

First National Survey of Practitioners with EYPS

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First National Survey of Practitioners with Early Years' Professional Status

Commissioned by CWDC

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1. Executive Summary

The first national survey of practitioners who have achieved Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) set out to ascertain:

- more detailed demographic information about their backgrounds and experience
- their views on their ability to carry out their role since gaining EYPS
- information about career trajectories including their intentions to change setting, role or career
- an overview of their professional development activities and plans
- an assessment of the impact of obtaining EYPS on professional identity
- their views on the difficulty of achieving change in their settings.

This survey is part of a three year longitudinal study investigating the role and impact of early years professionals (EYPs) in their working environments (settings) and also investigating practitioners' personal career development and aspirations. There are two main parts to the study:

- a survey of all EYPs, asking about their career development needs and aspirations
- case studies in 30 settings across the country, looking at how EYPs have an impact on the quality of education and care available to children.

The survey, with slight modifications, will be repeated in year three of the study.

The intention was to make the survey accessible to all who have achieved EYPS, with the aim of generating responses from approximately 10-15 per cent of respondents. The survey went live between January and February 2010 and by the close of the survey some 1,045 completed questionnaires had been generated, representing nearly 30 per cent of the total number of practitioners with EYPS. This sample was broadly representative of the total population of practitioners with EYPS based on gender, ethnicity, geographical distribution and the pathway they had followed to achieve EYPS.

1.1 Key Findings

Characteristics of the practitioners who have become EYPs and their distribution within the workforce

- A significant proportion of respondents had started working in early years relatively late in their careers. They may have had previous careers in other sectors which were likely to affect their views of EYPS.
- Practitioners with EYPS are drawn from across all career stages. The distribution of responses was slightly skewed towards those beginning their careers and centred on those within the established career stage (8-15 years).
- All respondents were qualified to degree level; one fifth also had a postgraduate qualification.

- Pathway one (Validation) and two (Short) participants were more likely to be older, more experienced EYPs and to hold postgraduate qualifications. Pathway three (Long) participants had a similar age and experience profile to those in one and two but participants were less likely to hold a postgraduate qualification. Pathway four (Full) participants were generally younger and less experienced with fewer qualifications.
- EYPs worked across a range of settings with 62 per cent in the private and voluntary sector (PVI), 18 per cent in Sure Start Children's Centres, 12 per cent in Local Authorities (LAs), 5 per cent in maintained nurseries and 3 per cent working as childminders.
- The majority worked in settings ranked as good or outstanding by Ofsted with only 10 per cent in settings graded satisfactory and 1 person (0.1 per cent) in an inadequate setting.
- In terms of current roles, the largest group of respondents with EYPS was made up of owners, managers or deputy managers (40 per cent), followed by those employed by LAs (12 per cent), room leaders and early years workers (both 7 per cent).
- Respondents were involved in a wide range of leadership activities which ranged from the leadership of practice within rooms to leading on learning and pedagogy across settings in an LA.
- Most respondents had been in their current role for only 3 years or less (59 per cent). Only just over one in ten (11 per cent) had been in their current role for more than 10 years.
- 60 per cent of respondents earned under £24,000 per annum (full-time) and many earned significantly less, particularly if they worked in the PVI sector, or as childminders.

The impact of the EYP programme on practitioners and their careers

- Overall, practitioners were extremely positive about the impact of obtaining EYPS on their ability to carry out their current role across a range of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Practitioners who were novices (0-3 years experience of working with young children) tended to be more positive about the impact of gaining EYPS than those in later career stages.
- Just over three-quarters of practitioners (76 per cent) felt obtaining EYPS had improved their sense of professional status and 80 per cent felt it had increased their confidence as a practitioner.
- Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) felt they now had greater credibility with colleagues.
- Overwhelmingly, 86 per cent of respondents felt that those outside their settings had little understanding of EYPS and just over three-quarters (77 per cent) felt that even other professionals were uncertain of what EYPS meant.
- Two-thirds of practitioners felt they had taken a greater interest in their own professional development since gaining EYPS
- Practitioners with EYPS were heavily involved in their settings supporting others, acting as mentors and coaches and leading a number of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. The process of offering support to others seemed, on whole, to be well resourced and managed with just over three-quarters of respondents (76 per cent) indicating that they had sufficient time to do so.

- Overall 59 per cent of respondents had some form of personal plan in place for their professional development. Of these, nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) stated that these plans were acted on most or all of the time.
- Three-quarters had the opportunity to discuss their needs formally with others in their setting and this resulted in the majority (69 per cent) of practitioners feeling that, most of the time, there was a good balance between meeting their individual needs and the needs of the setting as a whole.
- Practitioners felt more positive about the impact of EYPS on their overall employment prospects and the likelihood of them taking on a leadership role than they were about more specific changes, such as their prospects in their current setting or their chances of promotion.

EYPs' perceived impact on settings and the barriers they face

- The EYPS programme has had a substantive impact on practitioners' ability to effect change. The most positive responses were in terms of identifying areas of effective change and communicating these to other staff in the setting.
- Overall the impact of the EYPS programme on practitioners' ability to bring about change has been felt most strongly by early career professionals and those working in PVI settings.
- Practitioners varied considerably in their assessment of the barriers which affected them most strongly in their settings. The key barriers were difficulty in engaging parents, lack of resources, and staff reluctance to change practices and to engage with new ideas.

2. Introduction

This report sets out the main findings from the first national survey of practitioners who have achieved Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). Because this is a newly-established professional status, there was limited prior data on who had engaged with the EYP programme, where they were located and the roles they played within the children's workforce.

2.1 Aims

The survey set out to provide the following information on EYPs:

- more detailed demographic information about the backgrounds and experience of those who had achieved EYPS
- EYPs' views on their ability to carry out their role since gaining EYPS
- information about career trajectories including EYPs' intentions to change settings, roles or careers
- an overview of their professional development activities and plans
- an assessment of the impact of obtaining EYPS on professional identity
- EYPs' views on the difficulty of achieving change in their settings.

2.2 Methodology

This survey is part of a three year longitudinal study investigating the role and impact of EYPs in the settings they are working in. It is also investigating their personal career development and aspirations. There are two main parts to the study:

- a survey of all EYPs, asking about their career development needs and aspirations
- case studies in 30 settings across the country, looking at how EYPs have an impact on the quality of education and care available to children.

The survey, with slight modifications, will be repeated in year two of the study.

The intention was to make the survey accessible to all individuals with EYPS, with the aim of generating responses from approximately 10-15 per cent. A number of communication channels were used to contact practitioners. For example, a link to the survey was sent by email to all those on the current database of individuals with EYPS; the survey was advertised in CWDC's newsletter and on its web pages; multiple contacts were made with EYP network co-coordinators, LA staff, and EYPS providers using email and phone calls in order to increase awareness of the survey; and hard copies of the survey were also made available at a number of events where EYPs were in attendance such as a Nursery World event and other conference opportunities. There was also coverage in the sector press.

The survey went live between January and February 2010 and by the time it closed some 1,045 completed questionnaires had been generated, representing 31 per cent of the total number of practitioners with EYPS. CWDC's data showed that by 2009 some 3,387 practitioners had achieved EYPS (CWDC, 2009). This sample was broadly representative of the total population based on

gender, ethnicity, geographical distribution and the pathways followed to achieve EYPS. The main differences were that the South East region was slightly over-represented while the Eastern and East Midlands regions were slightly under-represented compared to the most recent data provided by CWDC on the current population of practitioners with EYP status (CWDC, 2009). Similarly, practitioners who had followed Pathway one were slightly under-represented while those who had completed Pathway four were slightly over-represented (see 'Pathways to EYPS' section below for full explanation of the EYPS pathways).

The report is organised under three main headings:

- characteristics of the practitioners who have attained EYPS and their distribution within the workforce
- the impact of gaining EYPS on practitioners and their careers
- EYPS' perceptions of their impact on settings and of the barriers they face.

3. Characteristics of the practitioners who have attained EYPS and their distribution within the workforce

This section of the report details the characteristics of the practitioners who have attained EYPS using a range of biographical, educational and professional indices from age, gender, and ethnicity to levels of professional experience. It then considers these practitioners' position in the workforce in terms of their geographical spread, the range of settings they work in and the roles they have adopted. This section, therefore, not only provides detail about the practitioners with EYPS as individuals but also about their distribution throughout the early years' workforce. It provides the context in which practitioners' later responses about the impact of the EYP programme on their practice and their settings can be assessed and analysed.

3.1 Biographical details of EYPs

If we were to create a composite snapshot, based on information on the practitioners who have achieved EYPS and using the most popular indices, a typical practitioner would be white British (87 per cent), female (98 per cent), aged between 36-45 (31 per cent), established in her career (34 per cent 8-15 yrs experience). She would be the owner or manager of a setting (40 per cent) that is rated good by Ofsted (55 per cent), and have been in her current role for 1-3 years (38 per cent). Behind this composite image there appear to be important variations in the range of individuals who have attained EYPS.

The fact that the vast majority of EYPs were female (98 per cent) with 24 men in the sample of 1,045 is consistent with the long-term gender balance in the early years workforce in England (Owen, 2003; Cameron, 2004; CWDC, 2009). With regards to ethnic background, the sample is broadly representative, indicating that 7.7 per cent of practitioners that responded are from an ethnic minority background compared with 8 per cent of the total population currently holding EYPS (CWDC, 2009). A breakdown is given in Table 1 using more detailed categories than those in the CWDC database.

The survey responses indicated a lower percentage of ethnic minority practitioners achieving EYPS in comparison with the total number within the children’s workforce, using the most recent data from the *Childcare and Early Years Providers’ Survey 2008* (DCSF, 2009). This showed that the proportion of staff from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background in the overall children’s workforce ranged from 8 per cent for childminders, 10 per cent (full day care) to 13 per cent in nursery schools and 16 per cent for Children’s Centres. There was evidence from CWDC’s own recruitment data that this under representation might be narrowing as 14 per cent of EYPS candidates were from BME backgrounds.

