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# **Second national survey of practitioners with Early Years Professional Status**

**Part of the Longitudinal Study of Early  
Years Professional Status**

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This research report was commissioned before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DfE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

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## Executive Summary

This is the second national survey of practitioners who have achieved Early Years Professional Status (EYPS). It 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 practice and 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.

The second national survey was carried out in September and October 2011. It addressed a similar set of issues to those explored in the first national survey of Early Years Professionals undertaken in January and February 2010. The second survey prompted 2,051 responses, which represented 25 per cent of the total population of 8,372 Early Years Professionals at that time (CWDC, 2011). The 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.

### Key findings

#### **Characteristics of Early Years Professionals and their distribution in the children's workforce**

- Just under a quarter (23 per cent<sup>1</sup>) of Early Years Professionals have a postgraduate qualification, a pattern which was fairly consistent across different types of settings.
- Nearly two-thirds of Early Years Professionals (64 per cent) stated that their degree was directly relevant to working in early years, while for 13 per cent it had some elements that were relevant. The remaining 23 per cent felt their degrees had no content specifically relevant to early years.
- The most common professional qualification was Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), held by 23 per cent of respondents. Only one per cent of EYPs held the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL).
- Practitioners with EYPS were drawn from across all career stages. The distribution was slightly biased towards those at the beginning of their careers in the early years sector (i.e. with 0-3 years of experience) and peaked in the established career stage (8-15 years' experience).
- The survey revealed that 89 per cent of Early Years Professionals (1,823) were employed or self-employed in the early years sector. Five per cent were not employed at the time the survey was conducted, four per cent were exclusively employed outside of

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages used throughout the report relate to the total number of responses to individual questions, rather than to the survey population as a whole.

the early years sector, and 20 respondents (one per cent) exclusively volunteered in the sector.

- A high proportion of Early Years Professionals working in settings rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted were childminders or based in independent settings.
- Early Years Professionals were most likely to be senior leaders in private and voluntary/community settings. They were more likely to be middle leaders in children's centres and tended to be practitioners with limited leadership roles in other Local Authority settings.

### **Impact of gaining EYPS on practitioners**

- 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 understandings. For example, 91 per cent stated that it had increased their confidence as a practitioner and 92 per cent stated that it had helped them to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Comparing the second national survey with the first survey revealed an increase in positive responses across four of the five areas relating to the impact of EYPS on Early Years Professionals. The largest shift was in the percentage who felt that gaining EYPS had improved their professional confidence, which increased from 80 per cent in survey one to 91 per cent in the second survey.
- Gaining EYPS had substantively improved individuals' ability to work with their colleagues, with 87 per cent stating that EYPS had given them greater confidence in developing colleagues' knowledge and skills and 83 per cent stating that they had become better at identifying and developing colleagues' good practice.
- Overall, the number of practitioners who felt gaining EYPS had increased their colleagues' readiness to accept their ideas grew from 49 per cent in the first survey to 67 per cent in this survey.
- Eighty per cent of practitioners felt that gaining EYPS had improved their ability to carry out improvements in their settings.
- Overall, staff attitudes tended to be the most widely encountered challenge to improving practice. Colleagues' reluctance to change their practice was the only challenge that the majority of Early Years Professionals (53 per cent) agreed was an issue.
- Early Years Professionals recognised a complex mix of challenges in their settings as they set out to bring about improvement. This mix included cultural, structural, contextual and leadership issues. The most difficult challenges they faced were to a large degree affected by the type of setting they worked in and to a lesser extent their leadership role in that setting.
- Eighty-eight per cent of Early Years Professionals employed in the early years sector at the time of the survey stated that they worked directly with children. This figure excludes EYPs working as advisers or consultants.
- Sixty-nine per cent of Early Years Professionals currently working in early years indicated that they worked with multiple age groups. Fifty-six per cent of this group typically worked more than one day a week with children aged under two. Seventy-five per cent worked more than one day a week with 2-3 year olds and 80 per cent worked more than one day a week with 3-5 year olds.

## **Impact of professional development**

- There was an increase from 71 per cent of staff in the first national survey believing gaining EYPS had led them to have a greater interest in their professional development to over three-quarters (79 per cent) in this survey. This appeared to be explained by high levels of enthusiasm for Continued Professional Development (CPD) among Early Years Professionals in the earlier career stages (less than eight years' experience).
- Early Years Professionals indicated almost universal involvement (96 per cent) in formal professional development and/or training in the last year.
- Most Early Years Professionals (68 per cent) felt a good balance had been struck between their needs and that of their settings.
- Well over three-quarters (84 per cent) of Early Years Professionals reported that they felt their CPD activities related directly to their work in settings.
- Over two-thirds of Early Years Professionals (69 per cent) felt that they had access to the professional development they required all or most of the time.
- Staff training events and learning conversations with peers were the most frequently cited activities that resulted in changes to Early Years Professionals' practice. Almost half of respondents (47 per cent) stated that training had encouraged them to lead on an area of improvement and just over a third (37 per cent) said the same for learning conversations.
- Overall, just under 50 per cent of Early Years Professionals routinely led CPD activities in their settings and, although more experienced Early Years Professionals were more likely to be more involved there was widespread involvement across the career stages.
- Overall, one-fifth of Early Years Professionals were involved in routinely leading professional development activities outside of their setting. This was concentrated amongst EYPs in the later stages of their career (having over 24 years' experience).

## **Impact on Early Years Professionals' future careers**

- The main reasons Early Years Professionals gave for undertaking EYPS were to increase knowledge and skills (37 per cent) and enhance their professional status (34 per cent) and career development opportunities (23 per cent).
- There was a widespread belief amongst Early Years Professionals that gaining EYPS had improved their career prospects. Fifty-eight per cent thought that undertaking EYPS had increased the likelihood that they would take on a leadership role and 54 per cent thought it had improved their prospects of employment in other types of early years setting.
- Comparing responses with the first national survey indicated a much more widespread belief among Early Years Professionals that gaining EYPS had improved their career prospects in all areas.
- Those at the start of their careers (0-3 years) consistently rated the impact of gaining EYPS more highly than those who were later on in their careers.
- Five per cent of Early Years Professionals in the sample were employed outside of the early years sector and five per cent were not employed. They were less positive about the impact of EYPS on their career prospects than Early Years Professionals working in the sector.

- Nearly half of Early Years Professionals (47 per cent) saw themselves continuing in their current role with the next most popular options being to continue in the early years sector in some form of training and development role (20 per cent) or moving into a leadership or management role (15 per cent).
- The main career barriers were low pay (66 per cent), the limited number of Early Years Professionals roles (55 per cent) and a lack of an obvious career path (52 per cent).
- Seventy-three per cent of Early Years Professionals working in the early years sector worked full time and 90 per cent worked more than three days.
- The majority of Early Years Professionals (71 per cent) surveyed earned less than £25,000 per annum.
- Just over a third of practitioners (34 per cent) had seen their earnings increase after gaining EYPS. This proportion was highest among Early Years Professionals working in maintained (46 per cent) and voluntary and community settings (41 per cent).
- A majority (72 per cent) of those who had received a pay rise since gaining EYPS felt that it was a factor in obtaining this increase.

# 1. Introduction

This report sets out the main findings from the second national survey of practitioners who have achieved Early Years Professional Status (EYPS).

## 1.1 Aims

The survey set out to provide the following information on Early Years Professionals (EYPs):

- more detailed demographic information about their background and experience
- 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

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

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

The survey is the second iteration of a survey that was first undertaken in January and February 2010. At key points in the analysis a cohort analysis, comparing only the responses of those who have taken part in both surveys, and tests of statistical significance were used to explore shifts in responses. It is, however, important to note the following changes that have taken place during the period between the surveys:

- the total number of practitioners with EYPS has increased;
- previously emerging pathways have now come fully on stream and a new pathway has been added;
- the changing policy context with the change of government; fewer centrally driven aims;
- significant reductions in funding for graduate practitioners, especially at local authority level.

As a result of these changes, a degree of caution has to be applied when comparing the two sets of survey results.

## 1.2 Methodology

The first national survey of EYPs was undertaken at the beginning of 2010 and its findings have already been reported (Hadfield *et al*, 2010). The second national survey was undertaken between September and October 2011. It addressed the same issues as the first survey, with some modifications. The intention was to make the survey accessible to all individuals with EYPS, both online and in hard copy, with the aim of generating responses from approximately 10-15 per cent of EYPs. A number of communication channels were used to contact practitioners, including the following: a link to the survey was sent by email to all those on its current database of individuals with EYPS; the survey was advertised in the CWDC's newsletter and on its web pages; and 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.

By the time the survey closed, 2,051 questionnaires had been generated, representing nearly 25 per cent of the total number of practitioners with EYPS. CWDC's data showed that by October 2011, 8,372 practitioners had achieved EYPS (CWDC, 2011). This sample was broadly representative of the total population based on gender, ethnicity, geographical distribution and the pathway they had followed to achieve EYPS (see below). Fifty-seven per cent (1,169<sup>2</sup>) of the respondents stated that they had also completed the first national survey, allowing specific cohort comparisons to be made where relevant. In addition, some data was collected from EYPs who were not employed at the time the survey was conducted or working outside the early years sector, although they did not complete questions which were not relevant to them. Thus, percentages used in the report relate to the total number of responses to individual questions, rather than to the survey population as a whole.

The report is organised under four main headings:

- Characteristics of EYPs and their distribution in the children's workforce
- The impact of gaining EYPS on practitioners
- The impact of professional development
- The impact on EYPs' future careers

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<sup>2</sup>This is higher than the total number of respondents (1,045) to the first national survey and is likely to largely to reflect the 100 EYPs who began the first survey but did not complete enough questions to be included in the final survey sample..

## 2. Characteristics of Early Years Professionals and their distribution in the early years workforce

This section of the report details the characteristics of the practitioners who have gained EYPS using a range of biographical, educational and professional indices such as age, gender, ethnicity, and levels of professional experience. It then considers these practitioners' positions 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 in the early years workforce. It provides the context against which practitioners' later responses about the impact of EYPS on their practice and their settings can be assessed and analysed.

### 2.1 Biographical details

In the first national survey report, we used the most common biographical responses to create a composite snapshot of the practitioners who had achieved EYPS using the most popular indices. Although some of the percentages have changed slightly, the composite EYP who emerged from the second national survey remained largely the same. Thus, a representative EYP would be White British (90 per cent), female (98 per cent), aged between 36-45 (31 per cent) and established in their career (34 per cent with 8-15 years' experience). They would be the senior leader of a setting (40 per cent) rated good by Ofsted (55 per cent), and would have been in their current role for 1-3 years (33 per cent). However, behind and beyond this composite, important variations remain in the practitioners who have gained EYPS.

