and holiday play schemes.

In Wales, the National Minimum Standards for Regulating Childcare (NMS) sets out the required qualifications for both childcare and play settings. In 2016, changes to the extension of Regulation for Childcare to include children aged 8-12 has required practitioners to hold both childcare and play qualifications in some settings. To support practitioners in meeting the NMS, we have issued guidance which sets out the childcare and play qualifications required under the NMS and the time frame for achieving the required qualifications as a result of the extension to regulation requirements. SkillsActive, the sectors skills council for play, define the sector's qualifications and publish the required list of qualifications for the sector.

To support growth and sustainability across the play sector, Play Wales' published its five year workforce plan in 2017.

We recognise that the current landscape for qualifications within the play sector remains uncertain. Therefore, in the development of the new childcare qualifications we will explore the opportunity for play pathways which align to the new CCLDP. It is proposed that this approach will assist practitioners to progress their career aspirations within the play sector. The new qualification will therefore be known as Children's Care, Learning, Development and Play (CCLDP).

Welsh Government will continue to work closely with PETC Wales and other stakeholders, to explore how best to support the play sector under the development

and implementation of this plan. Initially, in considering how we build on the achievements of Progress for Success, we will seek to explore further support for play practitioners working within childcare and play settings to upskill using European Social Funding.

Developing Additional Skills and Specialisms

It is our intention that the new qualifications will support transferability across sectors. This will enable practitioners to progress their careers and to specialise in areas of practice such as Additional Learning Needs and early speech and language.

Early Years Health Support Worker

It is intended that the new suite of qualifications will become a recognised career pathway for the Early Years Health Support Worker (EYHSW). As the qualifications are developed we will explore how they can align more effectively with the role of the EYHSW and the role of health visitors working with children 0-3 and provide opportunities to improve career development.

Supporting Children with Additional Needs

In 2017, the Welsh Government introduced the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Programme. All early years practitioners will need to be aware of the new approach and be able to support children in their care with additional needs. We will work with the new awarding body appointed by Qualifications Wales to design specific content in the new qualifications on working with children with additional needs.

Speech and Language Development

The new qualifications will recognise the importance of speech and language to a child's development, particularly in the early years of their life. The content will be designed to enable practitioners to recognise when children in their care may require additional support and enable them to work more closely with health visitors and others to ensure children receive the help and support they need.

Early Learning Workforce – Foundation Phase

Foundation Phase is the Welsh Government's education curriculum for three to seven-year-old children. It adopts an approach to learning and teaching that is designed to encourage children to become independent thinkers with a positive disposition to learning.

Local authorities can decide whether they deliver the Foundation Phase nursery provision for 3 to 4 year olds through their own maintained nursery schools or through private and voluntary sector nurseries, playgroups and childminders which are approved and funded by the local authority.

Ensuring that the interface between childcare and early education is effective and works for the benefit of children and their parents is vital to the successful implementation of the government funded 30 hours of Childcare provision for 3-4 year olds.

We will work closely with local authorities and their consortia to ensure that good practice on the delivery of the Foundation Phase is shared across settings. This will be supported by a national Foundation Phase Network and a zone on HWB, the Welsh Government's central IT portal. To further support childcare providers who are engaged in delivering Foundation Phase we will work in partnership with CWLWM to ensure good practice is shared across settings.

Learning Support Workers

School learning support workers (LSW) including Teaching Assistants are employed in a wide range of roles across the maintained sector and are an important resource in supporting teachers to deliver the curriculum. They are especially important within the Foundation Phase for the delivery of the developmental, experiential, play-based approach.