Table 1. Ethnic composition of respondents

Ethnic Background	Frequency	Percent
Arab	1	0.1%
White and Black Caribbean	1	0.1%
White and Other	12	1.3%
White British	815	87.4%
White Other	41	4.4%
Prefer not to say	14	1.5%
Black African	14	1.5%
Chinese	5	0.5%
Black Caribbean	2	0.2%
Black Other	1	0.1%
Indian	13	1.4%
Pakistani	2	0.3%
White and Asian	3	0.3%
Other	8	0.9%
Total	932¹	

3.2 Educational background of EYPs

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest educational qualification. A fifth had a postgraduate qualification but the highest qualification of most (just over two-thirds) was a degree.

¹ Missing responses have been omitted from the total

Table 2. Highest Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Cert Ed	36	4%
Degree	725	73%
PGCE	135	14%
Masters Degree	84	9%
Doctorate	8	1%
Total	988	

The small number of respondents whose highest qualification was a Certificate in Education was, unsurprisingly, concentrated in the older and more experienced members of the sample (i.e. those with more than 24 years of experience) who qualified when this was a requirement for teachers. When qualification data and setting data were cross-tabulated, generally, EYPs working in maintained settings and childminders had a higher percentage of PGCE and postgraduate qualifications than those working within the PVI sector. Respondents were also asked about other relevant professional qualifications. Of the total sample, some 319 respondents had achieved Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and 11 had also achieved the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) qualification. Those with QTS were mainly concentrated in Pathway one (39 per cent) and Pathway two (48 per cent).

3.3 Professional experience

Practitioners with EYPS were drawn from across all career stages. Previous studies indicate that professionals like teachers go through different career stages (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996; Huberman, 1993; Powney et al., 2003). A recent research report by DfES (2006) identified six stages that teachers experience in their professional life that have an impact on their efficacy, motivation, identity and level of satisfaction. In the first stage (0-3 yrs) they establish their efficacy with high level of commitment in the classroom. Their confidence about being effective increases in the second stage (4-7 yrs). This enables them to manage changes in role and identity when they progress to the third stage (8-15 yrs). Next, they try to manage tensions between professional and personal life (16-23 yrs). These tensions cause challenges to their motivation, which they try to maintain in the penultimate stage (24-30 yrs). Finally, depending on how well they manage to maintain motivation, they may either continue to do so and cope with change or look forward to retirement (31+ yrs).

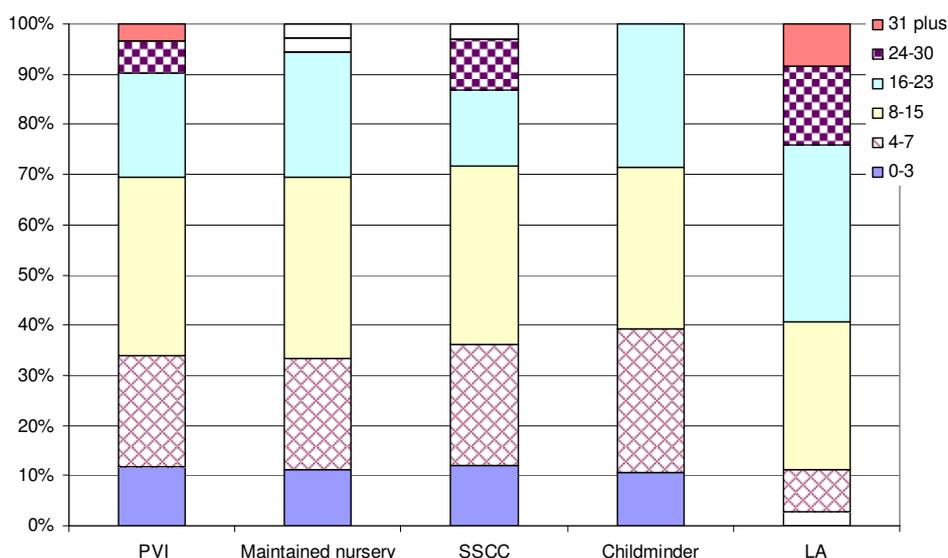
The above model was employed in this case in order to see if there was any attitudinal variance in terms of career stage. Based on the above model, EYPs were analysed in terms of age and experience. A significant proportion of them appeared to have entered relatively late into working in early years settings. The distribution across career stages was skewed towards those beginning their careers (i.e. 0-3 years) and centred on those within the established career stage (8-15yrs).

Table 3. Years of experience

Experience	0-3	4-7	8-15	16-23	24-30	31 plus	Total
Count	129	208	348	222	79	39	1025
% of Total	13%	20%	34%	22%	8%	4%	

Analysis of the spread of experience across different settings showed a broadly similar distribution. There was a greater percentage of middle (16-23 years) and later stage (24-30 years) practitioners working within LAs and there were no late stage practitioners (31 yrs plus) who were childminders.

Figure 1. Career stage against type of setting



3.4 Pathways to EYPS

Current practitioners with EYPS have come through one of four pathways:

Pathway 1 Validation (four months part time)

Candidates who met all the entry requirements tended to be experienced and close to being able to demonstrate that they met the EYP standards. The focus of this pathway was on the validation of evidence of existing attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills, rather than on gaining new knowledge, skills and experience.

Pathway 2 Short Extended Professional Development (Short EPD six months part time)

This pathway was for candidates who met the entry requirements and could demonstrate all the standards with babies, toddlers or young children, but not all three age groups. This Pathway was also for candidates who needed to gain additional knowledge. Following an assessment of skills and experience, a programme was personalised to enable students to top-up their knowledge, understanding and skills so that they could meet the standards

Pathway 3 Long Extended Professional Development (Long EPD 15 months part time)

This pathway was for candidates who either had a level 5 qualification such as an Early Years Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree, or those who required longer placements or training to meet the knowledge and experience requirements. Candidates with level 5 qualifications were also able to top up to a full degree on this pathway.

Pathway 4 Full Training (12 months full time)

This Pathway was designed for candidates with graduate level qualifications and, typically, very limited relevant experience with children from birth to the age of five. Candidates on this Pathway had to have at least 18 weeks of placements in early years' settings to gain experience in professional practice and leadership. (Adapted from CWDC, 2008)

Overall, the breakdown of responses by pathway mirrored that of the total population of practitioners with EYPS, although Pathway one was slightly under represented and Pathway 4 over represented.

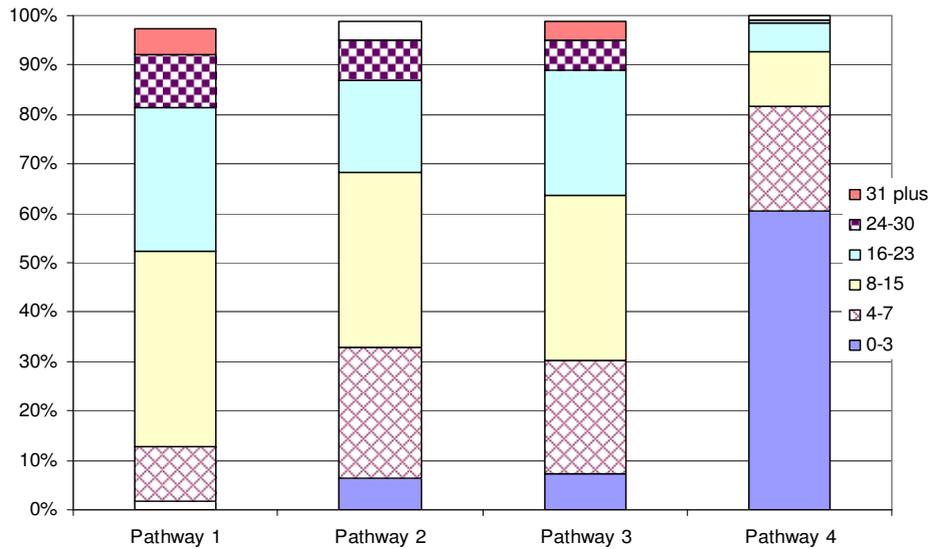
Table 4. Comparison of sample and population by pathway

Pathway	1	2	3	4
Population	41%	38%	13%	8%
Sample	32%	36%	15%	14%

There was a relatively even breakdown by cohort as 23 per cent gained EYPS in 2007, 33 per cent in 2008, 37 per cent in 2009 and 5 per cent in 2010.

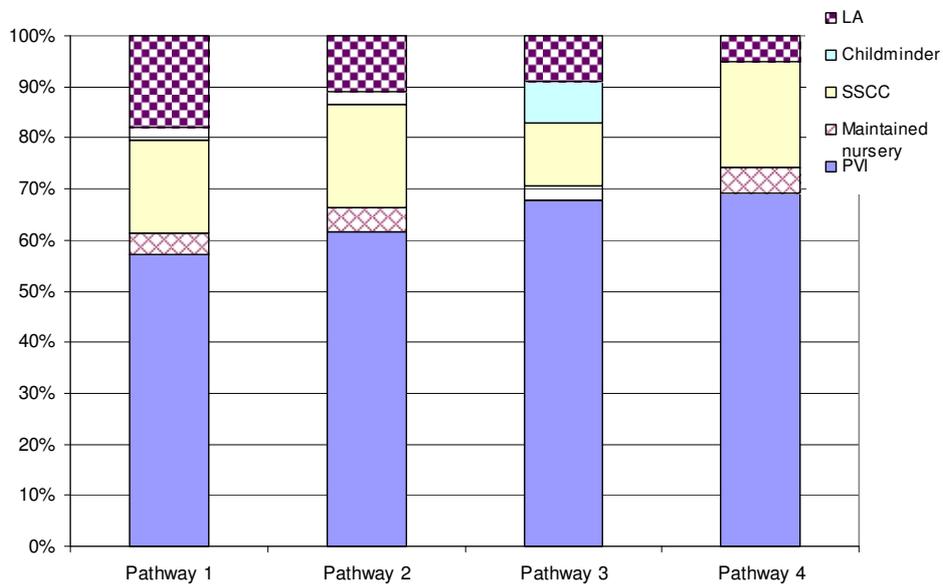
As differing levels of prior experience of working with children were required to access certain pathways it was not surprising to find that Pathway 1 (the validation pathway) attracted higher percentages of experienced individuals than the others. The most obvious difference in terms of experience was observable in Pathway four (Full) where, as we would expect, there was a predominance of novice (0-3 years) and early career phase practitioners (4-7 years).

