

Response ID ANON-Z871-PJJ1-F

Submitted to **Early Learning and Childcare Service Model for 2020: Consultation Paper**

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Section 1: Funding follows the child

1 What factors should be considered in developing a simple, standardised yet flexible process for becoming a funded provider?

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2 What are the key shared principles which should underpin an effective and positive partnership between local authorities and funded providers?

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Section 2: National standard for funded early learning and childcare provision

3a We are proposing that the National Standard includes a qualification requirement for childminders delivering the funded entitlement to be qualified to or working towards the same qualification level as is required for an ELC practitioner (SCQF level 7). What are the advantages of including this criteria?

Not Answered

What are the advantages of including this criteria?:

3b Are childminders able to access adequate funding to pay for training to SCQF level 7?

Not Answered

Not Answered

Please add reasons for your answer.:

4 Our aspiration is to see outdoor learning and play becoming a defining feature of funded ELC in Scotland.

Not Answered

If not, how could it be strengthened in a way that is sustainable for providers?:

How can these challenges be overcome?:

5a Will the criteria set out in the draft National Standard ensure that high quality, accessible, flexible and affordable Early Learning Childcare is delivered in all funded provider settings?

No

Please explain your answer.:

CRER's primary concern in relation to the criteria set out in the draft National Standard is Criteria 5 – Accessibility. In particular, we are interested in the commitment to provide ELC in a way that ensures equality of access for all children, including those who are from a minority ethnic background.

CRER worked alongside the Scottish Government in the development of the Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030. One of the commitments within the Framework is pertinent to this consultation: Ensure access to appropriate early learning and childcare for minority ethnic families.

The Framework makes clear that access to appropriate childcare provision is vital to ensure that BME families have economic and social equality, and that meeting this goal will improve outcomes for children while supporting parents into work, training, or study.

Underlying this goal, the Scottish Government committed to:

- Working to develop policy and practice so that early learning and childcare meets the needs of parents and children across all ethnicities
- Considering the feasibility of collecting accurate ethnicity information on children within early learning and childcare as part of its current data transformation work
- Working with key stakeholders to promote greater diversity during the expansion of the early learning and childcare workforce

Alongside the Framework, the Scottish Government published the Race Equality Action Plan 2017-2021. This commits the government to several actions, detailed below:

- The Scottish Government has committed to almost doubling funded Early Learning Childcare (ELC) provision to 1140 hours by 2020. Local authorities have

been asked to ensure that their expansion plans ensure accessibility for all families and they will be expected to consider the impact of expansion on families of all ethnicities, taking into account cultural and religious needs where relevant, to ensure that provision is accessible to all.

- The Scottish Government will publish an on-line resource for parents, including minority ethnic families, to empower them to make choices about the right ELC setting or combination of settings for their child. The Scottish Government published our Quality Action Plan for ELC in October 2017, with a specific action to develop this online resource to ensure that families are getting information in the way that is most helpful to them.
- The Scottish Government will aim to create an ELC workforce which better reflects wider society including from minority ethnic communities. We estimate that the expansion of ELC will require up 11,000 additional staff across a range of roles.
- The Scottish Government will include equality as a theme of the 2018-19 Blueprint Action Plan for Early Learning & Childcare. We will carry out an equality impact assessment on the expansion, to ensure that high quality ELC is accessible to all families. We will consider the impact of expansion on families of all ethnicities, taking into account cultural and religious needs where relevant, to ensure that provision is accessible to all.

We welcome the requirement on local authorities to identify, provide for, and review the additional support needs of their pupils, including children in funded ELC. However, the guidance document in the Support Children's Learning Code of Practice, as referenced in the consultation, does not include any reference to race or ethnicity beyond stating that early years education should take into account issues of diversity and equality and ensuring that outcomes do not discriminate against children, young people, and their families based on race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion or belief, and age.

It is an important statement to make and an important principle to uphold, but more detail is needed to ensure that local authorities understand their role in this, as well as potential inequalities and disparities which could arise. This should be accompanied by – as suggested in the Framework – the collection and evaluation of data on service provision to make sure, at a bare minimum, BME families are able to access childcare in proportion with the population. If this is not the case, work should be carried out to determine why and effort should be made to overcome any identified barriers.

Simply making a statement is not enough. Local authorities should be required to set out a policy which details how they will meet the Accessibility Criteria, which highlights in detail how it will ensure minority ethnic families are able to access ELC equally and free from discrimination. It should include details about how the authority will measure whether minority ethnic families are accessing ELC in line with the local population and how it will engage with the groups highlighted in the consultation document to become aware of any barriers.

The same should apply to all ELC providers. It is one thing to be willing to make reasonable adaptations and provide reasonable support, but it is another to do this effectively with equality at the heart. As with local authorities, providers should be required to develop and publish a policy which details their approach to Accessibility and how it will address cases in which they are asked to make reasonable adjustments or provide additional support to pupils which specifically highlights a commitment to equality for minority ethnic families and children. Providers should assist local authorities in monitoring uptake of ELC provision by ethnicity to ensure certain groups are not being left behind.

The development of policies and collection of data for both local authorities and providers would be in line with commitments made in the Framework to develop policy and practice so that ELC meets the needs of minority ethnic families and to consider collecting accurate ethnicity information on children within ELC. It would also support commitments in the Action Plan to ensure that local authority expansion plans ensure accessibility for all families and take into account the impact of expansion on families of all ethnicities while having consideration of cultural and religious need where relevant.