From April 2016, learning support workers in the maintained sector have been required to register with the Education Workforce Council and are bound by a Code of Conduct. We have developed for this group a new Professional Learning

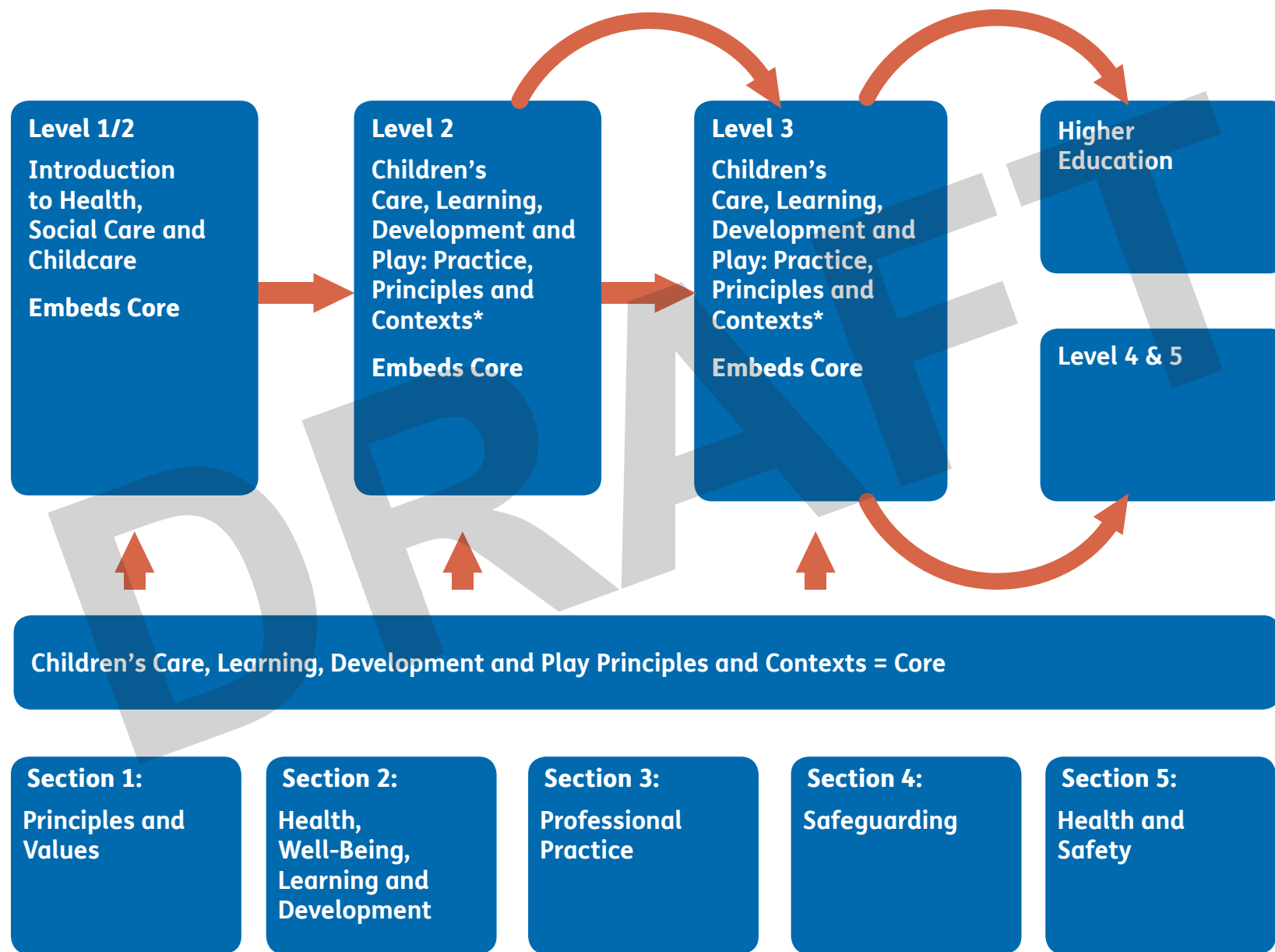
Passport (PLP), which is an online system designed to aid education professionals with their professional learning. In 2018, we will put in place professional standards for learning support workers, to contribute to raising the standards of teaching and improve learner outcomes throughout Wales. Individuals will use the standards to reflect on their practice and identify areas for professional development, supporting them to be the best they can be and enabling schools to identify and provide relevant training and learning opportunities.

We will work with Qualification Wales to explore whether the present content of relevant qualifications meets the current policy priorities, including the newly developed professional standards, for supporting teaching and learning in the classroom, in particular related to the new curriculum requirements which are currently being developed.

We will also consider how the new suite of qualifications being introduced from September 2019 for the childcare sector, can be aligned with the professional standards for learning support workers, to ensure those employed in early years settings within the maintained and private and voluntary sectors are able to actively pursue a recognised career pathway.

We recognise the importance of identifying professional learning opportunities to enhance the role of learning support workers. One of the ways of achieving this is to undertake an annual performance review and this already takes place in many schools across Wales. As part of a wider review of performance management processes in schools, we will consider whether there should be a requirement for learning support workers to receive an annual performance review which will help them and their school to define their individual learning requirements and support them in their role.

Figure 3: The New Qualification



This diagram is for illustrative purpose only and is subject to change as the qualifications develop.

* Carries additional knowledge only credits

Investing in Capacity and Capability Development

Key actions to invest in capacity and capability development:

- Work with **Business Wales** to provide business support services to childcare businesses.
- Work with **Regional Skills Partnerships** to support the development of the sector at local and regional levels.
- Provide access to flexible and affordable training and development through the new **Apprenticeship policy**.
- Explore the best use of funding under **Progress for Success** to continue to support the workforce to upskill.
- Consult on **Business Rate Relief** for the childcare sector.

We are operating within a tough economic climate, so we need to act now to sustain and grow high quality childcare which can in turn support economic growth. To support providers to operate sustainably, we will **prioritise support for the sector**. In doing so, we will seek to identify ways of developing business and skills assistance which addresses the sector's needs. The following actions outline how priority support for the sector will be developed over the next 3 years and aligns with the Economic Action Plan:

Business Wales

We will work with providers to help support their business growth and to encourage those who wish to do so, to start their own childcare businesses. Business Wales, the Welsh Government's business support service, provides the business community in Wales with a wide range of information, advice and support. This includes support to improve business plans, marketing, financial planning and assistance to identify suitable sources of finance. Business Wales will work with the sector, to gain a better understanding of the regulatory environment in which the sector operates, to explore the challenges they face and to address these challenges.

Various organisations offer a range of business support services to the sector, but whilst there is a lot of support available, it can result in a complex landscape for the sector to navigate. We will work with CWLWM and Business Wales to make the best use of expertise that they provide, and utilise CWLWM's experience in providing

advice to childcare providers around regulatory and governance arrangements.

Entrepreneurship

Welsh Government actively encourages innovation and entrepreneurship across Wales. Working with Business Wales, we will support the sector to take advantage of new opportunities emerging from wider economic development projects such as the South Wales Metro.

Development Bank of Wales

In partnership with the Development Bank of Wales and Business Wales we will work with the childcare sector to support access to suitable sources of finance and assist businesses to grow and expand.

Local Investment

We aim to support the sector to grow, particularly in those areas where provision is less established or where there is currently insufficient capacity to meet demand. It is widely recognised that an increase in the supply of labour will drive long term economic growth and can contribute to reducing in work poverty. As we develop the 30 hours childcare offer we will be working with the early implementer areas across Wales to support childcare providers and to develop innovative ways of working.

Supporting Quality Jobs – Better Jobs Closer to Home

We will work with our partners to encourage innovative ways of using our investment programmes, such as our employability and business support programmes, to create quality jobs, in childcare and play within local communities. In addition to NDNA's "Childcare Works" pilot project, we will explore opportunities under our Better Jobs Closer to Home initiative, to develop support for the sector, where appropriate. Initially, this work will focus on the South Wales Valleys area and its outcomes will be considered further.

We will encourage local authorities to secure benefits from their public procurement contracts in areas such as Flying Start provision, to support the development of innovative practices across the sector and via Community

Benefits clauses to support local workforce development and business opportunities, where appropriate.

Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs)

Regional Skills Partnerships analyse local and regional economic challenges, together with potential growth areas, based upon employer intelligence to identify the skills needed in the workforce. They also support priorities identified by Enterprise Zones, City Deals and Growth Deals as well as cross border collaborations. The Regional Skills Partnerships are:

- North Wales Economic Ambition Board – North Wales Regional Skills Partnership
- South East Wales Learning, Skills and Innovation Partnership
- South West and Mid Wales Regional Learning and Skills Partnership

We will encourage Social Care Wales to work closely with Regional Skills Partnerships to ensure skills gaps and shortages are discussed during the development of regional employment and skills plans. This work will be underpinned by ongoing support from our Apprenticeship Programme and our post 16 education and training provision, including Working Wales.

Apprenticeships

As childcare is a priority sector, the apprenticeship programme will continue to support employers, practitioners and new entrants into the sector.

In February 2017, we announced a new apprenticeship policy, which aligns the apprenticeship model to the needs of the Welsh economy. The new policy will provide access to training and development which is flexible and affordable. To support the aspirations of this plan, and within the Apprenticeship framework, we will continue to support level 2 apprenticeships as the transition level to enable practitioners to progress to level 3.

Progress for Success

Under our Apprenticeship programme and utilising the European Social Fund we have developed our Progress for Success (PfS) programme to help increase

capacity and capability within the sector by providing support for existing practitioners to develop their skills. Building on its achievements, and alongside our new Apprenticeship approach, we are exploring the best use of European Social Fund investment to continue to support practitioners.

FE Provision

We will work with FE colleges across Wales to ensure childcare is a priority within their annual plans. With the introduction of the new qualifications in 2019, we will ensure learner's needs are met by enabling ongoing academic career progressions, and where appropriate, occupational competence for the sector to be reflected.

Business Rates

Under the current Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) scheme in Wales, registered childcare premises with a rateable value of between £9,001 and £12,000 can benefit from an additional level of relief, receiving 50% rather than the standard tapered relief. This additional level of relief has been extended until March 2018.

From April 2018, we will increase the level of relief from its current maximum of £12,000 to £20,500. As part of our priority business support approach for the sector, we will consider how the SBRR scheme in the future can continue to assist to support growth and sustainability across the sector, including consideration of the Scottish Barclay Review on Business Rates published in 2017. This work will support the sector to build its capacity and capability to take up the opportunity presented by the 30-hour childcare commitment and aligns to the commitment to prioritise support for the childcare sector under the Economic Action Plan.

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CHAPTER 3: DELIVERING THE 10 YEAR VISION

Key actions to deliver the 10 year vision:

- Define a career pathway
- Introduce new qualifications at levels 4 and 5
- Develop a national framework of qualifications and training
- Develop a joint inspection system for private and third sector nurseries which provide Foundation Phase
- Build a diverse and bilingual workforce
- Introduce professional registration.
- Deliver a more integrated Early Childhood Education and Care system in Wales.

Our ultimate goal is to develop a highly skilled, early year's profession by creating a recognised career progression route and pathway within the sector, supported by recognised qualifications. Our proposals are ambitious and we recognise that change will take time. This chapter sets out our longer term actions.

Whilst the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (NMS) represent an acceptable minimum standard – they are not reflective of the full extent of the aspirations we have for our childcare and play workforce in Wales.

Delivering the Vision: Our Longer Term Actions

Continuing Professional Development

It remains our aspiration, over 10 years, to increase the numbers of individuals at graduate level in this sector. We know that graduates with specialist early years training make a positive impact on the quality of settings and can ultimately improve children's outcomes.

We propose to introduce new qualifications at levels 4 and 5 which will support a vocational route alongside the more traditional degree route and we will align both routes to enable learners to choose how to progress their careers.

We want our early years, childcare and play workforce to be proactive learners, taking responsibility for their own professional development. We will work with Social Care Wales to provide a national framework of qualifications and training. This framework will outline the required sector standards to practice along with recommendations for continued professional development (CPD) and support for practitioners to develop their career pathways.