Figure 2. Pathway and Experience



Analysis of the distribution of respondents by setting showed little significant difference between pathways taken and setting types.

Figure 3. Pathway and Setting Type



The 8 per cent of respondents who were not employed in an early years setting at the time of the survey either did not indicate a main setting type or named the type of setting in which they had previously worked.

3.5 Overall trends within pathways

Pathways one and two participants were more likely to be older, more experienced EYPs (see Appendix 1) and to hold postgraduate qualifications. Pathway 3 had a similar age and experience profile to that of one and two but participants were less likely to have a postgraduate qualification. Pathway four participants were generally younger, less experienced and had fewer qualifications. As the new fifth pathway, drawing on the Early Childhood Studies Degree (ECSD/EYPS), becomes established and more practitioners qualify through Pathways three and four, a greater balance of experience and age across the workforce is likely to be achieved.

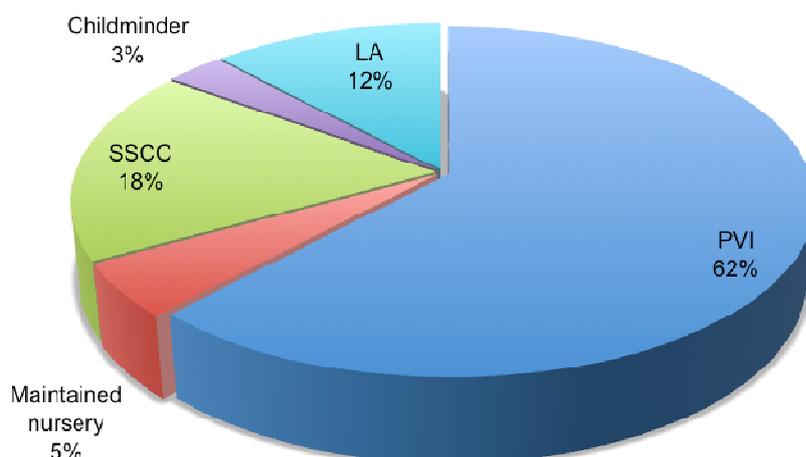
3.6 The distribution of practitioners with EYPS in the children's workforce

The regional distribution of EYPs in the survey mirrored that of current national CWDC data (CWDC, 2009) with the largest numbers being in the South East, followed by the South West and North West and the fewest in the North East (where there are fewer settings). In these regions, EYPs worked across a range of settings with 62 per cent in the PVI sector, 18 per cent worked in Sure Start Children's Centres and 12 per cent in LAs. These figures show a slight under representation from the PVI sector and over representation from Sure Start Children's Centres in relation to the expected variation in EYP settings according to CWDC data (CWDC, 2009).

There are difficulties in making more detailed comparisons as current CWDC data only include information on PVI and Sure Start Children's Centres and not on childminders and EYPs working in maintained settings or for LAs. Similarly, the *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2008* (DCSF, 2009) does not provide detailed information about the number of staff employed in PVI settings, SSCCs etc or the ownership of settings. However, it does report that there are 56,100 active childminders offering childcare places in England, 3 per cent of whom qualified up to level 6 (graduate including EYPS). Therefore, the survey would appear to be representative of graduate childminders. The current qualifications audit being undertaken by CWDC in Early Years' settings (CWDC, 2010a) should provide more up-to-date and detailed statistics against which survey responses can be analysed.

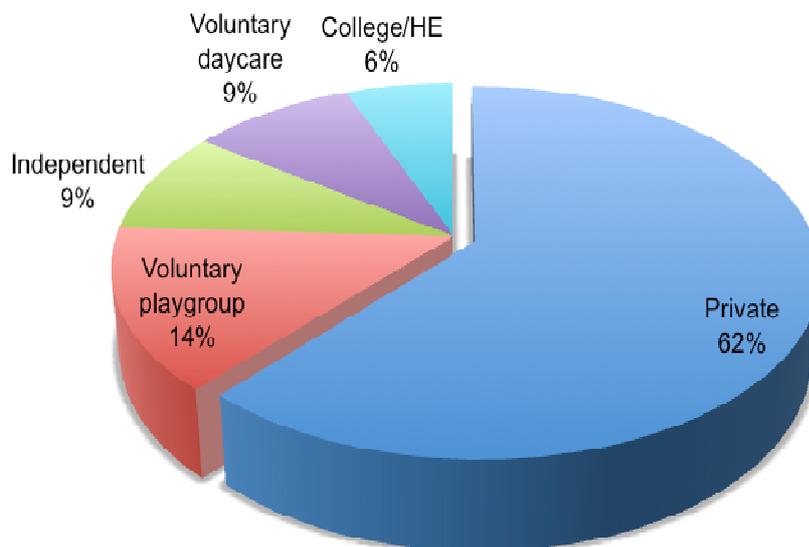
The breakdown of the main type of setting in which respondents worked was as indicated in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Main setting of respondents



Disaggregating those in PVI settings gave the breakdown outlined in Figure 5 which indicated a prevalence of EYPs in private settings within the PVI sector. This is broadly in line with overall provision in the early years sector (CWDC, 2009).

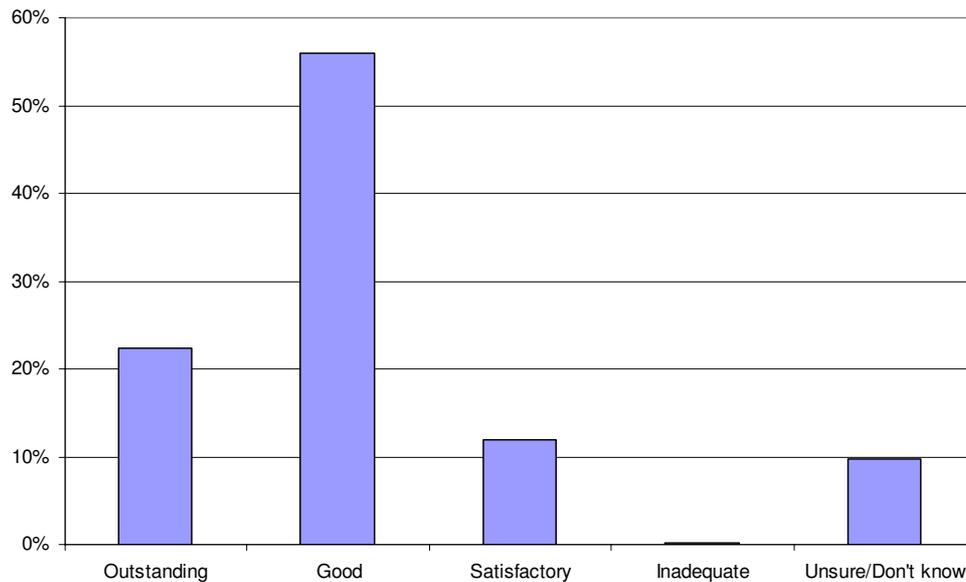
Figure 5. Breakdown of practitioners in PVI settings



The majority of respondents, 652 (62 per cent), worked in one setting, 75 (7 per cent) worked in two settings and 154 (15 per cent) worked in more than two settings. Those working in multiple settings tended to work in Children’s Centres (33 per cent of the total) or as LA staff (29 per cent). The category noted as College /HE may be viewed as a private setting but was regarded as a distinct category because of its direct attachment to education providers.

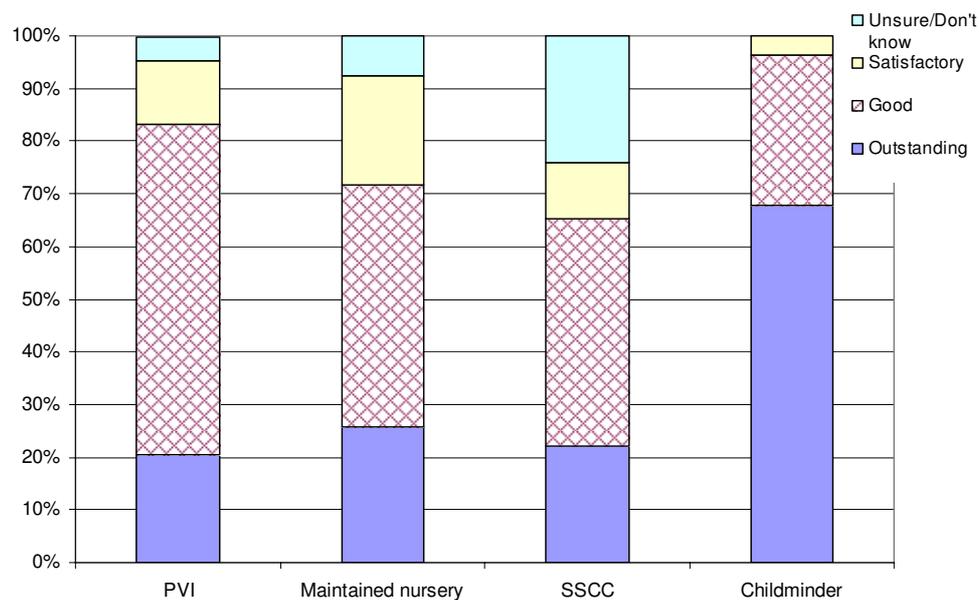
The distribution of practitioners with EYPS across settings by Ofsted grade was as follows:

Figure 6 Distribution of practitioners with EYPS by settings' Ofsted grades



Analysing these grades by the type of settings produced the results shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Distribution of Practitioners with EYPS by Ofsted grade and type of setting



Only one respondent worked in a setting rated inadequate by Ofsted and relatively small numbers worked in settings rated satisfactory, confirming the difficulty we experienced in recruiting EYPs for case studies who were not located in good or outstanding settings.