The fact that the vast majority of EYPs were female (98 per cent) with 43 men in the sample of 2,051 remains consistent with the long-term gender balance in the early years workforce in England (Cameron, 2005; CWDC, 2011). With regards to their ethnic background, the sample is broadly representative, showing eight per cent of practitioners coming from an ethnic minority background compared with ten per cent of the total population who currently hold EYPS (CWDC, 2011). A breakdown is given in Table 1.

Table 1 *EYPs' ethnic background*

Ethnic group	Frequency	Per cent
Arab	2	0.1
Asian/Asian British	59	3
Black/Black British	75	4
Chinese/Chinese British	7	0.3
Multiple	22	1
Other	7	0.4
Undeclared	336	16
White	1543	75
Total	2,051	

The proportion of staff from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds in the survey population ranged from 13 per cent of childminders with EYPS to five per cent of EYPs in maintained settings. The age profile of EYPs remained similar to the first national survey, although there was a slight increase (two per cent) in EYPs aged over 55 and a small decrease (one per cent) in those aged under 25.

### 2.2 Educational background

Asked to indicate their highest educational qualification other than EYPS, just under a quarter of respondents (23 per cent) held a postgraduate qualification, a little lower than in the first national survey. A degree was the highest qualification of the remaining respondents.

This pattern was fairly consistent across the different setting types in which EYPs worked, with the exception of maintained settings where 38 per cent had postgraduate degrees, mainly PGCE (26 per cent) and Masters (eight per cent) qualifications.

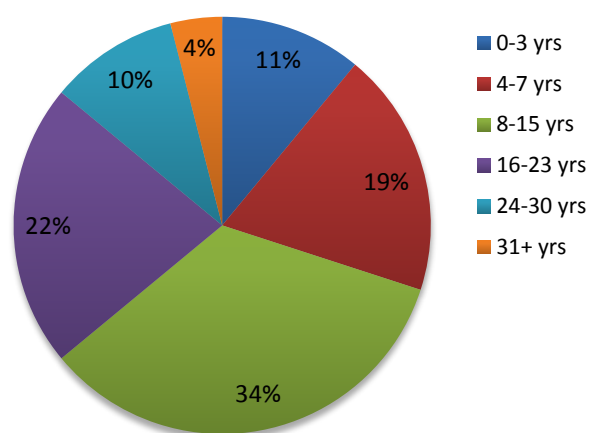
In the second survey, EYPs were also asked about the relevance of their degree to working in the early years sector. Sixty-four per cent of EYPs stated that their degree was directly relevant, 13 per cent stated that it had some elements that were relevant and the remaining 23 per cent felt their degrees had no content specifically relevant to working in the early years sector. Degree relevance was highest among EYPs working in LAs (73 per cent in Sure Start Children's Centres and 71 per cent in other LA settings) and lowest among childminder EYPs (42 per cent) and EYPs in maintained settings (53 per cent).

Finally, respondents were asked about their professional qualifications. The most common was Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), held by 23 per cent of respondents. The National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) was much more rare, gained by only 23 EYPs (1 per cent), with a select group of nine (0.4 per cent) having achieved both. As in the previous survey, respondents with QTS were much more likely to have gained EYPS via the Short Pathway (53 per cent) or Validation Pathway (26 per cent) than the other pathways (see definitions of EYPS Pathways on page 11)

## 2.3 Professional experience

EYPs were drawn from all career stages, although the distribution was slightly biased towards those early in their careers in the early years sector, peaking in the more established career stage of 8-15 years (see Figure 1).

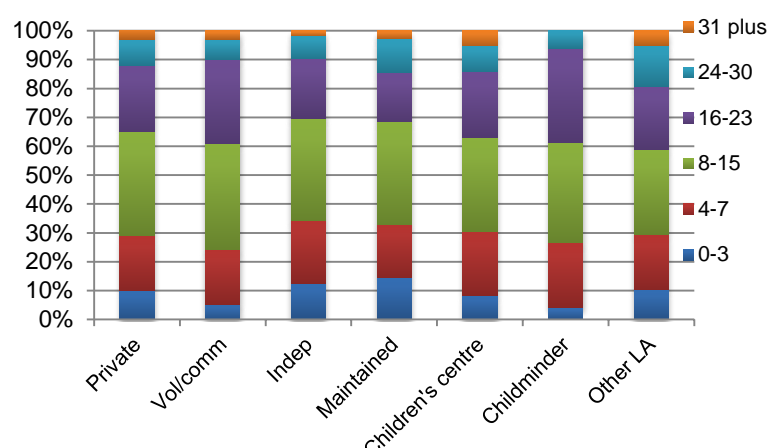
Figure 1 *Years of experience working in early years* (responses = 2,041)



EYPs' experience profile closely resembled the first survey, with a small decrease (two per cent) in EYPs in the 0-3 career stage being mirrored by a two per cent increase in EYPs with 24-30 years' experience.

Further analysis indicated a relatively similar distribution of EYPs across different setting types compared with the first survey. The career profile of respondents was relatively consistent across settings. Childminders tended to be slightly more experienced, while EYPs in independent or maintained settings were in the earlier career stages (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 *Career stage against type of setting* (responses = 1,189)



## 2.4 Pathways to EYPS

In the first survey, practitioners who had gained EYPS had done so through one of four pathways. Since then, one further pathway (Pathway 5 Early Childhood Studies) has been introduced, and the New Leaders programme, which includes EYPS as one of its main components, is currently being piloted. No New Leader students had achieved EYPS by the time the survey had closed. The pathways are all briefly outlined below. It should be noted that the EYPS pathways have been revised (CWDC, 2012). They broadly align with those outlined below but some changes have been made.

### ***Pathway 1 Validation (four months part time)***

This pathway is undertaken by candidates who meet all the entry requirements, have experience within early years, and are able to demonstrate that they meet the EYP Standards. The focus of this pathway is 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 developed for candidates that meet the entry requirements and are able to demonstrate all the standards. They will have experience within early years but may lack specific experience with babies, toddlers, or young children, but not all three age groups. It was also designed for candidates who need to gain additional knowledge. Following an assessment of skills and experience, a programme was 'personalised' to enable candidates to improve 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 developed for candidates that either had a Level 5 qualification such as an Early Years Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree, or for those already with a degree who required longer placements or training to meet the knowledge and experience requirements for accreditation. Candidates with Level 5 qualifications are required to 'top up' to a full degree on this pathway prior to undergoing assessment.

### ***Pathway 4 Full Training (12 months full time)***

This pathway was designed for candidates with graduate-level qualifications and, typically, limited relevant experience with children from birth to five. Candidates on this pathway have

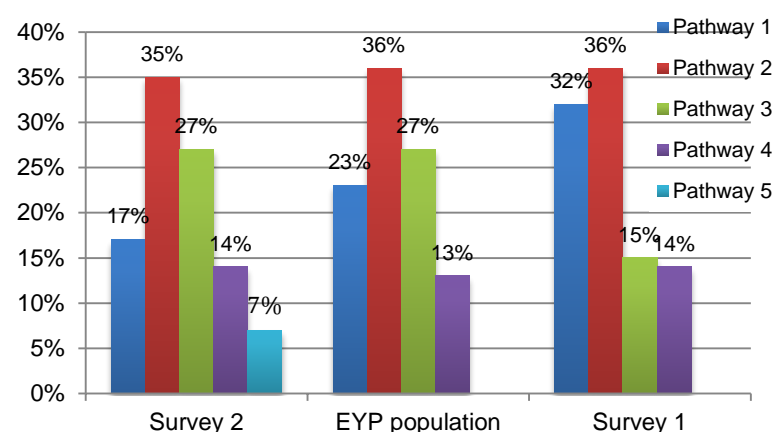
to have at least 18 weeks of placements in early years settings to gain experience in professional practice and leadership.

### ***Pathway 5 Early Childhood Studies Pathway (18 months)***

This pathway was introduced, following a brief pilot phase, in October 2009, with four EYPS training providers in order to provide a professional practice route through the second and third year of the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies. This enabled selected full time students to gain EYPS upon graduation or soon afterwards through extended professional development opportunities incorporated into their course.

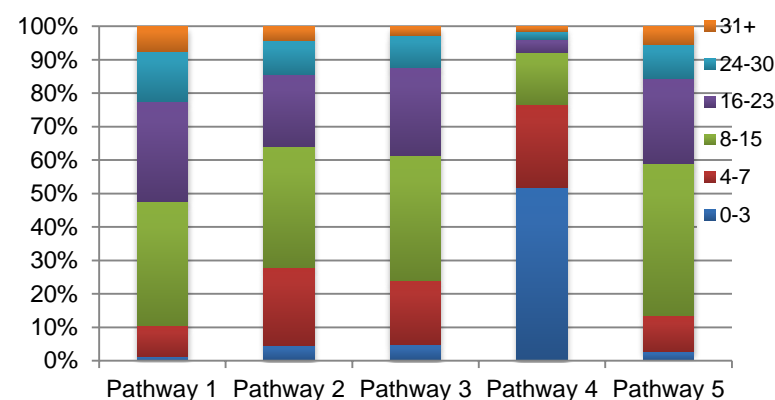
Overall, the breakdown of respondents for three of the four most established pathways mirrored the total current population of EYPs, the exception being Pathway 1 (Validation) which was under-represented by six per cent (see Figure 3). Figure 3 also reveals the declining proportion of Pathway 1 EYPs, as more Pathway 3 (Long EPD) and Pathway 5 (Early Childhood Studies) EYPs have come through into the workforce, although it was not possible to compare the relatively new Pathway 5 EYPs against national data.

Figure 3 *Comparison of sample and population by pathway*



The data continued to reflect the different levels of prior experience of working with children required to access certain pathways. Thus, 52 per cent of Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs were in the novice career stage (0-3 years) and a further 25 per cent had between four and seven years' experience. In contrast, 22 per cent of Pathway 1 (Validation) EYPs were in the later stages of their career (24 years or more). Pathway 5 EYPs were slightly more experienced than Pathway 2 and 3 EYPs, with 15 per cent having more than 24 years' experience and only 13 per cent having less than eight years' experience (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 *Pathway and experience (responses = 2,028)*

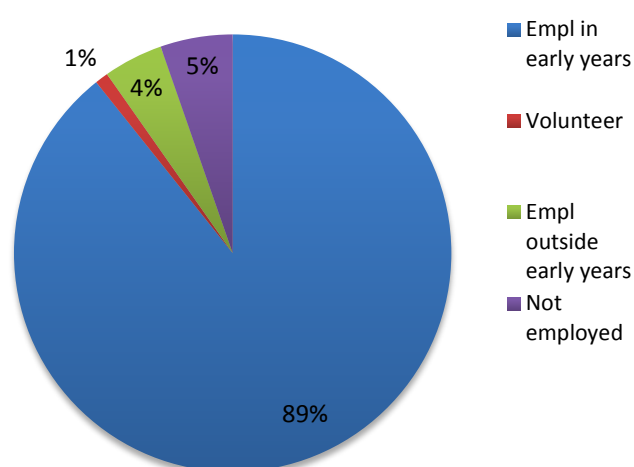


Analysis of the distribution of respondents by setting type revealed few significant differences, other than high proportions of childminders having taken Pathway 3 Long EPD (45 per cent) and of children's centre staff having undertaken Pathway 1 Validation (27 per cent).

