



Teaching
Agency

Review of the Early Years Professional Status Standards

May 2012

Contents

Executive summary	3
Early Years Professional Status Standards.....	5
1. Introduction: Background and Scope of the Review	8
2. The Review Process.....	10
3. Key findings	12
Stage two: Call for evidence.....	12
Stage four: Online consultation	15
4. Rationale	17
The model	17
The language	18
Content.....	18
Guidance	19
5. Next steps	20
Annex A: Terms of Reference of the Review	21
Annex B: External Reference Group for the Review	22
Annex C: Summary of Desk Research	24
Annex D: Respondents to call for evidence	27
Annex E: Online consultation questions and respondents.....	30
References	33
Glossary	35

Executive summary

1. The Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards are the basis for the assessment and accreditation for the award of the EYPS and were launched in 2007 by the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC). There were 39 standards, organised into six groups. In July 2011 the Minister of State for Children and Families, Sarah Teather, announced that CWDC were to undertake a review of the EYPS standards within 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years' (Department for Education [DfE], 2011c).
2. The aim of the Review was to:
 - test how the standards can support the concept of teaching in early years and help to spread leadership practice;
 - streamline the standards where possible ensuring that they link with other standards; and
 - ensure that the standards properly reflect outcomes of developments since 2007.
3. The Review was led by CWDC and, subsequently, the Teaching Agency between August 2011 and May 2012. The period of the Review was a time of significant policy activity. 'The First Report of the Independent Review of Teachers' Standards: QTS and Core Standards' had been published in July 2011 just prior to the commencement of the EYPS Standards Review. The consultation on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) was active and the revised EYFS was published in March 2012 just prior to the end of the Review. Professor Nutbrown's Review of Early Years Qualifications commenced in October 2011 and the interim report published in March 2012 (Nutbrown, 2012).
4. The Review team were supported by an external reference group who had an in depth understanding of the EYPS programme, or standards development from a practice, delivery or academic perspective (see Annex B). The Review was undertaken in a number of stages.
5. **Stage one** involved the consideration of evidence from a range of sources including emerging policy and research documents.
6. **Stage two** was a call for evidence, targeted at three groups of 'users' with in depth knowledge of the standards.
 - Practitioners holding or working towards EYPS: a total of 28 practitioners attended four user groups across three locations.
 - Training providers delivering EYPS and assessors: a total of 20 (of 35) training providers and their assessors responded to an online consultation survey to represent the views of the teaching and assessment staff.
 - The EYPS moderation contractor: they provided written evidence based on their experience during the course of acting as the national external moderators since the launch of the standards in 2007.
7. This call for evidence stage identified that there was potential for merging where there was overlap between two or more standards, and that the language and structure of the standards could be improved. Some issues were identified with particular standards. The call for evidence also provided a key opportunity to test how the standards could support the concept of teaching in early years and help to spread leadership practice, via discussion and debate within the user groups.

8. **Stage three** involved the production of revised draft standards which met the aims of the Review, and appropriately responded to the evidence gathered in stages one and two. To consider alignment across standards this drafting stage included liaison with the teams responsible for supporting the reviews of the EYFS, the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Core Standards, and the National Standards for Leaders of SureStart Children's Centres. The external reference group and a range of DfE policy teams also provided feedback to support the development of the standards.
9. The model adopted was a set of eight standards each with underpinning statements which represent the scope and extent of each standard.
10. **Stage four** was a ten week online consultation on the revised draft standards, which took place between January and March 2012. The consultation attracted 343 responses. The overwhelming majority of respondents were positive about the revised standards.
 - Over 90 per cent of respondents felt that the revised standards set (71 per cent) or partially set (21 per cent) appropriate expectations for what a candidate must achieve in order to be awarded EYPS.
 - Half of respondents felt there was (36 per cent), or there was to some extent (14 per cent), something missing from the revised draft standards which would be vital for an Early Years Professional to demonstrate. Comments were diverse.
 - Under a quarter of respondents felt that elements of the revised draft standards were (14 per cent) or were partly (eight per cent) unclear. However the comments provided little consensus on what was unclear.
 - Under one fifth (18 per cent) of respondents felt that there was some sort of duplication within the revised draft standards however again there was little consensus on where this duplication occurred.

During this stage liaison with sector leaders took place via the national Early Education and Childcare Workforce Co Production group and the CWDC Members Group.

11. **Stage five** involved the consideration and revision of the standards based on the consultation responses.
12. The external reference group and DfE officers (including those from the EYFS review team) scrutinised the final revisions, rationale and response to the consultation responses. The revised standards were then submitted to the Minister for approval.

Early Years Professional Status Standards

Preamble

Early Years Professional Status is the accreditation awarded to graduates who are leading practice from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The standards cover essential aspects of high quality practice and leadership. They promote mentoring, reflection and working in partnership with parents/carers and professionals to ensure effective early education and care of all children.

An Early Years Professional must:

- 1. Support the healthy growth and development of children from birth to the age of five.**
 - 1.1 Know and understand how children learn and develop and how this can be affected by individual circumstances.
 - 1.2 Support individual children through all areas of learning and development as outlined in the EYFS.
 - 1.3 Encourage and support children's learning in ways that are appropriate to their development.
 - 1.4 Support children through a range of transitions.
 - 1.5 Know when a child is in need of support and when to refer to other relevant services.
- 2. Work directly with children and in partnership with their families to facilitate learning and support development.**
 - 2.1 Understand the important influence of parents/carers, engaging them effectively to support their child's wellbeing, learning and development.
 - 2.2 Communicate effectively with children from birth to age five, listening and responding sensitively.
 - 2.3 Promote positive social and emotional behaviour, attitudes and independence.
 - 2.4 Know and understand the significance of attachment and how effectively to promote it.
 - 2.5 Develop and sustain respectful relationships with children and their families.

3. Safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- 3.1 Know the legal requirements and guidance on health and safety, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and the implications for early years settings.
- 3.2 Establish and sustain a safe environment and employ practices that promote children's health and safety.
- 3.3 Know and understand child protection policies and procedures, recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of abuse, and know how to act to protect them.

4. Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge every child.

- 4.1 Establish and sustain a stimulating and inclusive environment where children feel confident and are able to learn and develop.
- 4.2 Engage in sustained shared thinking with children.
- 4.3 Give constructive feedback to help children evaluate their achievements and facilitate further learning.
- 4.4 Demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviours expected from children.

5. Make use of observation and assessment to meet the individual needs of every child.

- 5.1 Observe, assess, record and report on progress in children's development and learning, using this to plan next steps.
- 5.2 Engage effectively with parents/carers and wider professionals in the on-going assessment and appropriate provision for each child.
- 5.3 Differentiate provision to meet the individual needs of the child and provide opportunities to extend their learning and development.

6. Plan provision taking account of the individual needs of every child

- 6.1 Provide balanced and flexible daily and weekly routines that meet children's needs and interests and enable them to learn and develop.
- 6.2 Plan and provide appropriate adult led and child initiated play and experiences that enable children to learn and develop.
- 6.3 Select, prepare and use a range of resources suitable for children's ages, interests and abilities, which value diversity, and promote equality and inclusion.

7. Fulfil wider professional responsibilities by promoting positive partnership working to support the child.

- 7.1 Understand the importance of and contribute to multi-agency team working.
- 7.2 Take a lead in establishing and sustaining a culture of cooperative working between colleagues and wider professionals.
- 7.3 Support colleagues to understand the part they play to enable every child to reach their full potential.

8. Lead practice and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

- 8.1 Model and implement effective practice, and support and mentor other practitioners.
- 8.2 Reflect on the effectiveness of provision, propose appropriate changes and influence, shape and support the implementation of policies and practices within the setting.
- 8.3 Take responsibility for improving practice through appropriate professional development, for self and colleagues.
- 8.4 Promote equality of opportunity through championing children's rights and anti-discriminatory practice.
- 8.5 Understand the implications of relevant legislation, statutory frameworks, including the EYFS, and policy for early years settings and apply in practice.

1. Introduction: Background and Scope of the Review

- 1.1 The Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards were launched in September 2007. The Standards are the basis for the assessment and accreditation for the award of the EYPS and set out the national expectations for anyone wishing to gain the status. The standards are outcome statements that describe what Early Years Professionals need to know, understand and be able to do, and apply to practice with children from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (age five). The original set of standards was 39 strong, and organised into six groups; knowledge and understanding, effective practice, relationships with children, communicating and working in partnership with families and carers, teamwork and collaboration and professional development.
- 1.2 The original standards were drafted by CWDC in 2006, and subject to a consultation which involved both an online survey and four face-to-face consultation conference events involving a broad cross section of those working in the early years sector. In depth interviews also took place with children and their families. The draft standards were revised following consideration of the consultation responses and development of the standards was overseen by an external reference group.
- 1.3 Since its launch, over 9,600 candidates have achieved EYPS and are working across England, making a positive difference to children's learning and development every day.
- 1.4 In July 2011 the Minister of State for Children and Families, Sarah Teather, announced that CWDC was to undertake a review of the EYPS standards within 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years'. This policy statement highlighted the "growing evidence of the positive impact that EYPS can have on the skills, status and on-going professional development of early years practitioners, and hence on young children's learning" (Department for Education [DfE] and Department of Health, 2011c: p62).
- 1.5 The aim of the Review was to:
 - test how the standards can support the concept of teaching in early years and help to spread leadership practice (which were identified as issues for further discussion within the policy document);
 - streamline the standards where possible ensuring that they link with other standards; and
 - ensure that the standards properly reflect outcomes of developments since 2007.
- 1.6 The Review's terms of reference (reproduced in Annex A) tasked it with establishing a set of standards which would meet the following quality criteria. The standards will:
 - be unequivocal, clear and easy to understand;
 - be fit for purpose and set appropriate expectations for what a candidate should achieve in order to be awarded EYPS;
 - be aligned with government policy and the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework; and
 - inspire confidence in the profession.

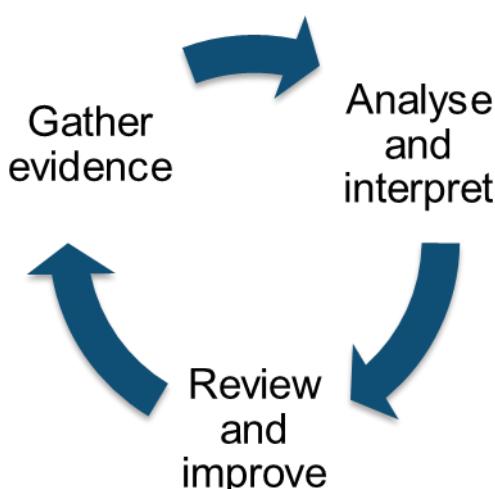
- 1.7 The Review was led by CWDC and, subsequently, the Teaching Agency between August 2011 and May 2012. The period of the Review was a time of significant activity. ‘The First Report of the Independent Review of Teachers’ Standards: QTS and Core Standards’ had been published in July 2011 just prior to the commencement of the EYPS Standards Review. The consultation on the EYFS was active and the revised EYFS was published in March 2012 just prior to the end of the Review. Professor Nutbrown’s Review of Early Years Qualifications commenced in October 2011 and the interim report published in March 2012.
- 1.8 The revised standards are to be implemented in September 2012 by the Teaching Agency¹, in line with the implementation of the revised EYFS and new Teachers’ Standards.

¹ CWDC closed on 31 March 2012 and its early years work transferred to the Teaching Agency.

2. The Review Process

- 2.1 A small review team of CWDC (and subsequently Teaching Agency) officers were responsible for undertaking the Review². An external reference group was established to advise and guide the Review team, throughout the Review. Members were required to have an in depth understanding of the EYPS programme or standards development from a practice, delivery or academic perspective. Details of the group are provided in Annex B.
- 2.2 The Review was undertaken in five stages. The review process was a continuous cycle of evidence gathering, analysis and improvement, and is illustrated by figure one.

Fig. 1



- 2.3 **Stage one** involved the consideration of evidence from a range of sources including emerging policy and research documents. This also involved consideration of the existing evidence which CWDC had from a number of consultations with young children and families undertaken between 2006 and 2011. As these provided the same message about the skills and knowledge required to work with young children by the workforce it was agreed that an additional consultation should not be undertaken. A summary of the evidence considered in this stage is presented in **Annex C**.
- 2.4 **Stage two** was a call for evidence, targeted at three groups of ‘users’ with in depth knowledge of the standards.
- Practitioners holding, or working towards, EYPS: A sample were invited to four user groups across three locations.
 - Training providers delivering EYPS and assessors: The 35 training providers and their assessors responsible for delivering EYPS at the time were invited to respond to an online consultation survey to represent the views of the teaching and assessment staff.
 - The moderation contractor also provided evidence during this stage.
- A full list of respondents is provided in **Annex D**, along with the questions asked.

² The Review team members remained largely unchanged during the transition of responsibility of the Review from CWDC to the Teaching Agency

- 2.5 **Stage three** involved the production of a set of revised draft standards (based on the consideration of the evidence received in stages one and two), and agreed with the external reference group. The drafting process included a mapping exercise and gap analysis conducted against the existing standards, in order to ensure that their coverage remained comprehensive and reflected the feedback received from the call for evidence. To consider alignment across different sets of standards this stage also involved liaison with the teams responsible for supporting the reviews of the EYFS, Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and Core Standards, and the National Standards for Leaders of SureStart Children's Centres (which underpin the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership).
- 2.6 **Stage four** was a ten week online consultation undertaken via CWDC's website, which could be completed by anyone wishing to comment on the draft standards. This ran between 16 January 2012 and 23 March 2012. The findings of this consultation are given in the **key findings section** of this report. Liaison also took place with sector leaders via the Early Education and Child Care Workforce Co-Production Group and the CWDC Members Group.
- 2.7 **Stage five**, involved the consideration and revision of the standards based on the consultation responses. The summary of responses and suitability of the changes made to the final draft of the standards was scrutinised by the external reference group and DfE, including officers from the EYFS review team. The final version of the standards was then submitted to the Minister for approval in May 2012.

3. Key findings

- 3.1 This section summarises the key findings from the call for evidence, at stage two, and the online consultation, at stage four.

Stage two: Call for evidence

- 3.2 The key themes extracted from the user groups (28 people), online survey (20 providers) and the external moderator's report³, prior to the first revision of the standards at stage two of the Review, are summarised below.

Structure/Language

- 3.3 The structure of the standards was highlighted as an issue with potential for improvement by survey respondents, user group attendees and the external moderator. This particularly related to the groupings. Generally, user group attendees considered the way standards were grouped to be very useful and felt it was important that standards remained grouped in some way. However, there were some comments from user group attendees in relation to changing the title of certain groups and/or moving standards into different groups.
- 3.4 Survey respondents and user group attendees also highlighted the complexity of some standards, particularly those that encapsulated a number of different elements which could be missed by candidates in their evidence. Overall, there was a general point about clarity and simplification. Many user group attendees felt the language used across all 39 standards needed to be clearer and more concise and there also needed to be a degree of consistency in the language used across the standards. Many attendees felt that detailed supporting guidance should be developed which provided examples of what type of evidence could be used for each standard as this would aid candidates with the assessment process.

Duplication and potential for merging

- 3.5 The vast majority of comments on the original standards from the user group attendees were on duplication and overlap and the need for certain standards to be more explicit on what was being asked of candidates.
- 3.6 Feedback from survey respondents suggested that each standard was unique and supported a slightly different element of practice. A certain degree of overlap between standards was considered appropriate and could provide a helpful opportunity to triangulate evidence during the assessment process. It was suggested that the overlaps and links between the standards also promote useful discussion and opportunity for reflective practice as candidates explore how one aspect of provision impacts upon and supports another. Despite the message that overlaps and linkages were helpful, there were indications from survey respondents of duplication and potential for merging within certain standards. This was supported by the report from the external moderator.

³ Although all the evidence included in the external moderator report has been considered as part of the Review, only those comments relating to standards also identified in the user group and survey have been included in this report.

- 3.7 Survey respondents felt there was a clear overlap between standards six and 36, which cover working with other professionals. This view was shared by the external moderator and many of the user group attendees, who felt these standards were very similar and difficult to evidence separately. Standard six refers to the knowledge and understanding of the contribution that other professionals can make, and standard 36 is about actively contributing to the multi-professional team.
- 3.8 Duplication was also reported by survey respondents within standards 17 and 28, which relate to children's behaviour, however, this pairing was not identified as suitable for merging by as many respondents.
- 3.9 Survey respondents reported that standards 29 to 32 (covering communicating and working in partnership with families and carers) should be considered and potentially merged or regrouped into two or three standards. The primary reason for this was to differentiate the elements of this aspect of the work to make it clearer for candidates and assessors. This view was supported by the external moderator.

Children's Learning

- 3.10 Comments from survey respondents suggested a need for strengthening the emphasis on children's learning while, at the same time, still recognising the importance of development and care. In the user groups, there was much discussion around the definition of school readiness and the need for children to learn to be independent/gain life skills. Some attendees felt the standards already supported the concept of teaching, while others felt it was something that could be further strengthened. A number of user group attendees while broadly recognising the importance of the standards supporting children's learning raised concerns about the use of the word teaching.

Comments in relation to specific standards

- 3.11 Many comments received from survey respondents and user group attendees were in relation to specific standards. However, the comments from user group attendees in relation to specific standards have only been included below if similar views were expressed in two or more groups.

3.12 Standard 16 - Engage in sustained shared thinking with children

This standard was identified by survey respondents as one which would benefit from consideration. The standard requires candidates to engage in sustained shared thinking (SST) with children. Concern was highlighted that it was often poorly understood and inadequately evidenced by candidates, and was particularly difficult for witnesses to give independent evidence. This was supported by user group attendees, who highlighted that the difficulty was in evidencing rather than understanding and practising SST which often takes place spontaneously and may not be witnessed or recorded. There were varying opinions on the action that should be taken. Suggestions were made for rewording to make the standard clearer, particularly as the phrase represented one particular theory/perspective on the process of extending children's thinking. There were also suggestions that although candidates found the standard difficult, it should be retained as it was an important concept and practice for Early Years

Professionals. The external moderator felt the standard was entirely appropriate for an Early Years Professional although it could possibly benefit from rewording.

3.13 Standard 20 - Recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of harm and know how to act to protect them

This was highlighted by nearly three-quarters of survey respondents as problematic for candidates to understand and evidence. In particular, respondents reported that candidates confused it with standard 19, which is concerned with safety of children. There was a clear message that this should be made more explicit by using the term(s) safeguarding/child protection, and that 19 and 20 should be more clearly differentiated – this view was shared amongst many of the user group attendees, who felt there was a definite overlap between standards 19 and 20. Some respondents also felt that it would be more helpful if the terminology used in the standard was more closely aligned to the EYFS. The external moderator also noted that the misinterpretation of the breadth of this standard had repeatedly proven a challenge for candidates. They agreed that it was important to make explicit that this standard was concerned with child protection.

3.14 Standard 22 - Give constructive and sensitive feedback to help children understand what they have achieved and think about what they need to do next and, when appropriate, encourage children to think about, evaluate and improve on their own performance

Although survey respondents acknowledged the importance of this standard, there was a general consensus that candidates often struggled with it. It was highlighted as one that was particularly difficult for candidates to understand and, therefore, evidence. Respondents felt the standard could be more clearly and simply worded as it was ‘very wordy’ with many component parts. Respondents also felt that the amplification for this standard could provide clearer guidance on what was required of candidates. The external moderator noted that this standard, although challenging, was entirely appropriate. However, the most frequently missing aspect for candidates was that of encouraging children to think about, evaluate and improve on their own performance.

3.15 Standard 37 - Develop and use skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support their work with children and wider professional activities

Survey respondents highlighted the complexity of this standard, particularly as it covers both professional development and practice. The standard also requires candidates to demonstrate literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in these areas. This was a view that was shared amongst user group attendees who felt the wording could be clearer. A number of survey respondents felt that candidates often did not recognise the development of personal skills/continuing professional development component of this standard. As a result they failed to provide the evidence which demonstrated they were supporting their own, as well as colleagues’, development in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Some survey respondents felt that more explicit clarification in the guidance detailing what was required would assist candidates’ understanding of this standard. The external moderator noted the complexity of this standard, however, did not feel there were any other significant issues.

- 3.16 Standard 39 - Take a creative and constructively critical approach towards innovation, and adapt practice if benefits and improvements are identified

There was a lot of discussion amongst user group attendees on this standard, particularly around the wording which many felt needed to be clearer and more concise. The external moderator's report did not identify any issues around this standard.

Stage four: Online consultation

- 3.17 The existing standards were revised as a result of the desk research and call for evidence. The revised draft standards were published online for consultation and a total of 343 responses were received. Not all respondents gave answers to each question and where this is applicable the total number of respondents to each question is provided within footnotes. Open comments were invited only from respondents whose answer to the closed question raised a concern. As can be seen from the figures reported below, in each case this represented a minority of respondents. See **Annex E** for the consultation questions.
- 3.18 Just over 90 per cent of respondents felt that the revised standards set (71 per cent) or partially set (21 per cent) appropriate expectations for what a candidate must achieve in order to be awarded EYPS⁴.
- 3.19 Of those who chose to comment⁵, there were some concerns about the breadth and depth of the revised draft standards. It was felt that the reduced number of standards, compared to the previous standards, would affect their status and quality. A number of respondents also felt it was important that the standards differentiated between what was expected from an Early Years Professional over and above all early years practitioners.
- 3.20 Some respondents who chose to comment also felt that more emphasis on leadership and supporting others was required. A number were particularly concerned about the leadership element being confined to one standard, however, this concern was balanced by other additional comments from respondents who felt this was a more helpful approach.
- 3.21 Half of respondents felt there was (36 per cent), or there was to some extent (14 per cent), something missing from the revised draft standards which would be vital for an Early Years Professional to demonstrate⁴. Additional comments provided by respondents included requests for more emphasis on working with parents and families; for statement 1.3 to reflect all areas of development defined by the EYFS; for more emphasis on inclusive practice and knowledge of supporting children with special educational needs and more emphasis on the importance of the environment, particularly outdoor provision and play.
- 3.22 Just under a quarter of respondents felt that elements of the revised draft standards were (14 per cent) or were partly (eight per cent) unclear⁶. However, the additional comments on the clarity of the standards provided little consensus on what was considered unclear. A small number of comments were made on statement 8.1, mainly concerned with the use of the term 'best practice'.

⁴ 340 responses

⁵ Themes and categories identified from open comments are only reported in this section where more than ten comments were received on that theme/category.

⁶ 338 responses

- 3.23 Just under one-fifth (18 per cent) of respondents felt that there was some sort of duplication within the revised draft standards, however, again there was little consensus on where this duplication occurred.

Background of respondents

- 3.24 The majority of respondents described themselves as early education/childcare practitioners (69 per cent). The remaining respondents described themselves as local authority staff (nine per cent), EYPS assessors (five per cent) EYPS training providers (four per cent), union/professional representation organisation (one per cent), and 'other', or did not respond (11 per cent)⁷. Most respondents held (61 per cent) or were working towards (14 per cent) EYPS. Please see **Annex E** for a full breakdown of the background of respondents in table form.

⁷ 337 respondents. Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

4. Rationale

- 4.1 The Review has been guided by a clear set of aims and quality criteria. The process has involved a number of points at which evidence has been gathered from various sources to inform the development of the standards.
- 4.2 The desk research and call for evidence undertaken at the outset ensured that the standards were redrafted to reflect outcomes of developments since 2007.
- 4.3 The Review has tested how the standards can support the concept of teaching in early years and help to spread leadership practice, in accordance with the original aim. This has been done via debate, discussion and consultation with the user groups of Early Years Professionals and candidates, the external reference group and DfE policy colleagues. As a result of these discussions the standards have been reshaped.
- 4.4 The standards have been streamlined by the changes to the model and language used. Overall the drive was for greater clarity and simplicity.
- 4.5 The revised standards define the required expectations of a graduate practitioner in early years and provide a clear basis for assessment and accreditation for the award of the EYPS. The remainder of this section will determine the rationale for the changes made, and respond to some of the issues raised within the online consultation.

The model

- 4.6 The Review team was given a clear brief by the Minister of State for Children and Families, to ensure the standards were streamlined and made clearer. Feedback received from the initial call for evidence in stage two supported this and suggested that the structure of the standards would benefit from some changes and improvement.
- 4.7 In order to address this, the Review team adopted the model of eight standards, supported by a number of bullet point statements. The bullet points represent the scope and extent of each standard and are the minimum benchmark for the achievement of each standard. Consideration was given to alignment between the EYPS and revised Teachers' QTS and Core Standards, which, from September 2012, also adopt a model of overarching standards with supporting statements.
- 4.8 The revised standards were issued for consultation, without explanation about the model, the rationale for its use and any guidance/amplification. This was to ensure that respondents' perspectives were not influenced by the explanations given. A minority of comments were made which highlighted concerns that the changes had implications for the breadth, depth, value and status of the standards. However this was counterbalanced by the majority who indicated that the revised standards were clearer, more concise and user friendly. Duplication was removed which made the focus of individual standards and the evidence required to demonstrate them easier to understand.
- 4.9 Another issue highlighted by the consultation was leadership and supporting others. A small minority of respondents felt that more emphasis was required on this element of practice and some comments suggested that this was weakened by the fact that there was a separate standard on leadership (in contrast to the original standards which required leadership to be demonstrated across all

groups). On consideration it was agreed that leadership would remain in a separate standard. The reason for this was twofold:

- One dedicated standard strengthens leadership. It enables the candidate to focus on the elements of the type of practice leadership they must demonstrate. As a result they will be required to provide more direct and robust evidence in support of their leadership which helps achieve the aim set for the Review of enabling the standards to help spread leadership practice.
- The external moderator had provided evidence that the approach used in the original standards was difficult to assess.

4.10 A small number of consultation responses highlighted the importance of ensuring EYPS candidates experience working across the birth to five age range. There was some concern that Early Years Professionals could achieve EYPS with minimal contact, knowledge and experience with the younger age groups. Some respondents felt that more emphasis was required on the under threes, both in terms of knowledge of child development and evidence of effective practice. Within the revised standards, EYPS candidates are required to provide evidence of knowledge and ability to work across the birth to five age range for standards one and two (specifically 2.2). Experience across the birth to five age range must be demonstrated for the remaining standards and it is the role of the prime organisations responsible for the delivery of EYPS to ensure this is demonstrated during the assessment and moderation process.

The language

4.11 In order to address comments about the complexity of some of the standards, plus requests for the language to be made clearer and more concise, the language used within the standards was simplified.

4.12 Some comments were made, during the online consultation, that the language used in the standards did not appropriately reflect Level 6. It is important to recognise that the standards are a set of professional standards rather than assessment criteria. They are outcome statements that indicate what candidates must know, understand and be able to do in order to achieve EYPS. They are specific, explicit and assessable. The prime organisations responsible for delivery of EYPS are responsible for setting assessment criteria at Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)⁸, based upon the professional standards.

Content

4.13 The Review's initial call for evidence indicated that the content of the original standards was largely appropriate. The revised standards were therefore mapped to the original standards at each stage of revision, to ensure that the key elements of content were maintained.

4.14 The standards are the benchmark which a graduate practitioner must achieve in order to gain EYPS. The statements under each standard identify the scope and

⁸ The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) "sets out the level at which a qualification can be recognised in England, Northern Ireland and Wales" (Directgov, n.d.). "It comprises nine levels (Entry level to level 8). Each accredited qualification has an NQF level. If qualifications share the same level this means that they are broadly similar in terms of the demand they place on the learner" (Ofqual, 2010).

extent of the skills, knowledge and understanding which Early Years Professionals should demonstrate in order to meet the standard. The standards are not designed to define knowledge of specific theories, which a small number of respondents suggested. For instance, it is not appropriate for the standards to define the specific theories of child development which should be studied and evidenced. The prime organisations for delivery of EYPS will ensure that candidates have knowledge of, and can apply, appropriate theories to enable them to meet the professional standard.

- 4.15 Within the call for evidence some concerns were raised over the original standard 16 ‘engage in sustained shared thinking with children’. Comments on the difficulty of this standard, and in particular evidencing it, were noted. The concept and alternatives were considered in detail during the revision process, however the outcome of discussions and advice from the external reference group was that this particular element of practice was an appropriate expectation of a graduate level professional. Only a very small number of comments (seven) were made raising concerns about lack of clarity of the statement within the revised standards.
- 4.16 Also within the call for evidence respondents highlighted the complexity of standard 37 ‘develop and use skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support their work with children and wider professional activities’. The updated EYPS entry criteria (introduced for candidates commencing training in 2012) addresses the numeracy/literacy element of this standard. These criteria ensure that candidates enter with a grade C GCSE or equivalent in Mathematics and English (previously this was an exit criteria). This standard was therefore not carried across into the revised standards.
- 4.17 A handful of comments were made about the need for organisational/people management skills to be reflected within the standards. It is important to confirm that an Early Years Professional’s focus is to lead practice, not to lead a setting in the organisational sense of the word, although some may have a role in both.

Guidance

- 4.18 The amplification and guidance which is provided in support of the standards is currently being finalised and shared with prime organisations for delivery of EYPS. It has been kept succinct and relates to each standard, not each supporting statement. Many user group attendees requested more detailed supporting documents with examples of the types of evidence which could be used for each standard in order to assist with the assessment process. However, this approach would be unhelpful, particularly in the context of the new era EYPS in which the prime organisations responsible for delivering EYPS have autonomy to teach and assess using their expertise, which brings EYPS in line with other graduate level professions. Delivering organisations will undertake to give the range experience and examples of the evidence which could be used to meet particular standards. More detailed guidance and examples could limit candidates’ learning by encouraging a ‘checklist’ approach, which is not appropriate at graduate level.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 The revised EYPS standards will be implemented for all new EYPS candidates from September 2012.
- 5.2 The introduction of the new standards will not affect professionals who have already gained, or are currently studying for, EYPS. Their status is still valid.

Annex A: Terms of Reference of the Review

The Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards were launched in 2007. The Standards are the basis for the assessment and accreditation for the award of the EYPS and set out the national expectations for anyone wishing to gain the status.

Since its launch, over 8,300 Early Years Professionals have successfully achieved EYPS and are working across England, making a positive difference to children's learning and development every day.

In the government's policy statement 'Supporting Families in the Foundation Years' (July 2011) the 'growing evidence of the positive impact that EYPS can have on the skills, status and on-going professional development of early years practitioners' was highlighted.

The policy statement announced that CWDC has been asked to commence a review of the EYPS standards.

The **aim** of the Review was to:

- test how the standards can support the concept of teaching in early years and help to spread leadership practice;
- streamline the standards where possible ensuring that they link with other standards; and
- ensure that the standards properly reflect outcomes of developments since 2007.

The revised standards will be measured against the following **quality criteria**. They will:

- be unequivocal, clear and easy to understand;
- be fit for purpose and set appropriate expectations for what a candidate should achieve in order to be awarded EYPS;
- be aligned with government policy and the revised EYFS framework; and
- inspire confidence in the profession.

Created August 2011

Revised November 2011

Annex B: External Reference Group for the Review

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the group

To provide advice, guidance and input on the Review of the Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) standards, which CWDC has commenced. The aim is to produce a revised set of EYPS standards for implementation by training providers' delivering the EYPS from September 2012.

Roles and Responsibilities

The main role of the reference group will be to support CWDC officers undertaking the Review by:

- providing feedback on the draft standards; and
- advising on key issues that arise during the Review.

Members will be identified who have an in depth understanding of the EYPS programme, or standards development from a practice, delivery or academic perspective.

Membership

Sharon Colilles	Early Years Advisor & Early Years Professional
Chelle Davison (BAhons,PGCE,PGCert,MA,FlfL,FHEA)	Senior Lecturer Early Years Professional Practice at Leeds Metropolitan University University Teacher Fellow Chair: SEFDEY NorthEast Chair: CWDForum
Maureen Lee	Director, Early Years & Children's Workforce and Programme Lead for EYPS Best Practice Network
Dr Eunice Lumsden	Course Leaders/Deputy Divisional Leader BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies The University of Northampton
Alexander Patterson	Early Years Professional & Group Co-ordinator Hastings & St Leonards Children's Centre
Dr Jane Payler	Senior Lecturer in Early Years Education University of Winchester Vice Chair of TACTYC, Association of Professional Development of Early Years Educators
Barbara Pearce	Director Formation Training and Development Ltd
Ava Sturridge-Packer (CBE)	Head Teacher St Marys Primary School, Handsworth Birmingham

Annex C: Summary of Desk Research

The desk research was undertaken during summer 2011 and included the review of key policy and grey literature related to the development of EYPS.

Literature reviewed

1. Review of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
 - a) The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning (Tickell, 2011)
 - b) Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage Draft for consultation (DfE, 2011).
2. Supporting Families in the Foundation Years (DfE and Department of Health, 2011).
3. First Report of the Independent Review of Teachers' Standards: QTS & Core Standards (Coates et al, 2011).
4. The Munro Review of Child Protection Interim report: The Child's Journey (Munro, 2011).
5. Grey Literature
 - a) Documentation held by CWDC regarding the development of the original standards
 - b) Consultations with parents, carers and children, undertaken:
 - during the development of the original Standards for Early Years Professionals (CWDC, 2006);
 - as part of the review of the National Occupational Standards for Child Care, Learning and Development (CWDC, 2011); and
 - as part of the refresh of the common core of skills and knowledge (CWDC , 2009).
 - c) Data held by CWDC on all EYPS outcomes following external moderation by Formation Training and Development Ltd (contractors responsible for external moderation between 2007 and 2012).

Literature not reviewed

A small number of potentially relevant documents were not directly included in the desk research, mainly due to the main findings and recommendations being taken account of and incorporated within the above (reviewed) documentation. Although they were not considered in detail within the review, the team kept abreast of relevant developments throughout the process.

- Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility (HM Government, 2011b), in response to the Allen Review on early intervention (Allen, 2011) and the Field Review on poverty & disadvantage (Field, 2010).
- A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families Lives (HM Government, 2011a), in response to the Field Review.

- Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (DfE, 2011b).

The Early Years policy statement ‘Supporting Families in the Foundation Years’ has taken into account the recommendations and policy of these reviews and strategies.

Evidence

The evidence considered as part of this Review of the EYPS standards highlighted the importance of the foundation years in the future healthy growth and development of the child. This is not only in terms of the child’s physical, emotional, language and cognitive development, but also their potential for being affected by disadvantage in the future. Evidence suggests that the quality of early education is vital to children’s outcomes, particularly those from a disadvantaged background (DfE and DH, 2011).

The overarching principles of the revised EYFS give a clear indication of the values which should be reflected in practice. The principles define the importance of considering each child as unique, developing and learning in different ways. The principles also stress the benefits children get from a strong and positive environment and relationships, with a particular emphasis on the importance of effective partnerships between the key people in the child’s home and early years setting.

Partnership working

All the literature reviewed showed a strong emphasis on the importance of collaboration. Parents and carers play a crucial role in a child’s development therefore it is vital that partnership working between practitioners and parents/carers is strong and effective (Tickell, 2011). Collaboration with other professionals has been identified as a key ingredient to ensure the healthy development of young children. Specifically the necessity for effective collaboration with health professionals has been highlighted, and particularly health visitors, in order to produce the 24 to 36 month summary of assessment (DfE, 2011a). All foundation years services are responsible for identifying and supporting vulnerable children and families (DfE, 2011c), and play an important role in this process. Munro identifies the role of the health visitor as key in the early identification and assessment of issues which could potentially develop and cause problems or risks for the child or family (Munro, 2011).

Areas of learning

The prime areas of learning for children from birth to five identified within the revised EYFS framework are personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development. Evidence supports that these are essential foundations for children’s life, learning and success (Tickell, 2011). Literacy, mathematics, understanding of the world, and expressive arts and design are the further specific areas of learning in which these prime skills are applied.

School readiness

A key consideration is the way in which the standards support the preparation of children for school. The need for stronger links between the EYFS and Key Stage One has been identified (Tickell, 2011) and is clearly demonstrated across the literature. A key focus for the government is to ensure that children are ready for this transition, and the reception year is a catalyst for this process.

Reducing paperwork

Tickell (2011) emphasised the importance of streamlining processes and reducing the burden of paperwork to ensure that practitioners are able to spend most of their time working directly with the children. This is reflected in the revised EYFS, particularly in the lack of requirement for a written risk assessment, as long as the setting can demonstrate that the risk assessment has taken place. It is also clear that formative assessment does not require excessive paperwork.

EYPS Developments

A review of grey literature was undertaken, relating to the original process of development of the standards and subsequent evaluation, assessment and moderation. The Review revealed that the complexities of the standards were a result of the diverse views incorporated which resulted in the wording of many standards being multi-faceted and complex. The standards made significant steps towards defining good practice, however the complexity of composite standards has resulted in uncertainty about interpretation and expectations. This indicates that the language used in the standards could be simplified to reduce the risk of misinterpretation and to ensure clarity.

Evidence from the previous consultations with children, parents and carers (details given in the first part of this annex) indicated the importance of practitioners who worked closely with them and communicated openly. Children felt that listening to them was an essential skill, particularly for Early Years Professionals. Children and their parents also indicated that practitioners should have high expectations for, and of, children. Positive values and attitudes were considered essential, and it was crucial for children that they were liked by those working with them. Parents also felt that Early Years Professionals should be familiar with the network of agencies that can provide support to children with difficulties, and know when and how to refer children onto them.

Documentation on EYPS assessment and moderation has provided evidence of the practical issues concerned with meeting the more complex standards. This has pointed to a number of areas of concern where confusion about the evidence required, or duplication, has been an issue. Further data was gathered on such issues during the call for evidence, and is contained within section four.