3.7 Practitioners' roles

Within these settings practitioners with EYPS were asked to identify their role using a number of categories:

- owner/manager/deputy - lead/manage/oversee the setting/more than one setting, lead/implement/support in implementing EYFS, team leader/manager
- senior early years worker - lead practice, lead/manage/oversee/monitor/support the EYFS, team leader
- room leader - lead/manage/oversee room, lead/manage/oversee EYFS, lead practitioner, team leader
- early years worker - lead and/or support staff
- admin/finance/facility worker - team leader
- LA staff - leading on learning/pedagogy

Analysing responses by type of setting produced the following overviews:

Table 5. Breakdown of roles

Role	Owner/Manager/ Deputy	Senior EY Worker	Room Leader	EY Worker	Admin/Finance/ Facility	Working for LA
	55%	9%	10%	10%	1%	16%

Table 6. Role of practitioners by setting type

Setting	Owner/Manager/ Deputy	Senior EY Worker	Room Leader	EY Worker	Admin/Finance/ Facility	Working for LA
PVI	83%	64%	82%	52%	43%	4%
Maintained nursery	1%	6%	3%	7%	14%	0%
Sure Start Children's Centre	8%	23%	9%	25%	0%	19%
Childminder	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%
LA	0%	0%	0%	5%	14%	71%

Respondents were also asked to list the main duties of their role in free text, indicating their main duties first. Nearly 1,000 open responses were received in this section. The common feature of the main duties across all roles was the emphasis placed on leadership and management. Thematic analysis of each of the main six roles showed that they broadly reflected the emphasis in the

Guidance to the Standards for the Award of Early Years Professional Status (CWDC 2010b) on leading and supporting others across the six groups of Standards. The major differences in leadership activities across the six main roles were related to:

- EYPs' position in the overall leadership and management structure of their setting(s) – this related to the extent to which others in the setting were involved in leadership activities
- the scale of their leadership activities - these might range from a single room to being responsible for a number of settings
- the scope of their leadership activities – the extent to which individuals stated they were involved in leading across all six groups of the standards.

More details on the roles respondents saw themselves as undertaking in their settings can be found in Appendix 2. However, one feature of the responses was the frequency with which being a key worker or key person was part of the respondents' role, suggesting that the concept of the key worker has had a wide impact across the sector since *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003). Working with families and parents was another common cross role theme.

3.8 Length of time in current role

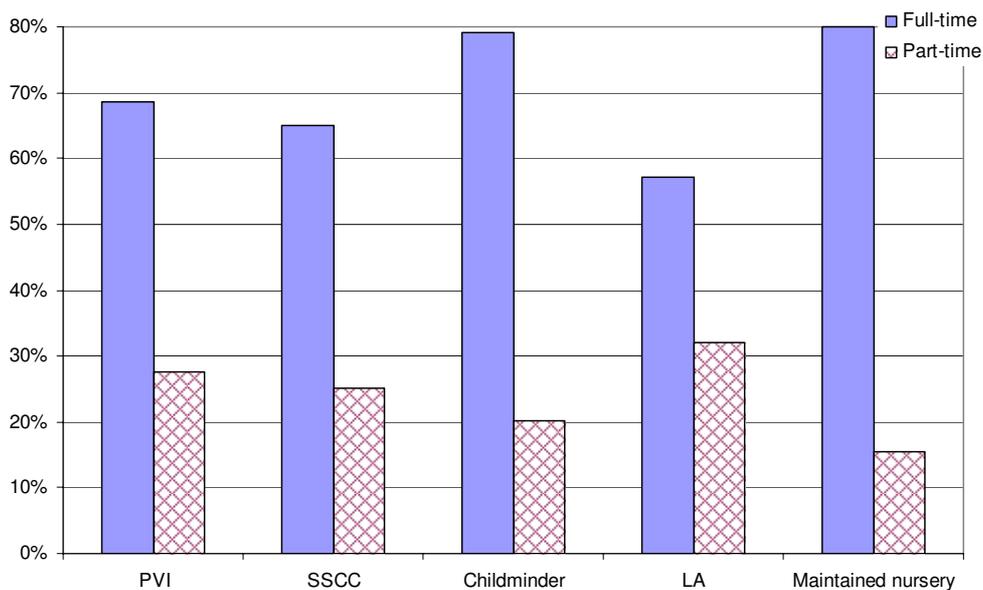
Most respondents have been in their current role for three years or less (61 per cent) and just over one in ten (12 per cent) for more than 10 years.

Table 7. Time in current role

Time in current role	Per cent	
Less than 1 year	231	23%
1-3 years	388	38%
4-7 years	207	20%
8-10 years	65	6%
More than 10 years	119	12%
Total	1010	

Patterns of part and full time working varied across setting types ranging from 32 per cent of LA-based practitioners being part-time to just 15 per cent of those in maintained nurseries. 0.5 per cent (five respondents) were volunteering at the time of the survey and 8 per cent were not employed in an early years setting.

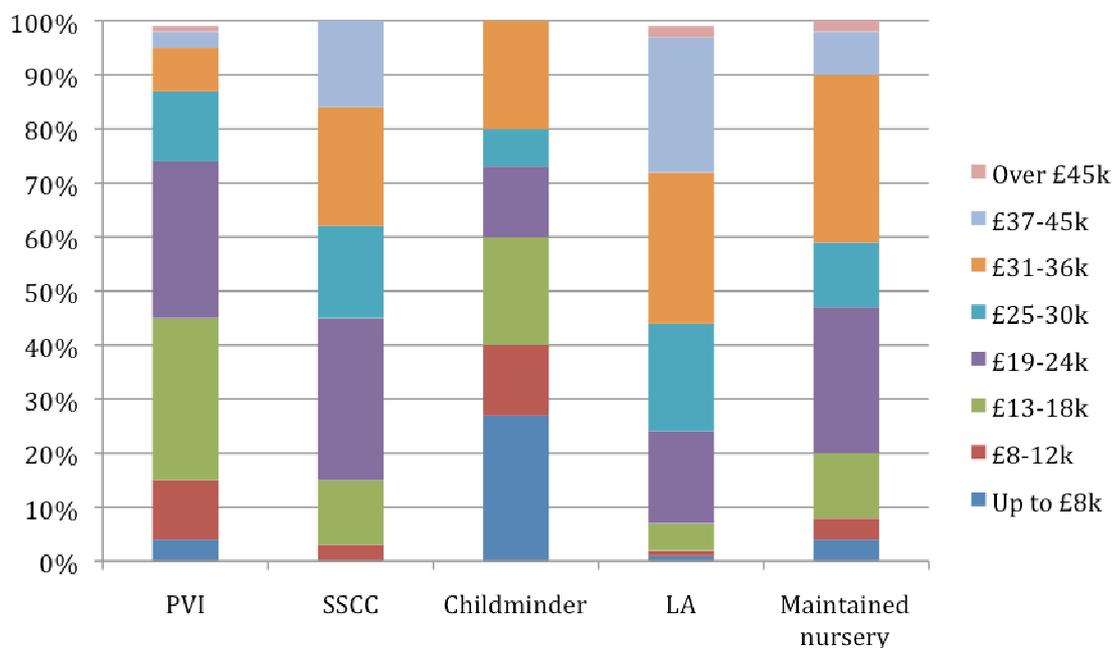
Figure 8. Full and part time work patterns by setting



3.9 Levels of pay

Using the salary figures reported by practitioners who stated they were working full time, the following overview of pay levels by setting type was produced.

Figure 9. Levels of (full-time) pay by setting type



Most respondents (60 per cent) earned under £24,000 per annum. The average weekly pay nationally across all sectors in December 2009 was £425 equating to £22,100 per annum (*Office for National Statistics Statistical Bulletin February 2010*).

Significantly, lower than average pay levels were concentrated in the PVI sector and childminding. Higher than average pay levels amongst practitioners were more common amongst those employed by LAs and those working in Sure Start Children's Centres.

3.10 Summary of key findings

- A significant proportion of EYPs appeared to have entered relatively late into working in early years settings and may have worked in other sectors. This experience is likely to have affected their view of the EYPS programme.
- Practitioners with EYPS were drawn from across all career stages. The distribution was slightly skewed towards those beginning their careers and centred around those within the established career stage (8-15 years).
- Just over two-thirds of respondents had a degree as their highest qualification, with a further fifth having gone on to achieve a postgraduate qualification or higher.
- Pathways one and two participants were more likely to be older, more experienced EYPs and to hold postgraduate qualifications. Pathway 3 had a similar age and experience profile to that of one and two but participants were less likely to hold a postgraduate qualification. Pathway four participants were generally younger and less experienced with fewer qualifications. (For details see Appendix 1).
- EYPs worked across a range of settings with 62 per cent in the PVI sector, 18 per cent in Sure Start Children's Centres 12 per cent in LAs, 5 per cent in maintained nurseries and 3 per cent working as childminders.
- The majority worked in settings ranked as good or outstanding by Ofsted with only 10 per cent in satisfactory and 1 person (0.1 per cent) in an inadequate setting.
- In terms of roles, the largest group of respondents was made up of owners, managers or deputy managers (40 per cent), followed by LA staff (12 per cent), room leaders and early years workers (both 7 per cent).
- Respondents were involved in a wide range of leadership activities at various points and levels in the early years' sector – ranging from the leadership of practice within rooms to leading on learning and pedagogy across settings in an LA.
- Most respondents had been in their current role for only three years or less (59 per cent) and only just over one in ten (11 per cent) for more than 10 years.
- Most respondents earned under £24,000 (full-time) per annum and many earned significantly less, particularly if they worked in the PVI sector or as childminders.