## 2.5 Distribution of Early Years Professionals in the children's workforce

As Figure 5 indicates, 89 per cent of EYPs (1,823) stated that they were employed or self-employed in the early years sector. Eight per cent of this group were advisers or consultants in early years. Five per cent were not employed, four per cent were exclusively employed outside of the early years sector, and 20 respondents (one per cent) exclusively volunteered in the sector<sup>3</sup>. In addition, 84 respondents (four per cent) indicated that they did not currently work directly in, or with, early years settings.

Figure 5 *What is your current employment status* (responses = 2,042)



The regional distribution of EYPs who completed the survey was analysed using the setting postcode data submitted by 70 per cent of EYPs. This indicated that the sample was broadly representative compared to the national data held by CWDC (CWDC, 2011). In the sample, the largest numbers of EYPs were in the South East, followed by the South West, London and the North West, which are also the largest regional groups of EYPs nationally. The smallest number of EYPs remained in the North East. Six respondent EYPs were based overseas and one in Wales.

EYPs worked in a range of settings, the majority being private or voluntary/community (see Figure 6). Fifteen per cent worked for LAs, split between children's centres and other roles, and three per cent were childminders. Compared to the national data on EYPs (CWDC, 2011), the survey appeared slightly to over-represent EYPs in private voluntary and independent (PVI) settings and under-represent those working in children's centres.

<sup>3</sup> An additional 25 respondents indicated that they volunteered in the early years sector in addition to their employment.

Figure 6 *Main setting of respondents* (responses = 1,553)

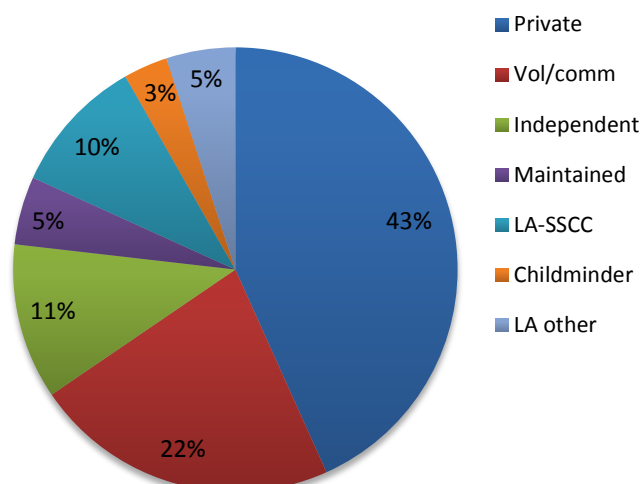
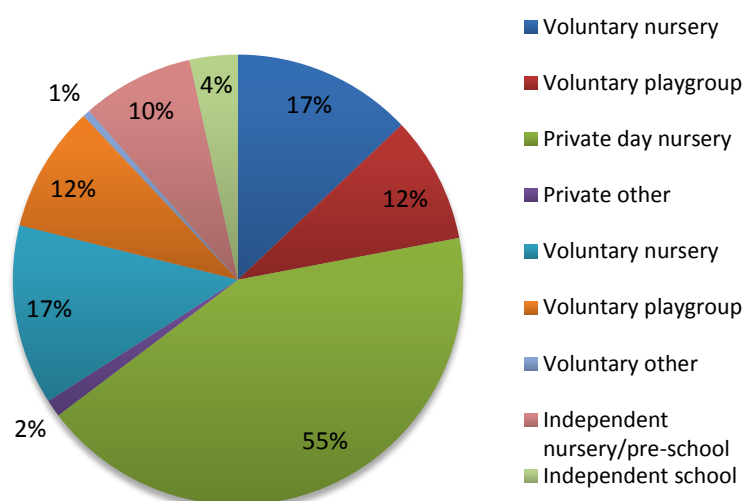


Figure 7 disaggregates respondents in PVI settings, revealing that just over half of these EYPs work in private day nurseries.

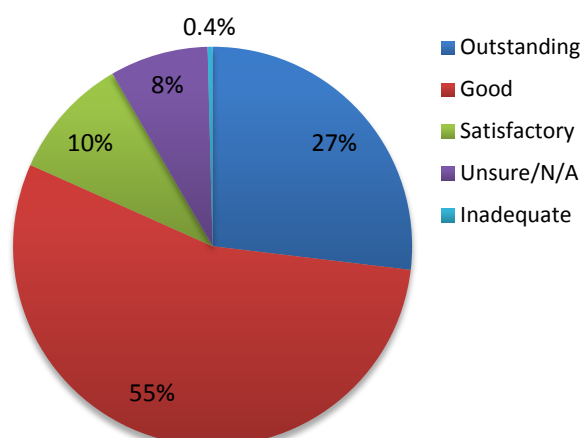
Figure 7 *Breakdown of practitioners in PVI settings* (responses = 1,193)



The majority of respondents, 76 per cent, worked in one setting, ten per cent worked in two settings, eight per cent worked in between three and ten settings, and six per cent worked in more than ten settings. EYPs working in 3-5 settings tended to work in children's centres or other kinds of LA settings (20 per cent of EYPs in both these categories) which mirrors responses from the first national survey.

The distribution of practitioners with EYPS across settings by Ofsted rating is indicated in Figure 8.

Figure 8 *Distribution of practitioners with EYPS by main setting's Ofsted rating* (responses = 1,526)



The 82 per cent of EYPs in good or outstanding settings represented a four per cent increase compared with the first national survey and compares with 74 per cent of settings with a good or outstanding rating in the sector as a whole (Ofsted, 2011). An analysis of these ratings by type of setting is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9 *Distribution of practitioners with EYPS by Ofsted grade and type of setting* (responses = 1,526)

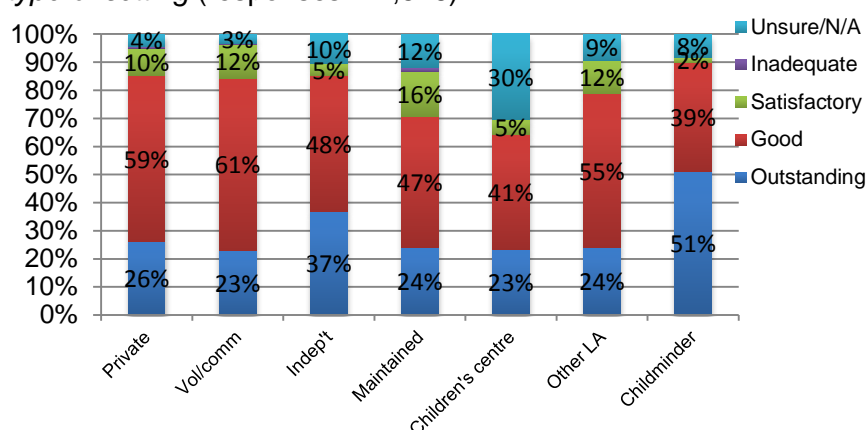


Figure 9 reveals that 'outstanding' settings were most common among childminders and EYPs working in independent settings. Analysis by pathway revealed a fairly consistent picture, with Pathway 1 (Validation) and 2 (Short EPD) EYPs a little more likely to work in outstanding settings (28 per cent) and Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs a little less likely to do so (24 per cent). Similarly, just over twice as many Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs worked in satisfactory settings (15 per cent) as Pathway 1 (Validation) EYPs (seven per cent), which perhaps reflects the higher experience levels of the latter group.

## 2.6 Job roles of Early Years Professionals

EYPs were asked to identify their job role, using categories derived from the open responses to the first survey. These roles were categorised into those predominantly in early years settings and those based in schools. Figures 10-12 indicate the range of responses.



Figure 10 *Breakdown of EYPs' roles in early years settings*  
(responses = 1,534)

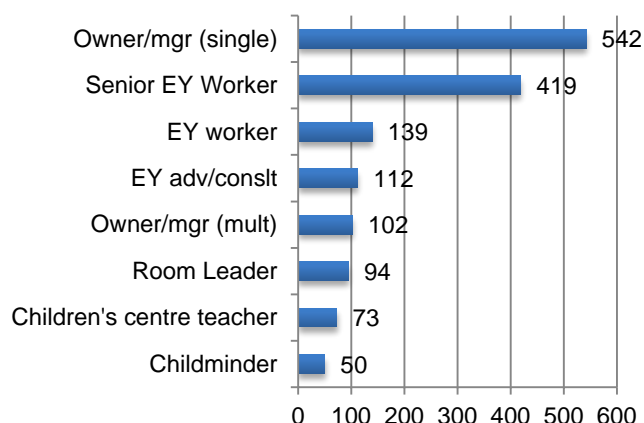


Figure 11 *Breakdown of EYPs' roles in school settings*  
(responses = 146)

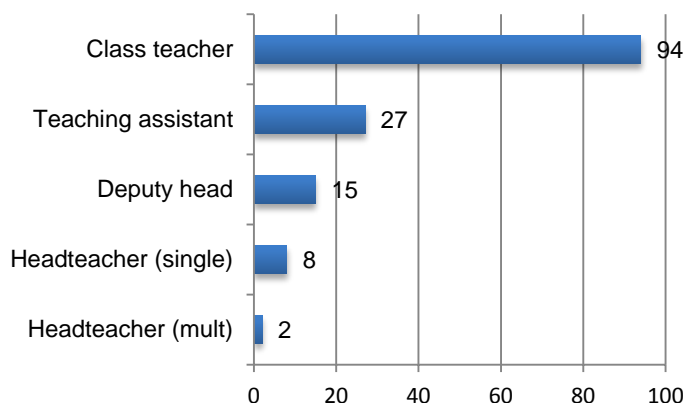
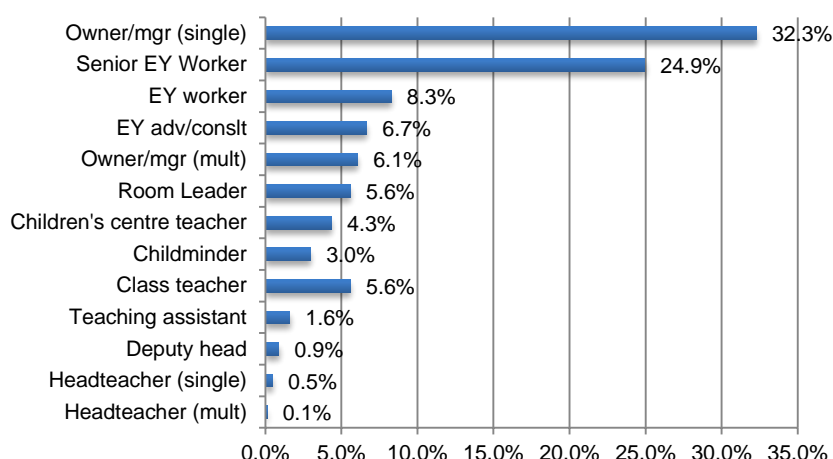