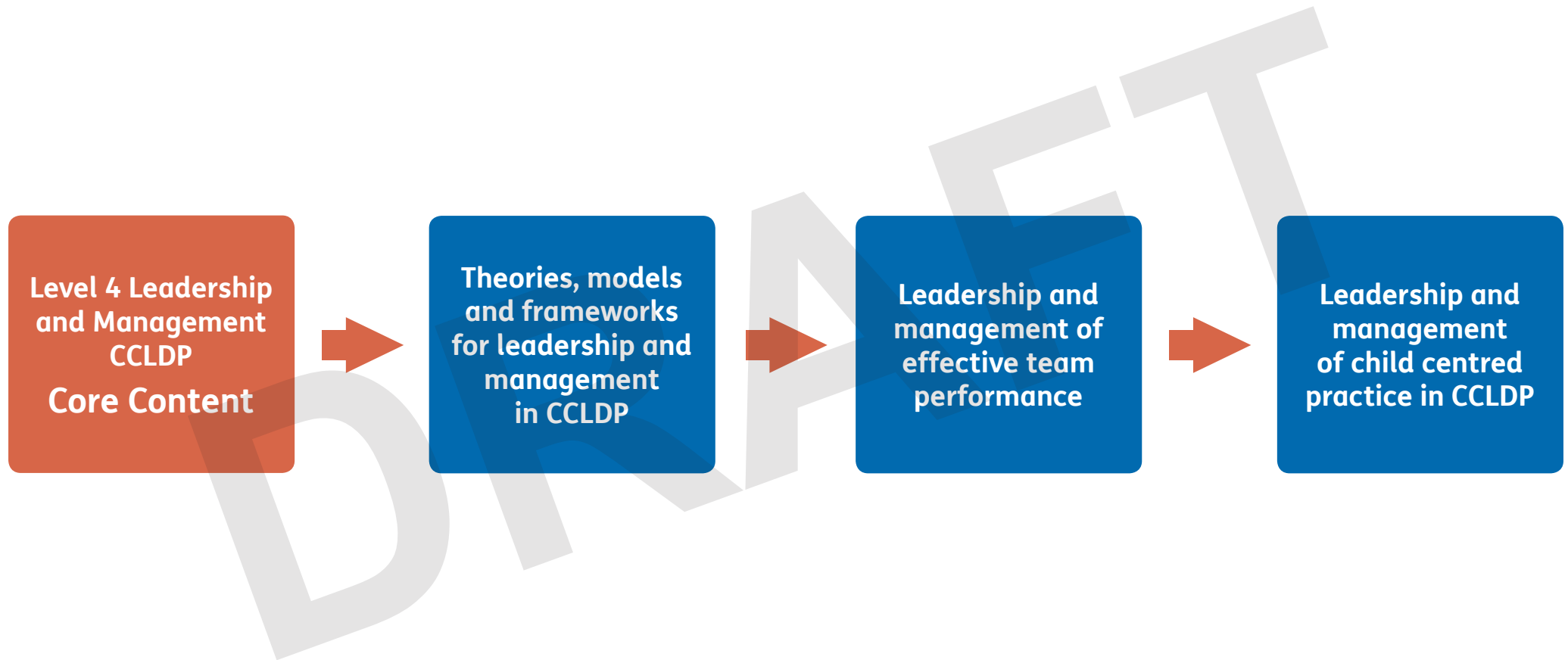
Career Pathways

To support professional development we will ensure that a defined career pathway exists across the sector, for those wishing to progress to beyond a level 3 qualification. We acknowledge that there is not always a clear connection between staff qualification levels and job roles. A career pathway will help practitioners know what skills are expected of them within their current employment and what they need to do to progress and to transfer between settings.