4. The Impact of the EYP programme on practitioners and their careers

The survey explored the impact on practitioners of achieving EYPS in a number of key areas, including their:

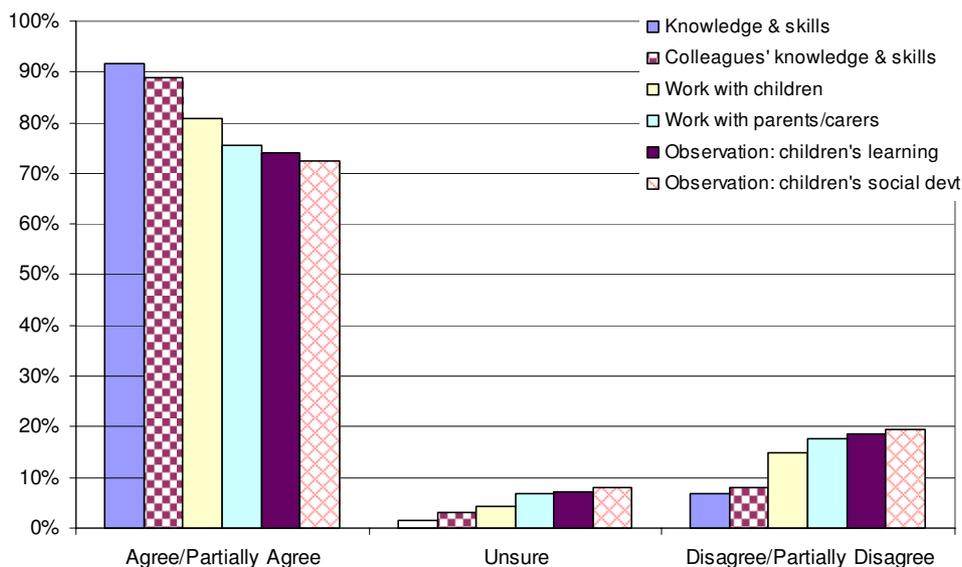
- current role
- professional status, self esteem and confidence
- approach to professional development
- career plans and prospects.

In each of these areas any marked differences between practitioners' responses were analysed in respect of their level of experience of working in early years settings, the types of setting they managed or work in, and the EYP pathways they had followed.

4.1 How has obtaining EYPS helped practitioners in their current role?

Practitioners were asked to rate the impact of gaining EYPS across a number of skills, dispositions and understandings drawn from the EYPS standards. These ranged from developing their own knowledge and skills and those of colleagues through to working with children and parents and their use of observations to assess children's cognitive and social development.

Figure 10. How EYPS has helped EYPs in their role



The overall responses were extremely positive across all six areas of the standards. The highest level of agreement (92 per cent) was in the area of their own knowledge and skills development with lower levels of impact being reported in the areas of observing children’s learning (74 per cent) and social development (73 per cent).

Within these generally high levels of agreement there were some relatively consistent patterns across all six areas. As might be expected, practitioners with the least experience of working with young children, specifically novices (0-3 years experience), tended to be more positive about the impact of gaining EYPS when compared to established (8-15 years) and mid-career career stage (16-23 years) practitioners. This was particularly the case when discussing the use of observation to assess and understand young children’s learning and social development, with fewer of the more experienced practitioners claiming that gaining EYPS had enabled them to do this more effectively. Interestingly, however, in some areas late stage practitioners (31+ years) were more positive about the impact of EYPS than practitioners in mid-career. These responses suggest that variations in the impact of the programme on individuals could not straightforwardly be accounted for by their differing levels of experience. The extent of CPD undertaken by practitioners before they engaged with the EYP programme also needs to be considered.

Analysing the settings in which EYPs worked revealed less robust and consistent patterns of impact. There were some indications that EYPs in PVI settings were, generally, more positive than other groups, particularly those working within LAs, but this also reflected the slightly differing levels of experience between these two groups.

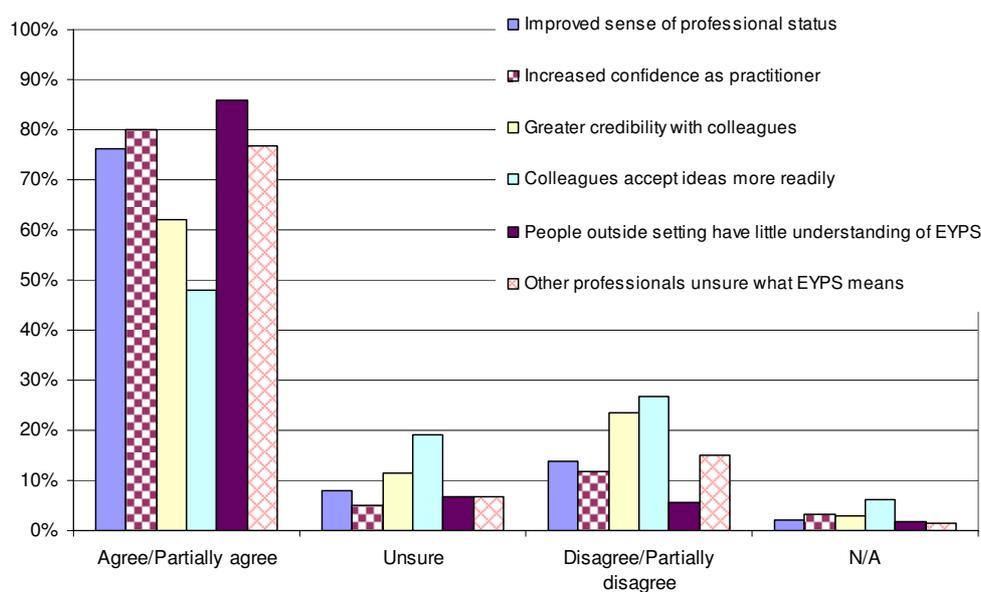
In terms of the pathway taken by EYPs, there was some slight indication that those from the Full Pathway tended to be the most positive about the impact of EYPS on specific aspects of their role. However, there are difficulties in assessing whether this is due to the nature of the pathway or differences in cohorts that have gone through the different pathways. The fact that the Validation and Short Pathways were intended for experienced practitioners was reflected in their responses to questions about change to their role and professional status as a result of gaining EYPS. They were more equivocal than respondents who had taken the Full Pathway which was targeted at, and

attracted, novice practitioners (0-3 years) whose practice and professional identity was affected more significantly by gaining EYPS.

4.2 Impact on professional status, self-esteem and confidence

A series of questions explored whether the practitioners felt that achieving EYPS had affected how they felt about themselves and how others perceived them.

Figure 11. Impact on professional status



Overall, responses were very positive with just over three-quarters of practitioners (76 per cent) agreeing, at least in part, that EYPS had improved their sense of professional status. 80 per cent of respondents were positive about EYPS having increased their confidence as a practitioner. However, the response to a question about whether they felt they had greater credibility with colleagues since gaining EYPS produced lower levels of agreement, with just under two-thirds (62 per cent) feeling it had. In part this was a reflection of the current levels of awareness about EYPS. An overwhelming number (86 per cent of respondents) felt that those outside their settings had little understanding of EYPS and just over three-quarters (77 per cent) felt that other professionals were unsure of what EYPS meant. The practical outcomes from this greater sense of professional status and credibility were that nearly half of all respondents (49 per cent) felt that colleagues now accepted their ideas more readily.

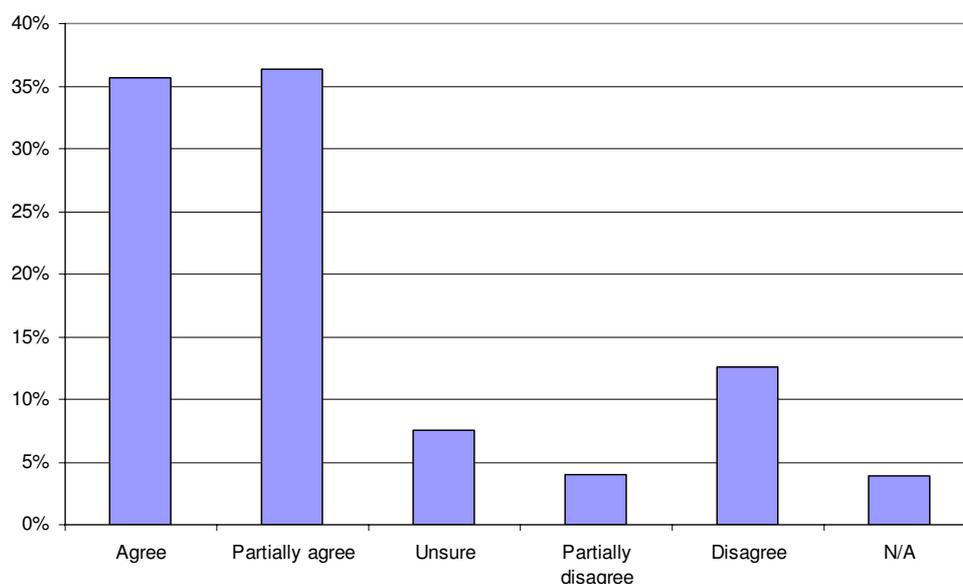
However, it is important to emphasise at this point that EYPS occupied a range of positions in settings' leadership and management structures. Many practitioners were already experienced leaders before gaining EYPS; others remained emerging leaders. Such variations may explain the fact that only around a quarter of practitioners felt they were more able to influence change at work or had more opportunities to show leadership since gaining EYPS. There was also some indication that gaining EYPS impacted differentially on practitioners depending upon the settings they worked in. The most striking example of this was childminders, for whom the impact of gaining EYPS was very strong, possibly reflecting a previous lack of formal recognition. Perhaps one of the more interesting responses was from practitioners working in LAs who, as a group, had rated

the impact on them as professionals relatively lowly in relation to other groups, but when asked about its impact on their credibility with colleagues rated it in line with other groups (60 per cent). Responses in terms of impact on professional status, confidence and credibility were relatively consistent both across career stages and across the length of time practitioners had been in their current roles.