Figure 12 *EYPs' roles expressed as percentages* (responses = 1,680)

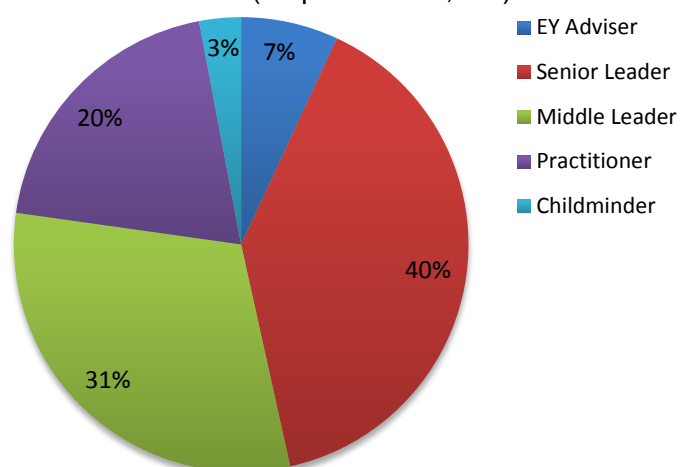


In order to support later analyses, these roles were aggregated<sup>4</sup> to reflect individuals' positions in settings' leadership structures. Figure 13, shows the overall percentage of EYPs

<sup>4</sup> Owner/managers and headteachers were classified as 'senior leaders'; children's centre teachers, senior EY workers and deputy headteachers were classified as 'middle leaders'; and the remaining

in each category, which separated EYPs in senior and middle leadership roles more clearly than in the first survey report.

Figure 13 *Collated roles* (responses = 1,680)



In private and voluntary and community settings the majority of practitioners with EYPS were senior leaders; in children's centres EYPs were more likely to be middle leaders; whereas in other LA settings they tended to be practitioners with limited leadership roles (see Table 2). These leadership categories were also broken down by setting type to provide an overview of EYPs' distribution across leadership structures in different sectors.

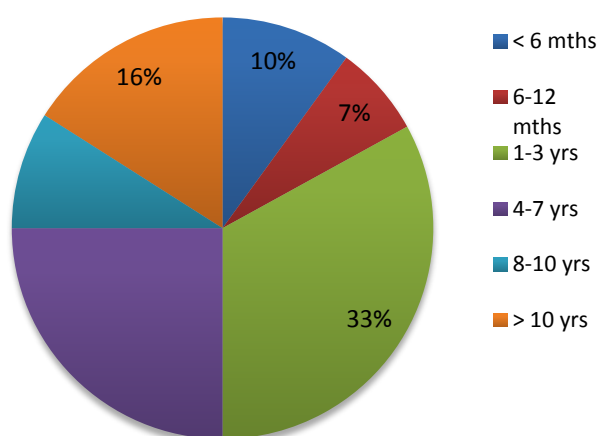
Table 2 *Role of practitioners by setting type (and percentage of setting type)*

	Early years advisor/consultant		Senior leader		Middle leader		Practitioner	
	Freq	Per cent	Freq	Per cent	Freq	Per cent	Freq	Per cent
Private	7	1	369	56	184	28	104	16
Voluntary/community	4	1	180	52	117	34	42	12
Independent	1	1	49	28	61	35	61	35
Maintained	1	1	8	12	33	39	33	48
Children's centre	6	4	22	14	37	58	37	24
Other LA	4	6	7	11	42	19	42	65
Total	23	2	635	42	491	32	319	21

Finally, half of the respondents had been in their current role for only three years or less and 16 per cent for more than ten years, the latter was an increase of five per cent from the first survey (see Figure 14).

EYPs were classified as 'practitioners'. Advisers and childminders were retained as separate categories.

Figure 14 *Time in current role* (responses = 1,672)



## 2.7 Summary of key findings: Early Years Professional characteristics and distribution

- Just under a quarter (23 per cent) of EYPs have a postgraduate qualification, a pattern which was fairly consistent across different types of settings.
- Nearly two-thirds of EYPs (64 per cent) stated that their degree was directly relevant to working in early years, while for 13 per cent it had some elements that were relevant. The remaining 23 per cent felt their degrees had no content specifically relevant to early years.
- The most common professional qualification was Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), held by 23 per cent of respondents. Only one per cent of EYPs held the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL).
- Practitioners with EYPS were drawn from across all career stages. The distribution was slightly biased towards those at the beginning of their careers in the early years sector (i.e. with 0-3 years of experience) and peaked in the established career stage (8-15 years' experience).
- The survey revealed that 89 per cent of EYPs (1,823) were employed or self-employed in the early years sector. Eight per cent of these EYPs were employed as an adviser or consultant in early years. Five per cent were exclusively employed outside the early years sector, four per cent were not employed, and 20 respondents (one per cent) exclusively volunteered in the sector.
- A high proportion of EYPs working in settings rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted were childminders or based in independent settings.
- EYPs were most likely to be senior leaders in private and voluntary/community settings. They were more likely to be middle leaders in children's centres and tended to be practitioners with limited leadership roles in other local authority settings.

### 3. The impact of gaining Early Years Professional Status on practitioners

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

- individuals' professional knowledge, skills, and confidence
- their ability to work with others
- leadership of improvements

In each of these areas, differences between practitioners' responses were analysed against their experience of working in early years settings, the types of setting they managed or worked in, their leadership position and the EYP pathways they had followed.

#### 3.1 How has gaining EYPS helped practitioners personally?

Practitioners were asked to rate the impact of gaining EYPS across a number of skills, dispositions and understandings drawn from the EYPS standards, which are explored in more detail in the case study element of this research. These included developing their:

- confidence as practitioners
- professional knowledge and skills
- ability to support children with their learning and development
- use of observations to assess and understand children's learning
- use of observations to assess and understand children's social development.

The overall responses were extremely positive across all five areas. The pattern of responses was broadly in line with the findings of the first national survey in that the impact on EYPs' own knowledge and skills (92 per cent) was rated the highest, followed by a gradual decrease in impact in terms of the use of observation, as Figure 15 indicates.

Figure 15 *What impact has gaining EYPs had on you personally?*

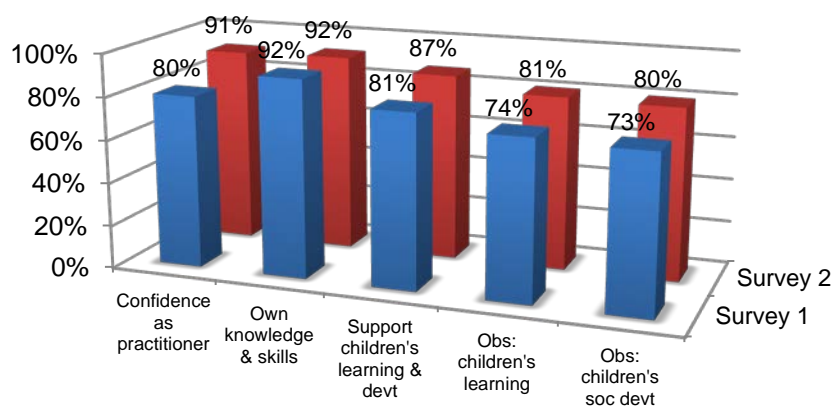


Figure 15 also indicates that there was an increase in positive responses across four of the five areas. An analysis of the cohort that had also undertaken the first national survey did not reveal any significant differences between this group and the new survey respondents in these areas. Thus, the overall increases cannot be attributed to those gaining EYPS earlier recognising more impacts over time, or those who achieved EYPS more recently being more

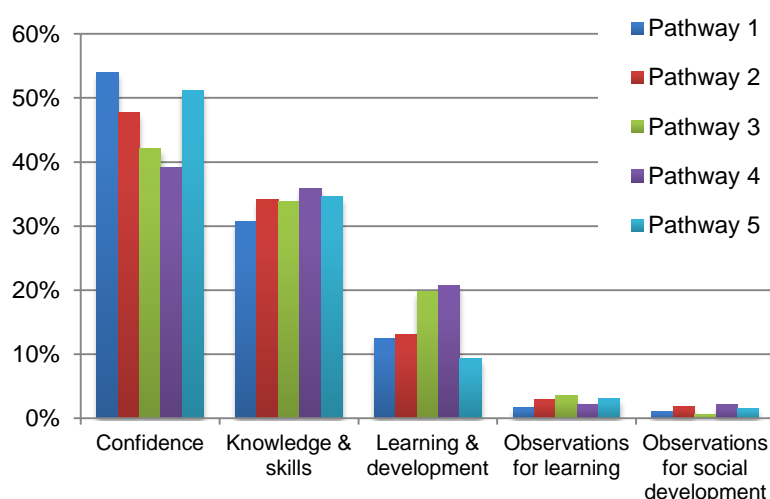
enthusiastic about its effects. Further research will be required in order to ascertain whether a significant overall trend is developing.

Of the four areas that had increased response rates, the largest shift was in the percentage of practitioners who felt that gaining EYPS had improved their professional confidence, which increased from 80 per cent to 91 per cent from survey one to survey two. Those from Pathways 3 (Long EPD), 4 (Full) and 5 (ECS) were slightly more likely to acknowledge EYPS had improved their confidence. A significantly higher percentage in the second survey claimed it had enhanced their ability to use observation to improve children's learning (from 74 per cent to 81 per cent) and social development (73 per cent to 80 per cent). This reflected the fact that many more EYPs from Pathways 3 (Long EPD) and 4 (Full) acknowledged these impacts, with an average of 90 per cent, compared to Pathways 1 (Validation) and 2 (Short EPD), which had an average of 71 per cent. It appears logical that the longer pathways would be reported to have a more significant effect on practitioners. Differences may be partly explained by variations in the levels of experience of EYPs but do suggest there might be a 'pathway effect' with regard to the use of observation. Although it demonstrated a smaller percentage increase than the other items, over 20 per cent more EYPs from Pathways 3 (88 per cent) and 4 (93 per cent) identified an impact of EYPS on their ability to support children with their learning and development than EYPs who had taken Pathway 1 (65 per cent).