We will work with Social Care Wales and with key partners to map progression routes to other professions in the wider children's workforce. We want to see better connections made between childcare and teaching, playwork, early years' health work, speech and language development, among others. Ideally, entrants to the sector should understand how their role contributes to a larger support structure for children, value the transferable skills it will bring and gain support to pursue additional qualifications necessary for progression to, and from, other professions. As part of our future work to develop enhanced career pathways and progression routes we will also explore how people from a wide range of professional backgrounds, with an aspiration to work with children, can transfer their skills and experience from those professions into the early years and childcare sector.

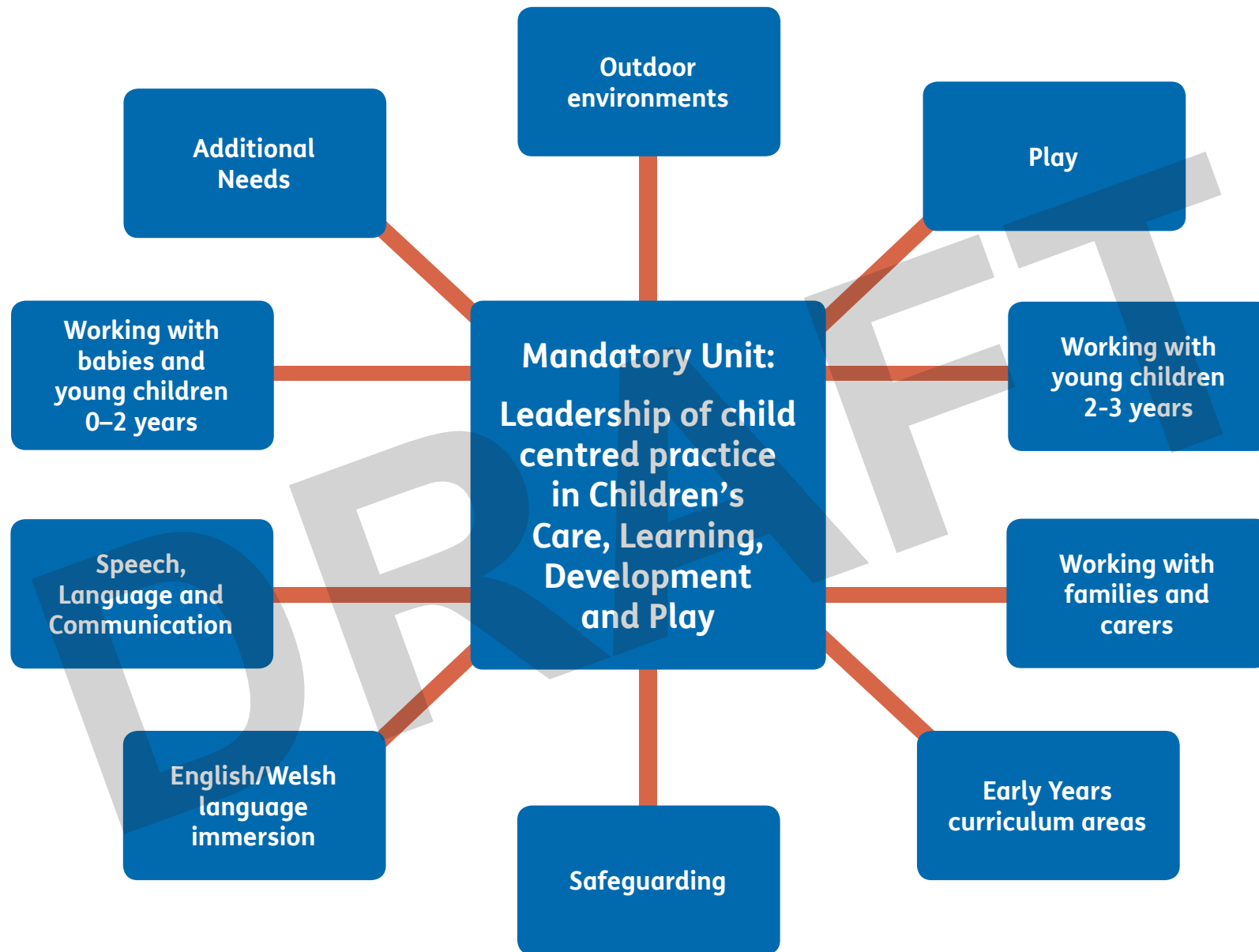
To support this approach the new qualifications will contain pathways to support career progression. **Figures 4a and 4b** set out an example of how this career progression route might look in the future and the opportunities it presents for practitioners to pursue their career of choice.