4.3 Impact on professional development

Practitioners were asked if, since gaining EYPS, they had taken a greater interest in their own professional development (Figure 12). Two-thirds believed they had and 36 per cent were intending to undertake a significant professional development activity in the next six months.

Figure 12. Since gaining EYPS I have taken greater interest in my professional development



The survey also explored practitioners' engagement in various forms of professional development activities since they obtained EYPS. These were broken down into two main areas:

- engagement in formal and informal CPD activities in and outside of their setting
- monitoring and management of their personal, professional development needs.

4.4 Engagement in formal and informal CPD activities in and outside of their setting

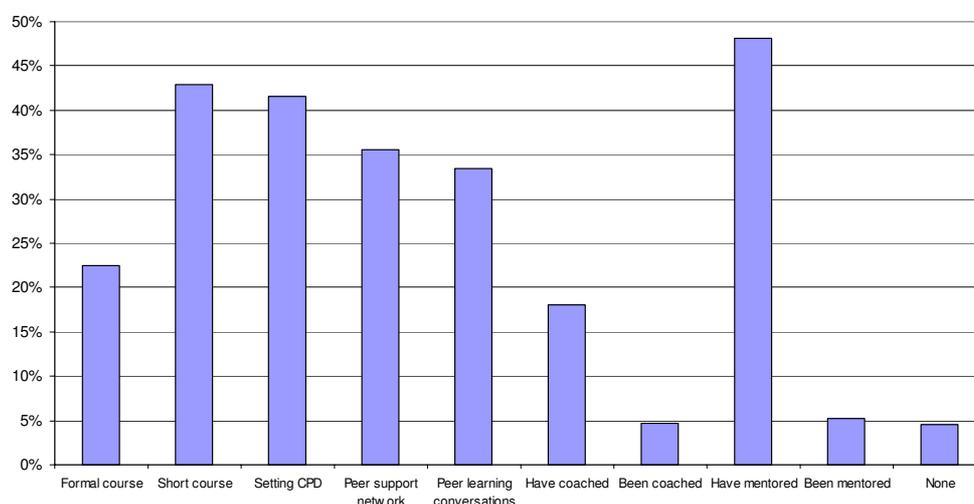
Respondents indicated almost universal involvement (98 per cent) in some type of formal professional development and/or training in the last year, **excluding** any time spent on EYPS. The extent of their engagement varied considerably around the most common response of 3-5 days (32 per cent).

Table 8. Professional development or training activities undertaken in the last year (excluding time spent on EYPS)

Days of formal CPD or training	Frequency	Per cent
None	23	2%
Less than 1 day	12	1%
1-2 days	91	10%
3-5 days	307	32%
6-9 days	245	26%
Over 10 days	249	26%
N/A as I have only recently gained EYPS	30	3%
Total	957	

Formal CPD events such as training activities are only a part of the overall range of professional development processes in which the practitioners were involved. Their responses indicated that since gaining EYPS they had been involved in a wide range of CPD activities, both formal and informal, in and outside of their settings, in which they took different roles. Respondents who had undertaken more than 10 days CPD or training were slightly over-represented in Sure Start Children’s Centres (32 per cent) and among childminders (35 per cent), whereas respondents in maintained nurseries were most likely to have done no training at all (5 per cent). Practitioners were involved in both providing CPD opportunities for others and in updating and enhancing their own skills and understandings.

Figure 13. Types of professional development most involved with since gaining EYPS (Top 3 selected)



In terms of external CPD, short courses were the most popular activity (43 per cent) but there were also relatively high levels of involvement in peer support networks (36 per cent), including local EYP networks. Being a mentor was the most frequently mentioned activity (48 per cent) and the high response rate amongst LA-based staff suggested that for some practitioners this was likely to be taking place both across as well as within settings. In settings, some form of in-house CPD meeting

(42 per cent) or informal conversation with peers (33 per cent) was the commonest form of engaging with others in CPD.

The overall picture created, supported by the practitioners' open responses about their duties, was that they were heavily involved in their settings in supporting others, acting as mentors and coaches, and leading a number of CPD activities. The process of offering support to others seemed on the whole to be well-resourced and managed with just over three-quarters of respondents (76 per cent) indicating that they had sufficient time to carry this out. Similarly, nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) indicated that there were planned opportunities in their settings for them to feedback their learning from professional development activities so that others could benefit.

The survey revealed practitioners' widespread engagement in a variety of CPD activities but this was not an indication of whether these were seen as relevant or effective in terms of developing their roles. At the most general level, the issue of relevance was explored by asking practitioners whether their CPD activity was directly related to their work in the setting. The response was relatively positive with just under half stating it was always relevant (46 per cent) and just under a third (31 per cent) rating it relevant most of the time. This response was consistent across practitioners in different settings.

As discussed below, practitioners with EYPS appear to have a high degree of control over their CPD plans which makes such high overall ratings for relevance unsurprising. This might also explain the fact that only novice practitioners (0-3 years) appeared to rate the relevance of their CPD activities substantively lower than those in other career stages. This lower rating **might be** indicative of a range of issues including lack of understanding of their CPD needs, difficulties in negotiating their plans or lack of support. The importance of having support within their setting to help identify CPD needs was highlighted by responses to a question about whether their current CPD activities helped them identify their own areas for development. Here, practitioners were less positive with six per cent stating CPD never or hardly ever helped identify development needs and just over a quarter (26 per cent) only rating it as sometimes being helpful. Interestingly, they were more positive about the benefits of CPD in terms of helping them identify areas for development in their setting than in helping them personally.

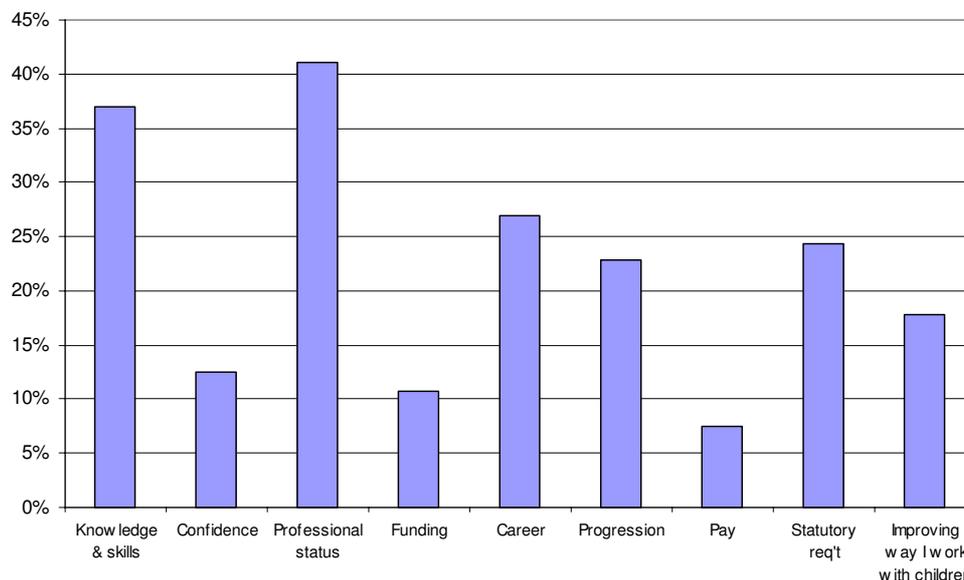
4.5 The monitoring and management of practitioners' professional development needs

The survey asked EYPs how well they felt their own professional needs were being managed and met. This area was seen as key in terms of maintaining and improving their longer-term effectiveness as leaders of early years practice. Overall, 59 per cent of respondents had some form of personal plan in place for their professional development. Of these, nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) stated that these plans were acted on most or all of the time. More generally, when asked about who decided what their professional development should be, just over three-quarters (76 per cent) indicated that all or most of the time it was they themselves who made the decision. Only a very small percentage (8 per cent) of the remainder were in a position where others in the setting made the decision for them most or all of the time. Three-quarters had the opportunity formally to discuss their needs with others in their setting and this resulted in the majority of practitioners (69 per cent) feeling that most of the time there was a good balance between meeting their individual needs and the needs of the setting as a whole.

4.6 Impact on future career

The starting point for analysing practitioners' perceptions of the impact of obtaining EYPS on their future careers was to analyse their main motivations for undertaking the programme in the first instance. Respondents were asked to select the two main reasons.

Figure 14. Main motivations for undertaking EYPS



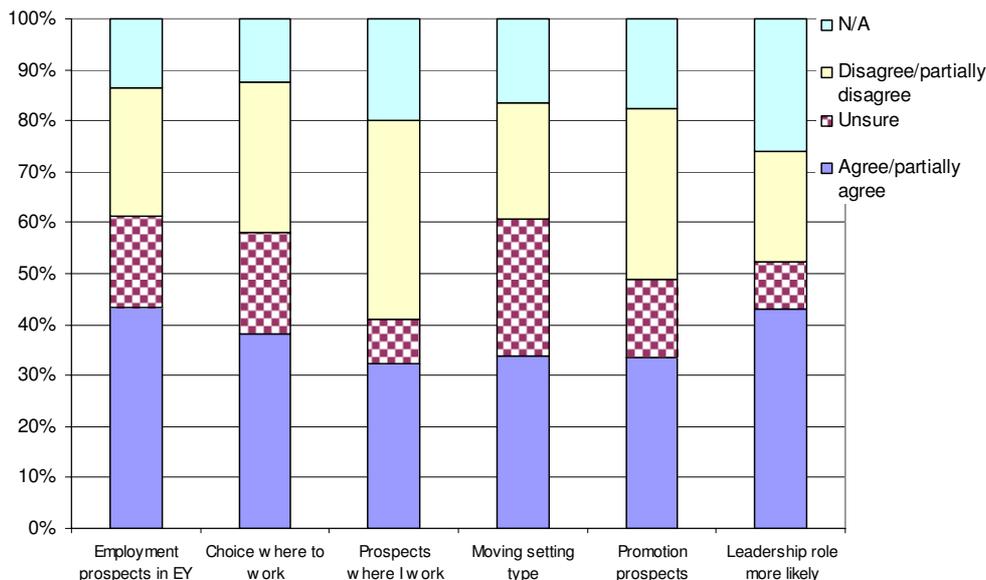
Respondents' most common motivation for undertaking EYPS was to enhance their professional status (41 per cent), followed by increasing knowledge and skills (37 per cent) and enhancing career development opportunities (27 per cent). More experienced practitioners (with 24 years experience or more) and respondents from PVIs were more likely to connect gaining EYPS with enhanced professional status.

A more complex picture emerged when practitioners were asked to reflect on whether they felt gaining EYPS had actually changed their career prospects. Six potential areas of impact on their career progression were highlighted in the survey:

- improved ability to gain employment in the early years sector
- increased choice of where to work
- improved prospects in their current setting
- improve prospects in other types of settings
- improved prospects for promotion generally
- increased likelihood of taking on a leadership role.

Figure 15 provides a breakdown of their responses.

Figure 15. How has EYPS impacted on career prospects?

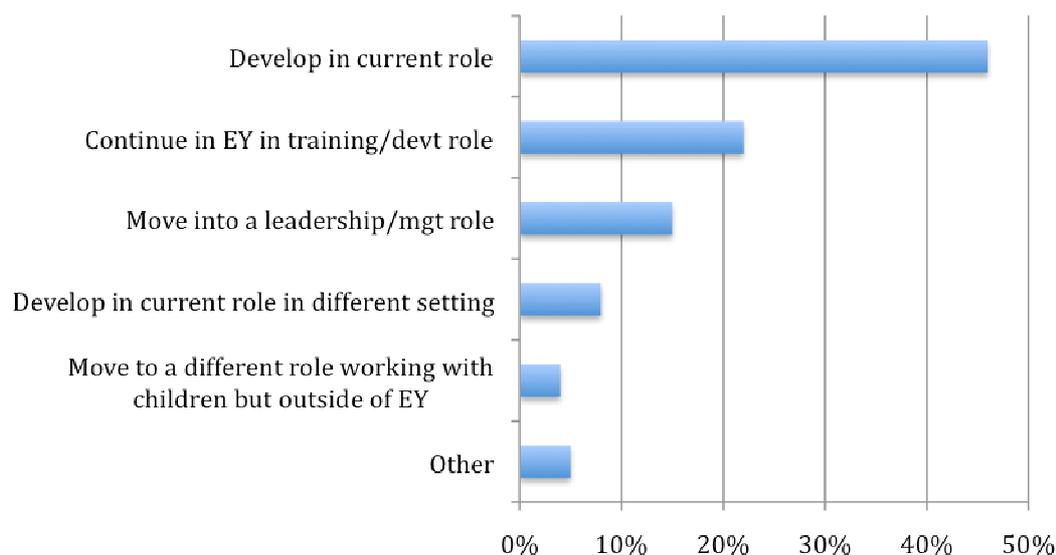


These questions produced some quite diverse responses, particularly with regards to whether practitioners felt that having EYPS had enhanced their prospects in their current setting or their general promotion prospects. Generally, they were more consistently positive about its impact on their overall employment prospects in the Early Years Sector as a whole and about the likelihood of them taking on a leadership role than other potential outcomes.

The divergence of the responses could not be attributed simply to the career stages of respondents, although there were some strong trends. A high proportion of novice practitioners (0-3 years) felt it made them more likely to take on a leadership role and relatively few of late career stage practitioners felt that it would improve their employment or promotion prospects. There were fewer distinct trends in the responses when examined by type of setting. Childminders tended to give a higher rating than other groups to the impact of gaining EYPS on their employment choices and prospects for working in other settings. In contrast, respondents working in LAs tended to see EYPS as having more impact on their promotion chances than on gaining employment in other settings.

These perceived impacts on practitioners' career prospects were explored further by asking them how they expected their career to develop over the next five years.

Figure 16. How EYPs expect their career to develop over the next five years



There were distinct patterns in practitioners' responses depending on their career stage. There was a steady increase through the career stages of the percentage of practitioners who indicated that they intended to stay in their settings and develop their current role rather than move to a new setting or change their role (19 per cent of novices compared to 60 per cent of late stage respondents although it should be noted that the latter group was largely made up of owners, managers and LA staff who have more control over their careers). This indicated a degree of stability that is not uncommon among other professionals in later career stages. More mobility was apparent in earlier career stages with 6-10 per cent of respondents with up to 8-15 years experience intending to move settings to develop their current roles. Moving into a training or development role was the most popular planned change, particularly among established (8-15 years) and mid-career (16-23 years) practitioners. Movement into a leadership and management role was the next most popular aim among novices (0-3 years) to mid career (16-23 years) practitioners, after which its popularity declined sharply.

4.7 The main barriers to career progression and mobility

Four broad areas that might be sources of potential barriers were explored in the survey:

- domestic – covering areas such as work/life balance, attitudes of partners and caring responsibilities
- career – covering areas such as pay and the lack of an obvious career path for EYPs
- personal – covering areas including lack of confidence and stress
- loyalty – to colleagues and children.

Overall responses were as follows:

Table 9. Biggest barriers to EYPs' career progression

Barrier	Frequency	Per cent
Domestic issues	153	25%
Career issues	257	42%
Personal issues	92	15%
Loyalty	112	18%
Total	614	

Compared to domestic/personal issues and loyalty which were mentioned by $\leq 25\%$, respondents perceived career issues as the biggest barrier to progression, A number of sub-issues were listed under career progression. The lack of obvious career paths was pointed to by the majority of the respondents. Low pay and the limited number of EYP roles available were indicated by over half of them. The loss of status, lack of suitable role models and mentoring were the least frequently mentioned issues respectively. Table 11 lists sub-issues that are related to domestic barriers.

Table 10. Responses to career issues probe question

Issue	Responses (total= 257)
Lack of obvious career path	65%
Low pay	56%
Limited number of EYP roles	52%
Loss of status	14%
Lack of suitable role models in your area	10%
Lack of mentoring	9%

Table 11. Response to domestic issues probe

Issue	Responses (total=153)
Personal ties	35%
Work life imbalance	44%
Additional caring responsibilities	54%
Attitudes of domestic partner	7%
Not a family friendly career	7%
Financial commitments	22%
Access to low cost adequate childcare	7%

4.8 Summary of key findings

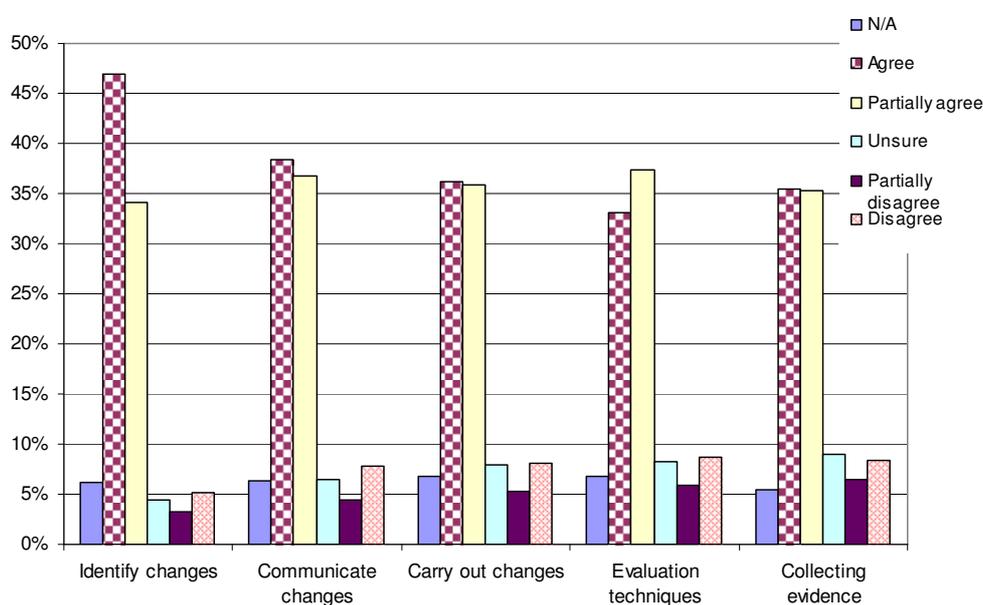
- Overall, practitioners were extremely positive about the impact of obtaining EYPS on their ability to carry out their current roles across a range of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Practitioners who were novices (0-3 years' experience of working with young children) tended to be more positive about the impact of gaining EYPS than those in later career stages.
- Just over three-quarters of practitioners (76 per cent) felt obtaining EYPS had improved their sense of professional status and 80 per cent felt it had increased their confidence as practitioners.
- Nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) felt they had now had greater credibility with colleagues.
- Overwhelmingly, 86 per cent of respondents felt that those outside their settings had little understanding of EYPS and just over three-quarters (77 per cent) felt that even other professionals were unsure what EYPS meant.
- Two-thirds of practitioners felt they had taken a greater interest in their own professional development since gaining EYPS
- Practitioners with EYPS were heavily involved in their settings in supporting others, acting as mentors and coaches, and leading on a number of CPD activities. The process of offering support to others seemed on whole to be well resourced and managed with just over three-quarters of respondents (76 per cent) indicating that they had sufficient time to do so.
- Overall 59 per cent of respondents had some form of personal plan in place for their professional development. Of these nearly two-thirds (65 per cent) stated that these plans were acted on most or all of the time.
- Three-quarters of respondents had the opportunity to discuss their needs formally with others in their setting and this resulted in the majority (69 per cent) of practitioners feeling that, most of the time, there was a good balance between meeting their individual needs and the needs of the setting as a whole.
- With regards to impact on their career prospects, practitioners were more positive about the impact of EYPS on their overall employment prospects and the likelihood of them taking on a leadership role than about whether obtaining EYPS had enhanced their prospects within their current setting or their general promotion prospects.

5. The Impact of EYPs on their setting

This section focuses on practitioners' perceptions of the impact of EYPS on their ability to effect change and the barriers they face. This part of the questionnaire was designed to gather initial baseline data about the impact of EYPs which will be explored in more detail in the in-depth case studies and in further iterations of the survey. A range of observation tools based on ECERS-R/ITERS-R have been used in case study settings to gather data with regard to the quality of EYP interactions with children and impact on environment. They are also asked in interviews and through journaling about their capacity to effect change.

The impact of the EYPS was explored in relation to different stages of the change process from the identification of effective changes through to their implementation and to the use of evaluation techniques and collection of evidence to assess their impact. The overall responses were as follows:

Figure 17. Ability to lead and influence change since gaining EYPS



These responses indicated that the EYPS had a substantively impact upon practitioners' ability to effect change. The most positive responses were in terms of identifying areas in which EYPs had been able to bring about changes and communicate these to other staff in the setting. Practitioners felt least confident about the effect of the EYPS programme was on their use of evaluation techniques. Perhaps unsurprisingly, when analysed by level of experience, it was the middle (16-23 years) to later career stage practitioners (24-30 years) who were slightly less positive about the overall EYPS programme, while novice (0-3 years) and early career stage (4-7 years) practitioners consistently rated the impact of the EYPS programme on their ability to lead and influence change higher than other groups.

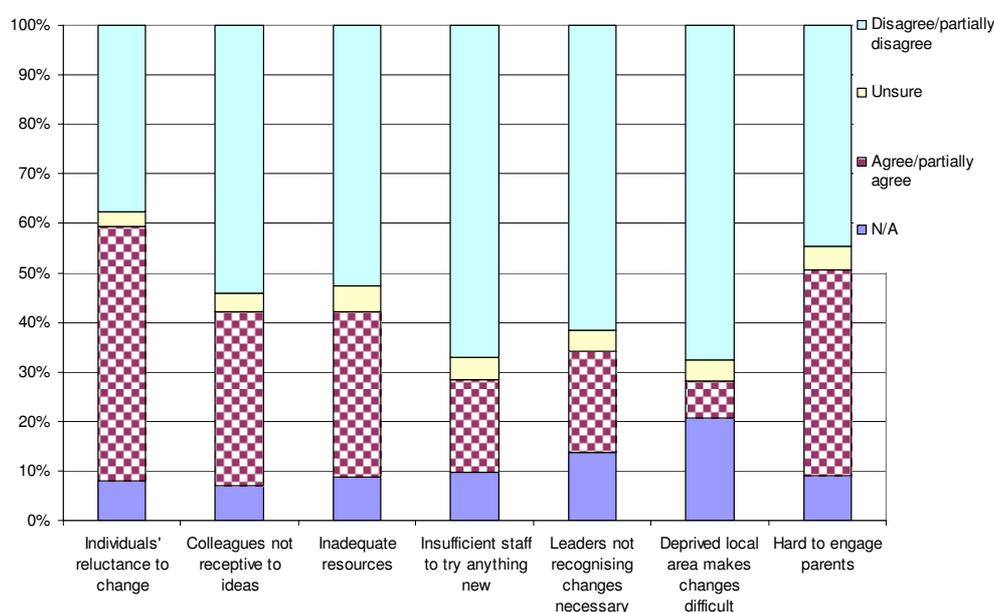
Trends were less consistent across the different types of settings but EYPs in PVI settings and childminders tended to rate the EYPS programme as having the greatest impact, while LA advisers rated its impact slightly lower, particularly with regards to the use of evaluation techniques and the collection of evidence.

Overall, the impact of the EYPS programme has been strongest on early career professionals and those working in PVI settings. Impact on more experienced staff, often working as LA advisers, was evident but it was less strong. This is indicative of the role played by prior experience and existing expertise in EYPs' assessment of the programme's impact.

5.1 Barriers to change

A number of potential barriers to change were highlighted in the questionnaire, ranging from staff reluctance and lack of receptiveness to new ideas, through inadequate resources and time, to leaders' views and contextual influences such as the level of social deprivation and parental involvement.

Figure 18. Barriers to change



Practitioners varied considerably in their assessment of which barriers affected them in their settings. There was far more consensus about what did not represent a barrier. The barriers that produced the most divergent responses were also those that were rated most frequently as problematic. These related to staff, resources and parents. Individuals' reluctance to change generated a relatively even split with 52 per cent of EYPs agreeing or partially agreeing that it was a barrier while 38 per cent disagreed or partially disagreed. The difficulty of involving parents generated a 42 to 45 per cent split between those who agreed or disagreed that it was a barrier. Staff receptivity to new ideas produced a slight less divergent reaction but a significant minority (35 per cent) still regarded it as a barrier, while over half (54 per cent) did not. Similarly, a lack of adequate resources was seen as a barrier for 33 per cent of EYPs, while 53 per cent disagreed. There tended to more unanimity about what was not a barrier: only 19 per cent saw a lack of staff as a problem and only 14 per cent felt the failure of leaders to recognise the need to change was an issue.

On looking in more depth at those barriers that generated the most divergent responses, there were no significant patterns in EYPs responses relating to either their level of experience or the type of settings in which they worked. The only group that produced consistently different responses to the others were childminders who tend to work alone, making staff issues less problematic.

5.2 Summary of key findings

- The EYPS programme has had a substantive impact on practitioners' ability to effect change. The most positive responses were in terms of identifying areas of effective change and communicating these to other staff in the setting.
- Overall, the impact of the EYPS programme on practitioners' ability to bring about change has been strongest on early career professionals and those working in PVI settings.
- Practitioners varied considerably in their assessment of the barriers which affected them most strongly in their settings. The key barriers were difficulty in engaging parents, lack of resources, and staff reluctance to change practices and to engage with new ideas.

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Appendix 1. Pathways, age and experience

Age	21-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	Over 55
Pathway 1	14%	31%	31%	37%	43%
Pathway 2	34%	43%	40%	36%	36%
Pathway 3	8%	14%	20%	16%	13%
Pathway 4	44%	11%	9%	11%	8%
Total	10%	24%	31%	30%	5%

Experience (years)	0-3	4-7	8-15	16-23	24-30	31 plus
Pathway 1	2%	11%	41%	30%	11%	5%
Pathway 2	6%	27%	36%	19%	8%	4%
Pathway 3	8%	23%	34%	26%	6%	4%
Pathway 4	61%	21%	11%	6%	1%	1%
Total	12%	21%	34%	22%	8%	4%

Appendix 2. Roles undertaken by EYPs in their setting(s)

Roles identified by respondents have been organised according to the frequency with which they were cited.

1. Owner/manager/deputy head

- 1.1 Lead/manage/oversee the setting/more than one setting
- 1.2 lead/implement/support in implementing EYFS
- 1.3 Team leader/manager
- 1.4 Train/support staff
- 1.5 Plan/deliver care (including health & safety) and/or education (teaching/learning at the setting)
- 1.6 Writing/compliance with policies
- 1.7 Work with families
- 1.8 Key worker

2. Senior early years worker

- 2.1 Lead practice
- 2.2 Lead/manage/oversee/monitor/support the EYFS
- 2.3 Team leader
- 2.4 Responsible for/oversee care and/or education
- 2.5 Supervision for children/staff
- 2.6 Developing partnership
- 2.7 Cover manager's absence/liaise with manager
- 2.8 Improve/reflect on practice
- 2.9 Promote ethos and values
- 2.10 Key person

3. Room leader

- 3.1 Lead/manage/oversee room
- 3.2 Lead/manage/oversee EYFS
- 3.3 Lead practitioner
- 3.3 Team leader
- 3.4 Provide care and/or education
- 3.5 Organise parent groups
- 3.6 Planning activities and/or observations
- 3.7 Cover manager's absence/liaise closely with manager
- 3.8 Manage/coordinate staff
- 3.9 Train staff

4. Early year worker

- 4.1 Care for/supervise children (also includes child protection officer)
- 4.2 Plan and deliver sessions/discuss planning with teachers
- 4.3 SEN matters
- 4.4 Observation
- 4.5 Lead and/or support staff

- 4.6 Organise/lead activities (eg crèche provision)
- 4.7 Promote ethos and values
- 4.8 Implement EYFS
- 4.9 Key person
- 4.10 Hand over with parents

5. Admin/finance/facility worker

- 5.1 Team leader
- 5.2 Coordinator (eg promotion of healthy life style or placement)
- 5.3 Support and challenge providers to raise quality
- 5.4 Key person
- 5.5 General administration tasks

6. Local authority staff (advisory team, workforce development, programme officer).

- 6.1 Provide consultancy/support/training/advice/mentorship to early years' settings/practitioners/childminders
- 6.2 Facilitate groups for children and families/coordinate family support
- 6.3 Monitor early years' outcomes/raise standards/embed continuous quality improvement
- 6.4 Line manager of staff/teachers and EYFS consultants
- 6.5 Leading on learning/pedagogy
- 6.6 Carry out professional duties of a teacher
- 6.7 Manage early years' projects/schemes (eg the childminder network quality assurance scheme, graduate leader fund).
- 6.8 Support and help children (incl. those with SEN)
- 6.9 Working closely with agencies and providers (job centre plus, police, health)
- 6.10 Key person

Appendix 3. EYP Standards

Available at: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/eyps/standards>

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