An analysis of these responses by the relevance of EYPs' degrees revealed, perhaps unsurprisingly, that those with degrees with content that was not relevant to working in the early years were the most positive about the impact of EYPS. In fact they returned higher responses across all the areas included in Figure 15 compared to those who rated their degrees as relevant or at least partially relevant. The responses from EYPs who rated their degrees as either relevant or partially relevant were very similar to each other.

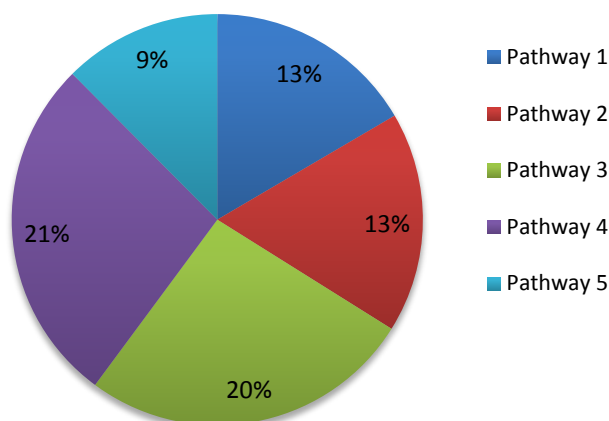
The responses to being asked to identify the biggest single impact of gaining EYPS revealed a clear overall pattern with some significant variations between pathways (Figure 16).

Figure 16 *Biggest impact on EYPs personally by pathway* (responses 1797-1807)



The main difference in terms of pathways was that EYPs who had undertaken Pathways 3 (Long EPD) and 4 (Full) were more likely to rate improving their ability to support children with their learning and development as the biggest impact on them, compared to those who had undertaken Pathways 1 (Validation) and 2 (Short EPD).

Figure 17 *Biggest impact: EYPs' ability to support children with their learning and development by pathway* (responses = 274)



Respondents' open responses in relation to why these impacts had the biggest effect upon them were analysed thematically to illustrate and begin to explain the overall pattern and variations between pathways. The responses indicated that increases in confidence were linked not only to new technical skills and professional understandings:

*'It has given me a greater understanding of how children learn, their needs and how to provide an environment which stimulates them and meets their needs'* (Senior early years worker, private setting)

But also linked to developing professional judgement in new roles:

*'The children's centre teacher role was new to me two years ago. Gaining the EYP has helped me to value my own judgement'* (Children's centre teacher).

In some cases, confidence was also associated with a broader sense of agency and even risk-taking:

*'Gaining a professional qualification has given me confidence to lead my staff team, evaluate children's development and work in partnership with parents and reception teachers, Ofsted inspectors and LEA advisors. I have had confidence to lead in-house staff training and am confident in my depth of knowledge to lead discussion between professionals and provide quality experiences for the children. For example, leading the staff team to look at the setting's environment and make sure we were providing a communication-friendly environment and leading the team to develop the playgarden to allow children to take risks in their play.'* (Manager, voluntary setting)

The impact of the use of observation appeared to have had a number of origins. For some practitioners, it was a new technique:

*'As a secondary school teacher I did not have too much time for observation but I found that I learnt a lot more through observing children as it helps me in supporting their learning and development more effectively'* (Early years worker, independent setting).

For others, seeing how observations were used in a range of settings improved their practice:

*'Through the full pathway for EYPS I had the opportunity to experience practice at a variety of settings. Having first-hand experience and being reflective on how each*

*setting worked and developed their observations I feel I have been able to develop my own work to a higher standard'. (Senior early years worker, children's centre)*

One EYP identified a link between observation and reflection that had had a profound impact on her practice:

*'For me, I would say that observation has enhanced my reflection, which applied to knowledge of child development and what I've observed helps me to support children's learning more effectively'. (Early years worker, independent setting)*

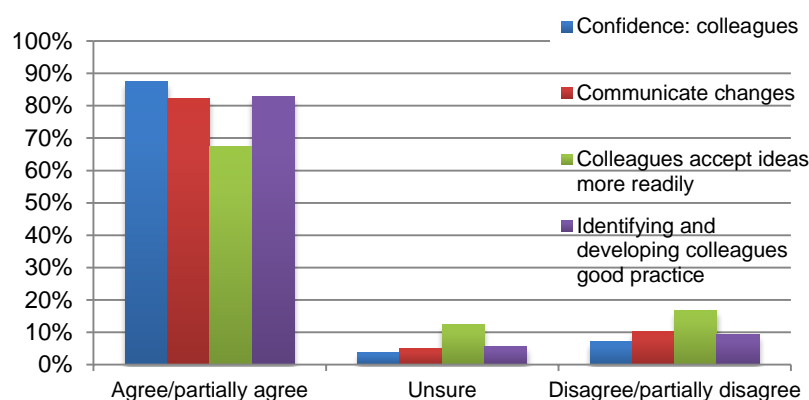
### 3.2 How has gaining EYPS affected Early Years Professionals' work with colleagues?

This section focuses on practitioners' perceptions of the impact of EYPS on their ability to work with colleagues to improve practice. Practitioners were asked to rate the impact of gaining EYPS on:

- their confidence in developing colleagues' knowledge and skills
- their ability to communicate changes to colleagues
- colleagues willingness to accept their ideas
- their ability to identify and develop colleagues' good practice

As Figure 18 demonstrates, responses appear to indicate that gaining EYPS had substantively improved individuals' ability to work with their colleagues.

Figure 18 *How has gaining EYPS affected your work with colleagues?* (responses 1,781-1,797)



The most positive response was practitioners' increased confidence in developing their colleagues' knowledge and skills. This finding is reflected in EYPs' high levels of engagement in leading professional development revealed in both surveys. Overall, there was an increase in the number of practitioners who felt gaining EYPS had increased staff's readiness to accept their ideas from 49 per cent in the first survey to 67 per cent in this survey. This appeared to be related in part to a growing recognition of their professional status among colleagues (see analysis of responses relating to professional on page 23). While there was little variation relating to the pathway EYPs had taken, analysis of the most positive and negative responses by career stage revealed some interesting differences. For the most positively rated item, confidence in developing colleagues' knowledge and skills, agreement peaked in the early career stages (where it was chosen by 91 per cent of EYPs with 4-7 years' experience), before tailing off among their more experienced counterparts. An almost identical pattern was found in relation to the least positively rated item, colleagues' readily accepting their ideas, with which 74 per cent of EYPs with 4-7 years' experience

agreed as opposed to only 60 per cent of EYPs with over 24 years' experience. Analysis in relation to the relevance of their degrees revealed that 88 per cent of EYPs with both relevant and non-related degrees felt they were more confident in developing knowledge and skills, compared with 85 per cent of EYPs with partly relevant degrees.

The responses to which of these areas had the single biggest impact are collated in Table 3.

Table 3 *In which of these areas did gaining EYPS have the biggest impact on your work with colleagues?*

Statement	Frequency	Per cent
Gaining EYPS has given me greater confidence in developing colleagues' knowledge and skills	655	39
Since gaining EYPS I am more able to communicate necessary changes to my colleagues	461	27
Since gaining EYPS colleagues accept my ideas more readily	339	20
Since gaining EYPS I have become better at identifying and developing colleagues' good practice	236	14
Total	1,691	

When these responses were analysed by type of setting, no significant differences in the responses were found. However, the open comments offered more detail about why respondents felt more confident about developing their colleagues' knowledge and skills. For some this was primarily due to feeling that their professional knowledge base was now more grounded in research and theory:

*'I felt I could impart the knowledge that I had because I could back it up through theory and research'.* (Senior early years worker 1, voluntary setting).

Some felt that they were better able both to identify good practice and constructively challenge poor practice:

*'I now feel able to challenge colleagues and improve their performance in a constructive and effective way, I feel I have a solid base on which to establish good leadership plus the skills to develop individuals, i.e. embed change at a caring and sensible pace that improves the performance of others whilst improving outcomes for children'.* (Owner/manager, private setting)

Others stated that they had developed their ability to draw on existing good practice and engage colleagues more effectively in improvements:

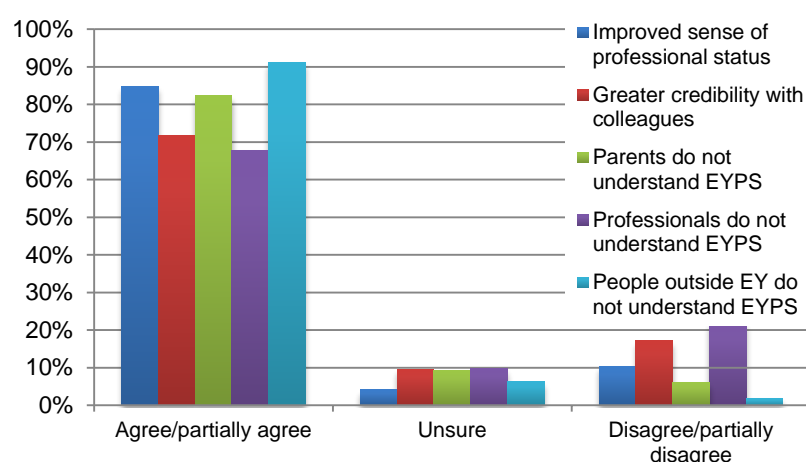
*'It has meant that, while working to improve practice in the setting, I am able to use my colleagues' existing skills and develop them in a way that empowers them and maintains a good working relationship'.* (Senior early years worker 2, voluntary setting)

### 3.3 Impact on professional status

Perhaps one of the starkest findings from the initial survey was the discrepancy between EYPs' view that gaining EYPS had improved their own sense of professional status (76 per cent), the fairly widespread view (77 per cent) that other professionals were unsure of what EYPS meant and the even more widespread view (86 per cent) that those outside of their setting had little understanding of EYPS. In the second survey the same questions around professional status and recognition were asked again, supplemented by questions around colleagues' and parents' awareness of EYPS (see Figure 19).



Figure 19 *Your professional status* (responses = 1,718)



Responses were broadly similar to the first survey. Again, an overwhelming majority of practitioners (85 per cent) felt gaining EYPS had improved their professional status. In the second survey, this was linked to the majority's view (72 per cent) that it had increased their credibility with colleagues. Equally persistent though was the belief amongst practitioners that parents (82 per cent), other professionals (68 per cent) and people outside the early years sector (91 per cent) did not understand what EYPS meant.

EYPS' credibility with colleagues varied according to the type of setting in which they worked. For example, 80 per cent working in voluntary and community settings felt that their credibility had increased, while only 59 per cent of EYPS in local authority settings agreed.

In summary, these responses, viewed alongside others such as the increase in the number of practitioners who felt that colleagues accepted their ideas more readily after gaining EYPS, indicated a growing recognition of EYPS in settings by those who work regularly with these practitioners. Unfortunately there has been no similar increase in the broader professional and social recognition of EYPS.

### 3.4 Impact on Early Years Professionals' ability to make improvements in their workplace

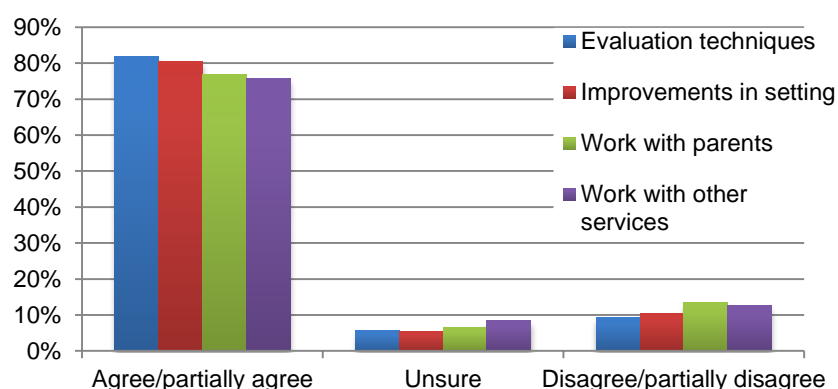
This section focuses on practitioners' perceptions of the impact of EYPS on their ability to make improvements in their settings and the barriers they face. This will be explored in more detail in the in-depth case studies.

The impact of EYPS was explored in relation to different stages of the change process and with different groups. They were asked about:

- use of evaluation techniques
- ability to carry out improvements
- working with parents/carers
- working with other services and agencies

As Figure 20 indicates, responses were very positive overall. Analysis of these responses by setting type revealed no significant differences.

Figure 20 *How has gaining EYPS affected your ability to make improvements to your setting?* (responses = 1,348-1,459)



The question of which was the biggest single impact of gaining EYPS on their ability to make improvements in the workplace produced a more differentiated set of responses (Table 4).

Table 4 *In which of these areas did gaining EYPS have the biggest impact on your ability to make improvements to your setting(s)?*

Statement	Frequency	Per cent
Gaining EYPS has made me more able to carry out improvements in my setting(s)	602	37
Since gaining EYPS I am better at using evaluation techniques to improve my setting	503	31
Gaining EYPS has enabled me to work more effectively with other services and agencies	284	17
Gaining EYPS has enabled me to work more effectively with parents/carers	259	16
Total	1,648	

Analysing these responses by individuals' leadership position in their settings highlighted variations in impact. For example, senior leaders were more likely to claim that gaining EYPS had improved their use of evaluation techniques (36 per cent) than other groups. Middle leaders identified being able to carry out improvements in their setting most frequently (44 per cent), while practitioners with limited leadership roles were most likely to highlight its impact on their work with parents and carers (27 per cent).

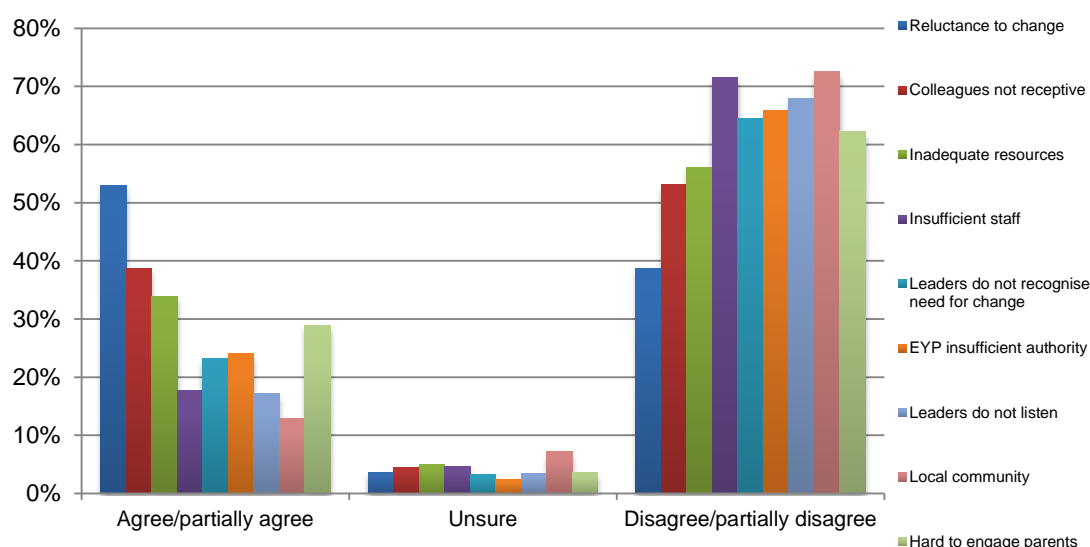
### 3.5 What are the biggest challenges faced by Early Years Professionals in making improvements in their workplaces?

A number of potential challenges and barriers to improvement were highlighted in the questionnaire, these included issues which been grouped according to whether they relate to the culture of settings, structural issues, leadership, or the local context in which EYPs work as follows:

Cultural	Colleagues' reluctant to change practice Colleagues unreceptive to new ideas
Structural	Lack of resources in the setting Lack of staff to try anything new.
Leadership	Leaders do not recognise need to change They lacked sufficient authority to bring about change Leaders within the setting did not listen to their advice about the need to improve.
Contextual	The nature of the local community made it difficult to make improvement Difficulties in engaging parents.

The overall responses were very similar to the first survey in that practitioners varied considerably in their assessments of the range of challenges that affected them in their settings.

Figure 21 *Barriers to improvement* (responses 1,769-1,781)



Overall, cultural issues around staff attitudes tended to be the most widely encountered challenge to improving practice. Staff reluctance to change their practice was the only challenge that the majority of practitioners (53 per cent) agreed was an issue. Of the structural challenges, lack of resources (34 per cent), was more frequently mentioned than staffing levels (18 per cent). In terms of leadership, all three aspects represented a challenge to a large minority of practitioners with a lack of authority being the most frequently mentioned (24 per cent). Engaging parents was the most commonly highlighted contextual factor, recognised by 29 per cent of practitioners. There were minor variations in how frequently practitioners saw these areas as challenges in their settings. EYPs in voluntary and settings (41 per cent of respondents in such settings) were most likely to see lack of resources as a major barrier to improvement. In contrast, engaging parents was highlighted far less frequently by childminders and EYPs based in independent settings.

Where EYPs stood in the overall leadership structure of their settings mainly affected the extent to which they saw leadership issues as major challenges. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those who were lower in the leadership structures tended to identify problems with leaders not listening to their advice or recognising that changes were necessary more frequently, along with lacking the authority to effect change.

Asked to identify the single biggest challenge that they faced, a more complex picture emerged. Although colleagues' reluctance to change was still the single most widely mentioned issue, challenges from all the categories dominated their concerns (Table 5).

Table 5 *Which of these barriers has been the most difficult to overcome?*

Statement	Frequency	Per cent	Barrier type
Individuals reluctant to change	379	25	Cultural
It is hard to engage parents in my setting(s)	278	19	Contextual
My setting(s) does not have adequate resources to implement changes	226	15	Structural
Colleagues not receptive to new ideas	167	11	Cultural
Insufficient authority to bring about improvements	166	11	Leadership
Leaders do not recognise changes necessary	100	7	Leadership
Nature of my local community makes it difficult to make improvements	67	5	Contextual
Not enough staff to try anything new	55	4	Structural
Leaders do not listen to my advice	62	4	Leadership
Total	1,500		

Practitioners' responses varied considerably depending upon the type of setting in which they worked in and their leadership position. The cultural issue of individuals' reluctance to change was the most difficult challenge for 31 per cent of EYPs in private settings, but only an issue for 20 per cent of staff in local authority settings. There were more distinct patterns where structural and leadership challenges were considered. In voluntary and community settings a lack of resources was the major challenge faced by 20 per cent of EYPs, while it was mentioned by only ten per cent of practitioners in the maintained sector and 11 per cent in local authority settings. The situation was reversed in relation to leadership issues. Lacking the authority to bring about change was the most difficult challenge to overcome for 22 per cent of EYPs in maintained and local authority settings, while it was only regarded as such by eight per cent of practitioners in private settings and six per cent of staff in voluntary and community settings. These differences can in part be explained by variations in EYPs' leadership positions across different setting types.

Again, some responses demonstrated clear variations in perspective depending on the positions EYPs held in leadership structures. Over a quarter of senior leaders (27 per cent) rated the challenge of parental engagement as the most significant barrier they faced. Practitioners with no major leadership responsibilities rated it far lower than the average, at only nine per cent.

In summary, EYPs recognised a complex mix of challenges in their settings as they set out to bring about improvements. This mix includes cultural, structural, contextual and leadership issues. The most difficult challenges practitioners faced were to a large degree affected by the type of setting in which they worked and to a lesser extent their leadership role in that setting.

### **3.6 Direct practice with children**

Part of the aspiration behind the development of EYPS was to generate a cohort of well-qualified and highly experienced practitioners who would use high quality interactions with children to improve children's learning and social development, in addition to leading professional development and improvements in settings.

#### **Extent and amount of time spent in direct practice**

In order to make an assessment of the amount of time EYPs spent with young children, EYPs were asked to provide an overview of how much time they spent on a range of activities in a typical week. Eighty-eight per cent of EYPs employed in the early years sector at the time of the survey stated that they spent time working directly with children as part of their role.

In terms of time spent on each of the different activities identified, thirty-eight per cent of EYPs who responded to the question stated that they spent more than four days a week working with children.

The more detailed findings reveal that sixty-five per cent of EYPs identified as primarily early years practitioners and 63 per cent of EYPs working as childminders spent more than four days a week working directly with children. In comparison only five per cent of early years advisers/consultants and 25 per cent of senior leaders spent more than four days in direct practice.

EYPs were also asked to provide more detail on the age ranges of the children they spent time with as part of their role. Initially, EYPs were asked about the age ranges of the children in their setting. This revealed that 95 per cent of EYPs worked in settings which had children aged between 3 and 5 (14 per cent of these settings exclusively contained 3-5 year olds); 80 per cent worked in settings with 2-3 year olds. Just over half (51 per cent) worked in settings with children under 2; and just over one-fifth (21 per cent) worked in settings or schools which had children aged over 5.