Similarly, CRER would be interested to see the purported on-line resource for parents (including minority ethnic families) to empower them to make the right choices about ELC for their child. In particular, we would like to ensure that this resource doesn't just include a passing mention of particular issues BME families may face, but that it includes a specific focus on this issue and aims to especially target BME parents. We would welcome the involvement of race equality groups in this endeavour.

Furthermore, CRER, while we welcome initiatives to get BME women into appropriate employment, would like to highlight concerns around the aim to create an ELC workforce which better reflects wider society, including minority ethnic families. While this is a laudable aim, we recognise that BME women experience lower employment rates than BME men, white women, and white men. With BME women particularly likely to experience poverty (with BME ethnic groups twice as likely as white ethnic groups to experience poverty), it will be especially important to ensure that the ELC workforce does earn a living wage and has security in employment so that BME women are not encouraged to enter into careers where they may struggle to make ends meet. The commitments detailed under Criteria 7 – Fair Work Practices should go a ways to addressing this, but we must ensure that a group already experiencing a disparate level of unemployment, underemployment, and poverty is not directed into a profession which traditionally has underpaid its workforce and not offered quality and secure employment opportunities.

We look forward to the introduction of the Blueprint Action Plan for Early Learning & Childcare 2018-19, and hope that the Scottish Government will adhere to its commitment to include equality as a theme. We will also welcome the publication of an equality impact assessment on the expansion to ensure that childcare is accessible to all families.

To aid in this pursuit, CRER would also like to highlight examples of inequalities in ELC highlighted at a UK-level, with the hope that the Scottish Government will consider these through equality impact assessments to ensure that ELC provision takes account of these barriers.

- The report "Ensuring Equality in Childcare for Black and Minority Ethnic Families: A Summary Paper" by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation investigated the reasons why BME families are less likely to access good quality childcare. The research found that:

- o As BME families are more likely to come from low income groups, the cost of childcare is a significant barrier. Research found that even with government support (e.g. working tax credits and income support) or heavy subsidisation, childcare was often still unaffordable.
- o As BME groups were more likely to work shifts during the night or on weekends, many were restricted from being able to access childcare which was set for traditional 9am-5pm hours. Offering flexibility in hours was seen as a way to increase uptake.
- o For many BME families, childcare is an option that might not be readily considered and, as such, outreach work from local authorities and healthcare providers to engage with BME communities and highlight the positive benefits of childcare (including returning women to work) was seen as a critical first step.
- o There is a lack of representation of BME groups in the childcare workforce, and it was suggested that increasing representation in the workforce would also increase uptake. Improving the terms and conditions of childcare workers was seen as an important step to recruiting and retaining more childcare workers.
- o Childcare use varies between different BME groups due to a range of factors (e.g. language or religious belief), and some BME parents reported feeling more

comfortable using childcare if there was a mix of cultures and ethnic backgrounds in the care setting. A lack of input from BME parents as to what is taught in the childcare setting was identified as another barrier to uptake.

o Language presented a barrier for parents who were unable to communicate well with childcare workers and a barrier for children who did not speak English and could not communicate with peers or workers. It was recommended that ESOL classes could be incorporated into the childcare setting to increase uptake.

• The publication “Believe in childcare? The childcare needs of ethnic minority communities in Northern Ireland” by Barnardos Northern Ireland and NICEM provided an overview of the needs of BME groups in relation to childcare. The briefing states that:

o BME families are more likely to use informal childcare (in comparison to formal childcare) than the general population. BME parents without family members living in close proximity were more likely to be unemployed.

o Low income and lower employment rates for BME groups affects the ability of BME families to afford services, as the cost of childcare can negate earnings from employment. Furthermore, shift work patterns in the evenings and weekends affect BME families as no services operate during these times. Zero-hour contract employment presents another barrier, as inflexible services restrict short notice arrangements for childcare.

o There was a lack of awareness for BME parents regarding how to access services, including entitlement to services. It was suggested that institutional racism could play a role in this, and recommended that effort should be made to raise awareness of the positive impact of childcare services within BME communities.

The common barriers identified in these reports – awareness, employment and underemployment, cost, representation, cultural awareness, and engagement – should be considered seriously by the Scottish Government, local authorities, and providers.

Not Answered

Please explain your answer.:

5b Is there any criteria not included in the National Standard that is required to ensure a high quality service is provided to all children?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer.:

5c Do the proposed criteria within the National Standard seem fair and proportionate for all?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer.:

Not Answered

Please explain your answer.:

Section 3: Implementing the early learning and childcare living wage commitment

6 What areas would you look to be addressed in the technical guidance note for supporting implementation of the ELC Living Wage commitment?

What areas would you look to be addressed in the technical guidance note for supporting implementation of the ELC Living Wage commitment?:

Section 4: Next steps and the transition period to 2020

7 Should newly established ELC settings be able to deliver the funded hours on a probationary basis, pending the outcome of their first inspection, provided they meet all other aspects of the National Standard?

Not Answered

Are there any particular challenges or issues that may arise from this approach?:

8 What support will service providers require to prepare for the introduction of the National Standard and meet the criteria and delivery of the new service model?

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About you

What is your name?

Name:

Rebecca Marek

What is your email address?

Email:

rebecca@crer.org.uk

Are you responding as an individual or an organisation?

Organisation

What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights

The Scottish Government would like your permission to publish your consultation response. Please indicate your publishing preference:

Publish response with name

We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Yes

Evaluation

Please help us improve our consultations by answering the questions below. (Responses to the evaluation will not be published.)

Matrix 1 - How satisfied were you with this consultation?:

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Please enter comments here.:

Matrix 1 - How would you rate your satisfaction with using this platform (Citizen Space) to respond to this consultation?:

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Please enter comments here.: