**Early Years workforce strategy – key announcements**

The aim of the Early Years workforce strategy is to **support the early years sector to remove barriers to attracting, retaining and developing** the early years workforce.

The *Early Years Workforce Strategy* will:

* **Raise the status of early years specialist teachers** through a consultation on allowing those with Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) or Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) to lead nursery and reception classes in maintained schools by September;
* **Support the growth of the graduate workforce in disadvantaged areas** by exploring with the sector how best to get specialist graduates into the areas where they are most needed and help make sure every child has the best chance to succeed in life, not just the privileged few;
* **Establish a panel of professionals to help develop clear early years career routes** as part of the government’s Skills Plan;
* **Raise the profile of early years careers among young people** by linking providers with schools and colleges so they can engage with their careers advice sessions and promote a career in the sector;
* **Develop a qualification in special educational needs and disabilities** (SEND) in consultation with experts so that teaching staff can get recognition for these specialist skills;
* **Help attract more men to the profession** by promoting the career opportunities available through new and existing networks for men in childcare, engaging with them on recruitment barriers and improving our data on gender;
* **Support professional development** through a new online training portal and training courses funded by voluntary and community sector grants; and
* **Invest in quality improvement** within the sector, through funding projects that bring early years professionals together with schools to share learning.

*Government response to the consultation on qualification requirements at Level 3*

We have also announced today that in direct response to more than 4,000 views raised during a consultation last autumn, the government will **broaden the English and maths requirements for level 3 Early Years Educators (EYE) to allow staff with a level 2 qualification, including Functional Skills**, to count in staff: child ratios.