Overall the evidence considered indicated appropriate coverage within the original standards. Simplification and restructuring would ensure the standards are unequivocal, clear and easy to understand, and ensure alignment with government policy.

Annex D: Respondents to call for evidence

As part of **stage two**, CWDC consulted with a number of stakeholders with in-depth knowledge of the standards. Evidence was obtained from the following three groups of stakeholders.

- Practitioners holding, or working towards, EYPS.
- Training providers delivering EYPS and assessors.
- The EYPS moderation contractor.

Practitioners

Four user groups were conducted across three locations during October 2011. The user groups were conducted with a sample of 28 practitioners working in early years settings who hold, or were working towards, EYPS.

Table D1.

Location	Status	Number of participants
Bradford College	EYPS	7
University of Chichester user group (1)	EYPS	7
University of Chichester user group (2)	Working towards EYPS	10
Sunderland University	EYPS	4

User group participants were recruited through training providers responsible for delivering EYPS from 2008 to 2011 via convenience sampling. Audio recordings were made of each user group with the permission of all those attended. Detailed notes were also taken.

Questions asked of respondents during Early Years Professional user groups

- When you were working to achieve EYPS, were there any standards that you found problematic?
- Is there anything missing from the standards which you think is vital for an Early Years Professional to demonstrate?
- Are there any standards which you feel are not relevant to your practice as an Early Years Professional?
- Are there any standards that you think could be merged?
- Do the standards support the concept of teaching in early years?
- Do the standards help to spread leadership practice?
- Does anyone have any additional comments?

Training providers

Training providers responsible for delivering EYPS from 2008 to 2011 were invited to respond to an online survey, which was open from 29 September to 14 October 2011. Each provider was asked to submit no more than one response, which incorporated feedback from both staff and assessors within their organisation. The survey was completed by 20 out of 35 training providers; the list of respondent organisations is provided below.

Organisations responding to the survey

- University of Chichester
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- University of Worcester
- North West Early Years Transformation Group (Liverpool Hope)
- Sheffield Hallam University
- CETAD, Lancaster University
- Anglia Ruskin University
- NDNA and The OU Partnership
- University of Huddersfield
- Somerset Centre for Integrated Learning (SCIL)
- University of Derby
- University of Gloucestershire
- EM Direct
- University of Brighton
- University of Northampton
- Bradford College
- Tribal
- Kingston University
- Best Practice Network
- University of Reading

Questions asked of respondents within the online survey

- Is there anything missing from the standards which you feel is vital for an Early Years Professional to demonstrate?
- Are any standards unclear in terms of what is required in order to meet them?
- Are any standards (or their elements) duplicated?
- Should any standards be merged?
- Are there any standards you would remove?
- Do you have any additional comments in relation to the standards?

EYPS moderation contractor

Formation Training and Development Ltd were the contractors responsible for the moderation of EYPS between 2008 and 2011. They submitted a report based on evidence acquired on the EYPS standards during the course of acting as the national external moderators since the initial pilot was established. The report included standard-specific comments against most of the standards and a number of key questions and issues.

Annex E: Online consultation questions and respondents

Consultation questions

1. Do the revised draft standards set appropriate expectations for what a candidate must achieve in order to be awarded Early Years Professional Status?

Yes No Partly Not sure

If you answer anything but yes, please explain

2. Is there anything missing from the revised draft standards which you feel is vital for an EYP to demonstrate? (e.g. a particular aspect of practice)

Yes No Not sure

If yes, please give details of what you think is missing, and ensure you use the relevant standard number(s) where referring to a particular revised draft standard.

3. Are any of the revised draft standards unclear?

Yes No Not sure

If yes, please give the relevant standard number(s) and the details of what is unclear.

4. Within the revised draft standards, are any standards (or their elements) duplicated in your opinion?

Yes No Not sure

If yes, please give the relevant standard numbers and the details of the elements which you believe are duplicated.

5. If the questions we have asked here have not given you opportunity to make all your views known in relation to the revised draft standards, please use this space to add any further comments you would like to draw to our attention.

Respondents

The following three tables give a detailed breakdown of the respondents to the online consultation.

Table E1.

Please indicate one category which best describes you as a respondent		
Response	Frequency	Per cent
Early education/childcare practitioner	231	69
Local authority staff (not working in an early/education childcare setting)	31	9
Early Years Professional Status assessor	18	5
Early Years Professional Status training provider	15	4
Union/Professional representation	4	1
Other	38	11
Total	337	99⁹

Table E2.

Please select one of the following which best describes your position in relation to Early Years Professional Status		
Response	Frequency	Per cent
I hold Early Years Professional Status	209	61
I am working towards Early Years Professional Status	49	14
Neither of the above	85	25
Total	343	100

⁹ 337 respondents. Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table E3.

Please indicate one category which best describes the setting in which you work or have contact with		
Response	Frequency	Per cent
Private nursery	84	25
Playgroup or pre-school	72	21
Further education	46	14
Children's centre	36	11
Local Authority	27	8
Childminder	25	7
Nursery class attached to a school	13	4
School	9	3
Community nursery	6	2
Nanny/Au Pair	6	2
Reception class	5	1
Maintained nursery school	4	1
Day nursery attached to a children's centre	4	1
Special needs provision	0	0
Higher education	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	337	100

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Glossary

Abbreviations, acronyms and terms

CWDC	Children's Workforce Development Council
DfE	Department for Education
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYPS	Early Years Professional Status
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
Prime Organisation	EYPS training providers commencing delivery from January 2012
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SST	Sustained shared thinking



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