#### **Direct practice with different age groups**

Respondents who were additionally asked how much time they spent with each of the age groups identified in a typical week. Sixty-nine per cent of EYPs indicated that they worked with more than one age group:

- Fifty-six per cent of respondents worked more than one day a week with children aged under two,
- Seventy-five per cent of respondents worked more than one day a week with 2-3 year olds.
- Eighty per cent of respondents worked more than one day a week with 3-5 year olds.

There has been increased interest among policy-makers about whether gaining EYPS has encouraged experienced practitioners to spend more time working directly with younger groups of children. Responses suggest that EYPs' seniority and experience was linked to the age groups with which they worked. EYPs who defined themselves as primarily practitioners tended to spend more of their time with the younger age groups and senior leaders spent more time with the older age groups. Data suggests that time spent with children under two seemed to peak in the early career stage, as Figure 22 indicates. Twenty-nine per cent of EYPs with 4-7 years' experience stated that they spend more than four days a week working with children under two, compared with only eight per cent of EYPs with between 24 and 30 years' experience and no EYPs with 31 or more years' experience spent time working with children under two.

Figure 22 *Time spent with children **under two** in a typical week by years' experience* (responses = 600)

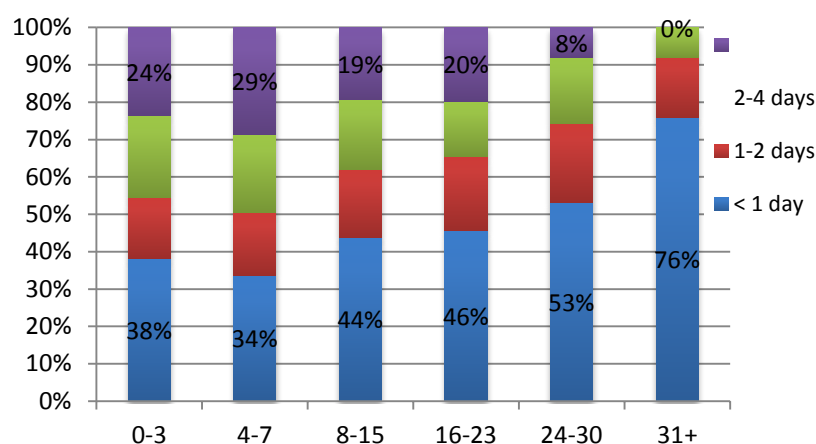
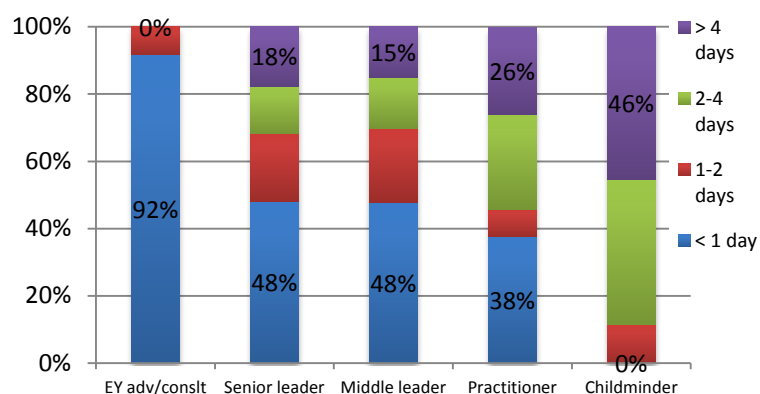


Figure 23 breaks the figures down on time spent with children under two by the EYPs' primary role. Unsurprisingly, childminders were most likely to spend large amounts of time with children under two, with 46 per cent spending four days or more with them. Twenty-six per cent of practitioners came into the same category. Senior leaders (18 per cent) were a little more likely than middle leaders (15 per cent) to spend four days or more with children under two. In contrast, around one-third of both senior and middle leaders stated that they spend four or more days a week with children aged 3-5 (see Figure 23).

Figure 23 *Time spent with children **aged under two** in a typical week by EYP's position* (responses = 599)



### **3.7 Summary of key findings: Impact of EYPS on practitioners**

- 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 understandings. For example, 91 per cent stated that it had increased their confidence as a practitioner and 92 per cent stated that it had helped them to develop their knowledge and skills.
- Comparing the second national survey with the first survey revealed an increase in positive responses across four of the five areas relating to the impact of EYPS on EYPs. The largest shift was in the percentage who felt that gaining EYPS had improved their professional confidence, which increased from 80 per cent in survey one to 91 per cent in the second survey.
- Gaining EYPS had substantively improved individuals' ability to work with their colleagues, with 87 per cent stating that EYPS had given them greater confidence in developing colleagues' knowledge and skills and 83 per cent stating that they had become better at identifying and developing colleagues' good practice.
- Overall, the number of practitioners who felt gaining EYPS had increased their colleagues' readiness to accept their ideas grew from 49 per cent in the first survey to 67 per cent in this survey.
- Eighty per cent of practitioners felt that gaining EYPS had improved their ability to carry out improvements in their settings.
- Overall, staff attitudes tended to be the most widely encountered challenge to improving practice. Colleagues' reluctance to change their practice was the only challenge that the majority of EYPs (53 per cent) agreed was an issue.
- EYPs recognised a complex mix of challenges in their settings as they set out to bring about improvement. This mix included cultural, structural, contextual and leadership issues. The most difficult challenges they faced were to a large degree affected by the type of setting they worked in and to a lesser extent their leadership role in that setting.
- Eighty-eight per cent of EYPs employed in the early years sector at the time of the survey stated that they worked directly with children (this excludes EYPs working as advisers or consultants).
- Fifty-six per cent of EYPs who worked with more than one age group typically worked more than one day a week with children aged under two. Seventy-five per cent worked more than one day a week with 2-3 year olds and 80 per cent worked more than one day a week with 3-5 year olds.

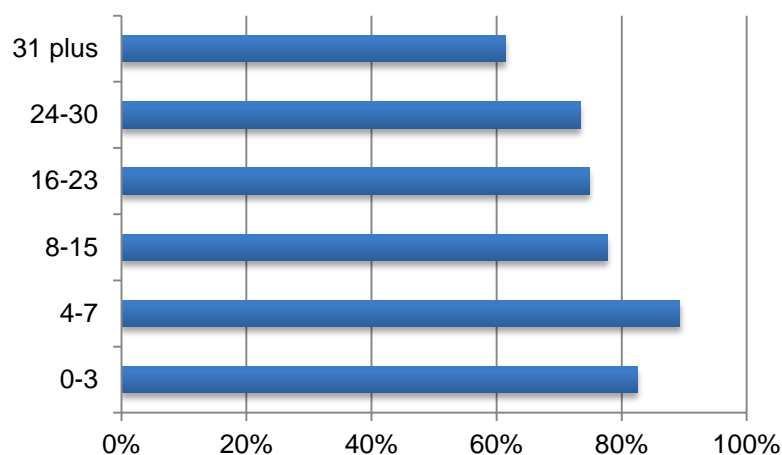
## 4. Impact on professional development

This section looks at the impact of gaining EYPS on EYPs' professional development and their engagement in leading and contributing to other practitioners' professional development.

### 4.1 Early Years Professionals' own professional development

Respondents were asked if, since gaining EYPS, they had taken greater interest in their own CPD. As Figure 24 indicates, there was an increase from 71 per cent of staff agreeing to this statement in the first national survey to over three-quarters (79 per cent) in the second survey. In part, this increase appeared to be explained by the enthusiasm of EYPs in the early career stages (with 0-7 years of experience) for professional development (see Figure 28). Although there appeared to be a trend of decreasing impact as EYPs' careers progressed, the impact of CPD still appeared to be widespread, with 72 per cent and 61 per cent of practitioners in later careers stages still responding positively.

Figure 24 *Since gaining EYPS I have taken greater interest in my personal/ professional development (agree and partially agree responses collated by EYPs' level of experience)* (responses = 1,716)

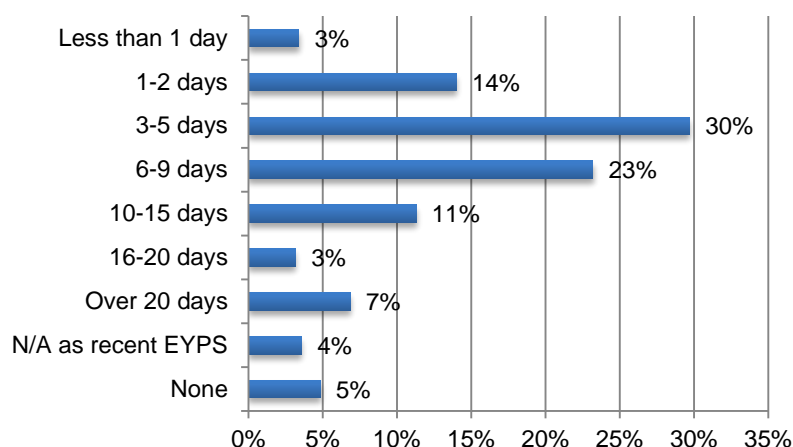


### 4.2 Engagement in formal and informal CPD in and outside of their setting

EYPs indicated almost universal involvement (96 per cent) in some type of formal professional development and/or training in the last year, *excluding* any time spent on EYPS. As Figure 25 indicates, the extent of their engagement varied considerably around the most common response of 3-5 days (30 per cent).



Figure 25 *How many days of formal professional development and training have you participated in during the last year (excluding time spent on EYPS)?* (responses = 1,737)



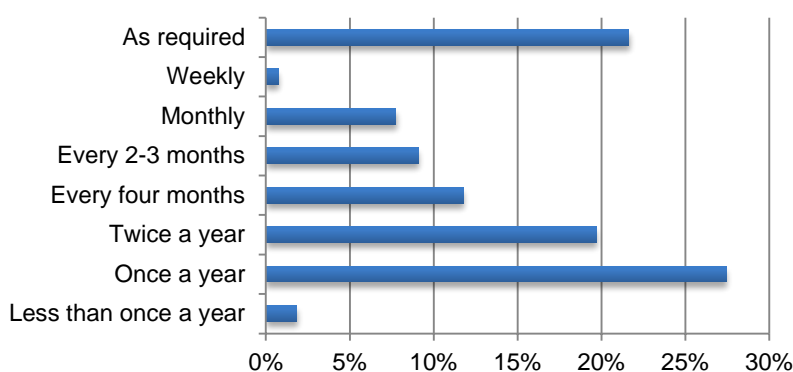
### 4.3 The monitoring and management of Early Years Professionals' CPD

The survey asked EYPs how well their professional development and training needs were being managed and met. These areas were seen as key in terms of maintaining and improving their longer-term effectiveness as leaders of early years practice.