Figure 4a: Level 4 Leadership and Management CCLDP: Principles, Theories and Contexts



This diagram is for illustrative purpose only and is subject to change.

Figure 4b: Level 4 Children's Care Learning, Development and Play with specialist pathways



This diagram is for illustrative purpose only and is subject to change as the qualifications develop.

Professional Registration

As part of our longer term vision, we will work with the sector to explore having a registered workforce.

Professional registration provides recognition of continuous professional development; it provides opportunities for individuals to set out their learning pathway and demonstrate their skills and experience; and would recognise childcare as a profession which requires specialist skills and knowledge to support child development. Registration also provides public assurance. Practitioners who fail to adhere to the code of professional conduct may be subject to fitness to practice procedures, which would ensure they have the skills, knowledge and character to practice safely and effectively. This would bring the sector in line with current practice in other professions such as teaching and with adult social care which is currently moving to professional registration for its workforce.

In the first 3 years of the plan, we will consult on this proposal and seek the views of the sector. Consultation would include consideration of the cost of registration, the timescale for implementation, and those within the sector who would be covered.

Early Education and Care approach

As part of Prosperity for All: the national strategy we have committed to ensuring consistent regulation and delivery of pre-school provision. We will seize the opportunity provided by the development of the Childcare Offer to try to simplify the current landscape and deliver a more integrated Early Education and Care system in Wales, which could provide the solution to many parents' problems and benefit children.

As part of our longer term vision, we will explore opportunities to streamline and bring together common expectations and requirements for all early education and care practitioners, including qualifications, CPD, professional registration, leading to the longer term development of an acknowledged and recognised early education and care approach in Wales.

Joint Inspection Framework

As a first step to a more integrated approach, CSSIW and Estyn have been working together to develop a joint inspection system for private and third sector nurseries that are also funded by local authorities to provide Foundation Phase early education for three and four year olds. Although the current overlap is limited – around 600 childcare settings out of 4,400 – the split system adds complexity particularly for providers and those supporting the sector. The development of a joint inspection regime between Estyn and CSSIW will reduce bureaucracy and give a clear message of joined-up thinking, breaking down distinctions between education and care.

The inspectorates have piloted a joint inspection system and a joint inspection framework. The themes of the framework concentrate on the well-being outcomes for the child and the impact the service and professionals contribute to the child's development and learning. An independent evaluation⁷ concluded that the pilot worked successfully; it demonstrated that joint working can be delivered in practice and that the framework enabled the two inspectorates to cooperate effectively. We will work with CSSIW and Estyn to progress and roll-out joint inspections as part of delivering a more integrated Early Education and Care system in Wales.

Building a Diverse Workforce

A very high proportion of the sector is made up of women who identify as White Welsh/British. We want to encourage a more diverse early years' workforce, which better reflects wider society and helps to enhance children's experiences. This will increase the pool of applicants for the sector to recruit from and provide more diverse role models for young children. Recruiting more males to the workforce would provide a virtuous cycle where boys will have more male role models influencing them in the early years and therefore will view a career in childcare and play more positively in the future. As part

⁷ Undertaken by Arad Research and Welsh Institute for Health and Social Care, University of South Wales.

of our recruitment framework we will work with Social Care Wales to encourage greater diversity across the workforce.

Building a Bilingual Workforce

The 'Cymraeg 2050' strategy sets out the Welsh Government's vision of ensuring a million Welsh speakers by 2050, and the early years and childcare sector has a central role in achieving this aim.

We aim to expand Welsh-medium and bilingual early years provision, and the use of Welsh across the sector to offer increased opportunities for children to acquire the language. The Strategy includes a target to ensure an additional 150 Welsh-medium nursery groups over the next decade. This will provide the grounding to enable greater numbers of children to continue developing their Welsh language skills on transfer to education and beyond and we must ensure that we have the workforce to underpin this expansion.

The workforce plays a key role in supporting children to take their first step towards bilingualism and we recognise the need to support capability and capacity across the sector. We will offer a range of training programmes to enable practitioners improve their Welsh-language skills and ability to work through the medium of Welsh. This will include supporting those working in Foundation Phase settings to ensure they can deliver the curriculum effectively through the medium of Welsh, as well as training aimed at developing specific skills, including Welsh language immersion techniques.





Training will also be offered to those working in English-medium settings to give them the confidence to use more Welsh with the children in their settings as part of their day-to-day provision.

The new suite of qualifications for the childcare practitioners will be developed to enable greater numbers of new entrants and existing practitioners to undertake their training through the medium of Welsh.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that parents/carers wishing to access Welsh-medium or bilingual childcare are able to do so. We will seek to build a better understanding of the workforce's Welsh language skills to enable support for the sector to be targeted and identify where capacity needs

to be built for the future to meet the needs of the early years sector in a bilingual Wales.

Key Actions – to develop a highly skilled childcare and play workforce

Attracting High Quality New Recruits		Raising Standards and Skills		Investing in Capacity and Capability		
Develop a Career Advice framework to ensure up to date and accurate careers advice in partnership with SCW.	Encourage a Career in Childcare . Pilot with National Day Nurseries Association “ Childcare Works ” projects to provide short term work experience within the sector.	Review the National Minimum Standards to ensure they are fit for purpose and respond to changing needs of the sector.	Embed occupational competency into Early Years and Childhood Degrees routes . Support graduates to start their own childcare businesses.	Work with Business Wales to provide business support services to childcare businesses e.g. improve financial planning.	Work with Regional Skills Partnerships to support the development of the sector at local and regional levels.	Explore ways to mitigate the impact of Business Rates , taking into account the unique challenges faced by the sector.
Enable Skills Gateway to provide information to the sector as a single access point for employability support.		Offer a structured training and development route based on a new suite of qualifications for the sector.	Support transferability with optional training modules for: Early Years Health Support Workers, Supporting children with ALN, Speech and Language Development and Foundation phase.	Work with Development Bank of Wales to support childcare businesses to access finance to grow and expand.		Further develop our Progress for Success programme, exploring the best use of European funding to support practitioners to develop their skills.
Maximise support available to those wishing to enter and remain in work through our Parents Childcare and Employment (PaCE) programme.	Work with SCW to encourage greater diversity across the workforce.	Develop a career pathway for child minders and home carers , based around a revised pre registration (CYPOP5) award.	Work with PETC Wales to support the development of the Playwork Workforce to ensure practitioners can progress within the play sector.		Provide access to flexible and affordable training and development which is through the new apprenticeship policy . Continue to support level 2, to enable practitioners to achieve level 3.	

Delivering the 10 Year Vision

Introduce **new qualifications at Levels 4 and 5** to support a vocational route for practitioners to progress their careers.

With Social Care Wales develop a national framework of qualifications and training outlining the sector standards to practice.

Define a **career pathway** to help practitioners know what they need to progress.

Map **progression routes** to other professions in the wider children's workforce.

Introduce **professional registration** to recognise continuous professional development and provide public assurance.

Consult on the proposal and seek the views of the sector.

Deliver a more integrated Early Childhood Education and Care system in Wales.

Streamline expectations and requirements for all early education and care practitioners.

Develop a joint inspection system for private and third sector nurseries which provide Foundation Phase

Build a bilingual workforce by offering increased routes for new entrants, and existing practitioners, to gain qualifications through the medium of Welsh, to improve their Welsh language skills, and the specific skills needed to work in Welsh-medium settings.

Support those working in Foundation Phase settings to deliver the curriculum through the medium of Welsh.

Provide training for practitioners in English-medium settings to use more Welsh in their work.