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 they made the decision. Others in the setting made the decision for a small percentage of the remainder (eight per cent) most or all of the time. The CPD needs of a slightly greater proportion of staff in the early career stages, 0-3 years and 4-7 years, were determined in this way, and a corresponding high percentage of more experienced practitioners rarely or never had their CPD decided in this way. Three-quarters of EYPs had opportunities to discuss their needs with others in their setting formally, and just under a third of practitioners' professional development planning (30 per cent) involved someone from outside their setting. Two-thirds of respondents (67 per cent) had some form of personal development plan in place for their professional development and 65 per cent stated that it was acted on most or all of the time.

EYPs with personal development plans had them reviewed relatively regularly. Although once a year was the most common frequency, the majority had them reviewed more often.

Figure 26 *How regularly is your personal development plan reviewed?* (responses = 1,188)



In addition to these formal reviews, more frequently than not the CPD activities they engaged in were designed to help them identify areas for development. Sixty-five per cent

of EYPs stated that this occurred either always or most of the time. However, there were fewer opportunities for EYPs to receive feedback on their own practice. Twenty-eight per cent of EYPs stated this happened only sometimes and 11 per cent stated that it never happened at all.

However, most EYPs felt that they had access to the professional development they require, with over two-thirds (69 per cent) rating themselves as having such access always or most of the time. It also resulted in the majority of practitioners (68 per cent) stating that a good balance had been struck between their needs and those of their settings always or most of the time, with no significant differences apparent in levels of satisfaction at different career stages. It appears also that this degree of planning resulted in well-targeted professional development that focuses on EYPs' work in their settings. Well over three-quarters (84 per cent) of practitioners reported that they felt their CPD activities were always or mostly related directly to their work in settings, a figure that was relatively consistent across all career stages. However, a slightly higher proportion of practitioners in voluntary and community settings and children's centres (89 per cent) highlighted such links, compared to EYPs in other types of settings.

In summary, this level of planning, activity and monitoring resulted in over two-thirds of EYPs (67 per cent) feeling that most of the time there was a good balance between meeting their individual needs and those of their settings. It also left an equally high number (68 per cent) of practitioners feeling they had access to the professional development they required always or most of the time. There were no significant differences in these levels of satisfaction among EYPs at different career stages.

The final question this raises relates to EYPs' involvement in CPD and whether all this activity resulted in improvements to practice. In terms of CPD activities, 86 per cent of EYPs had been involved in learning conversations and 85 per cent in staff training. Predictably, childminders were less likely to be involved in staff training or learning conversations than other EYPs. Involvement in a peer support or EYP networks was more common for EYPs in voluntary and community (67 per cent) and private settings (65 per cent) and less common among EYPs in maintained settings (51 per cent). Low levels of involvement in formal courses were common across all setting types, but being coached or mentored was most frequently cited by children's centre EYPs (50 per cent) and least common among EYPs in voluntary and community settings (29 per cent) and childminders (33 per cent).

Involvement in CPD activities appeared to be related to EYPs' levels of experience. Thus, 67 per cent of EYPs with less than four years' experience had been involved in staff training events compared with 94 per cent of EYPs with over 24 years' experience. Similar differences were seen in relation to activities such as learning conversations with peers and visits to other settings. For example, while only 40 per cent of novice EYPs (0-3 years' experience) were involved in support networks, the figure was 72 per cent for EYPs in the later career stages (24 years and over). Although outcomes were less sharply differentiated when analysed by pathway, pathway 4 (Full) EYPs were consistently less frequently involved in all CPD activities than EYPs who had undertaken other pathways. Pathway 1 (Validation) EYPs were more likely to have been coached and mentored (47 per cent) and been involved in a network (73 per cent) than other EYPs.

EYPs were also asked to rate these different types of CPD against a range of impacts. As Figures 27 and 28 indicate, staff training events and learning conversations with peers emerged as the most frequently cited activities which resulted in changes to EYPs' practice, with over half of EYPs who responded (56 per cent) stating that staff training had encouraged them to lead on an area of improvement and over a third (41 per cent) saying the same for learning conversations. In contrast, half of EYPs had not undertaken formal external courses (53 per cent) or been coached or mentored (49 per cent).

Figure 27 *Impact of professional development activities on EYPs' practice (1)* (responses = 1,676)

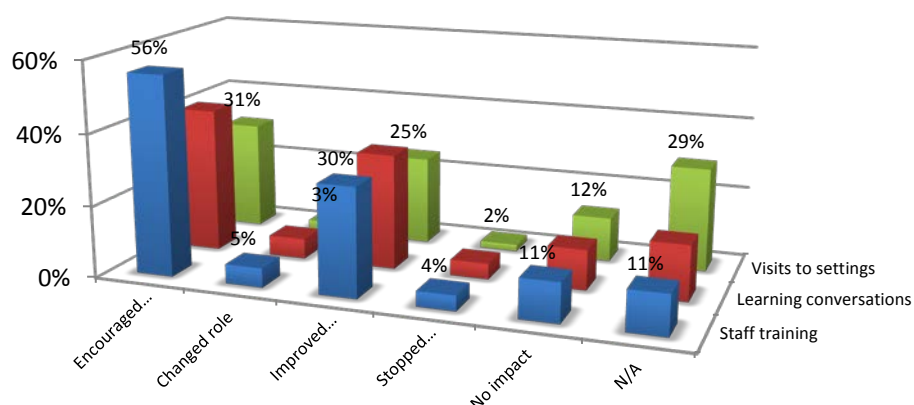
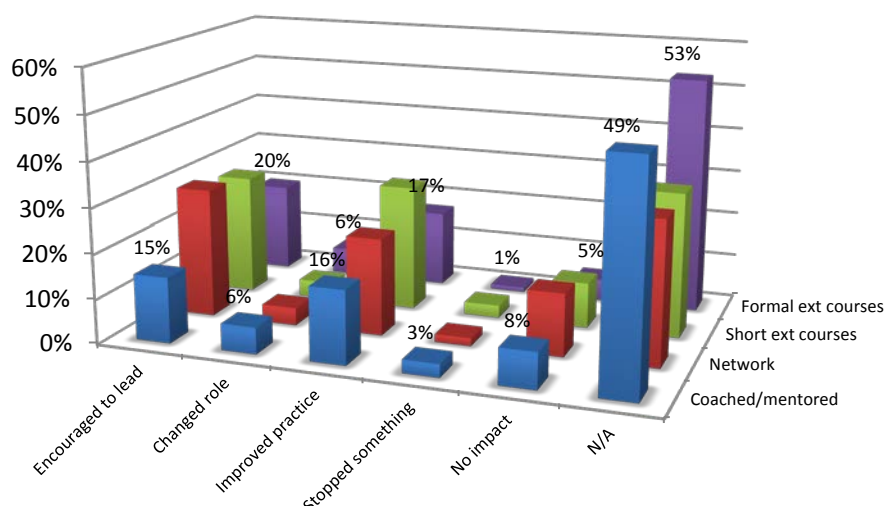


Figure 28 *Impact of professional development activities on EYPs' practice (2)* (responses = 1,676)



Staff training events were more likely to encourage experienced EYPs to lead on an area of improvement in their setting: 53 per cent of EYPs with over 24 years' experience made this link and 49 per cent of EYPs with between 8 and 23 years' experience agreed, compared with only 39 per cent of novice EYPs. Half of novice EYPs had no experience of support networks, compared with only 16 per cent of late career EYPs. Similarly, Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs were less likely to associate CPD activities with impact. Thus, 26 per cent of Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs had not been involved in staff training events or did not associate them with impact in their setting(s), compared to only 16 per cent of Pathway 1 (Validation) EYPs and 17 per cent of Pathway 2 (Short) EYPs.

In summary, most EYPs (68 per cent) felt a good balance had been struck between their needs and that of their settings and 84 per cent stated that they considered that CPD activities related directly to their work in settings. Over two-thirds of EYPs (69 per cent) stated that they had access to the professional development they required always or most of

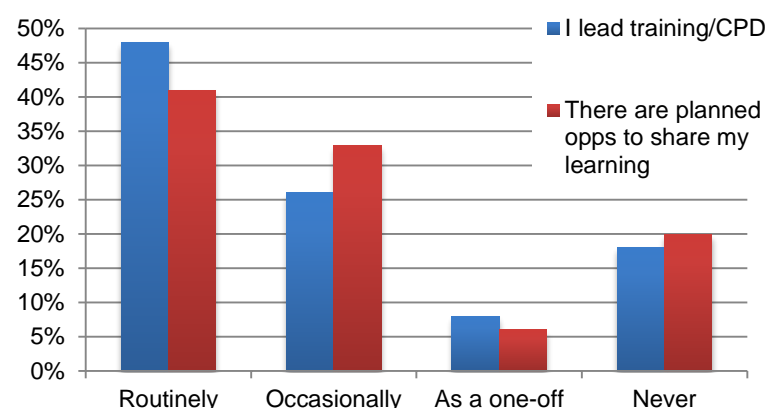
the time. Almost half of respondents (47 per cent) stated that training had encouraged them to lead on an area of improvement and just over a third (37 per cent) said the same for learning conversations.

#### 4.4 Leading the professional development of others

The overall picture that emerged from the first survey was that some EYPs were heavily involved in supporting others in their settings, acting as mentors and coaches and/or leading a number of CPD activities. Responses to this survey revealed the enduring impact of gaining EYPS on practitioners' confidence in developing their colleagues and workload analysis has demonstrated their widespread involvement in leading CPD.

In the second national survey, an attempt was also made to quantify the extent to which practitioners were involved in leading CPD both inside and outside of their settings. The outcomes are illustrated in Figure 29.

Figure 29 *EYPs' involvement in other's professional development in their setting(s)* (responses 1666 -1,670)



Overall, just under half of EYPs (48 per cent) routinely led CPD in their settings and, although more experienced EYPs tended to be more involved, there was widespread involvement across the career stages. We were also interested in whether EYPs were given opportunities to share their learning from professional development activities in their settings. Just under three-quarters of respondents (74 per cent) indicated that there were such opportunities in their settings, an increase of nine per cent from the first survey. There is some evidence therefore that EYPs support the development of professional learning communities across settings.

Opportunities to lead CPD outside of their settings were more restricted. Overall, almost one-fifth of EYPs (19 per cent) routinely led professional development activities, although this was concentrated among later career professionals, and over 50 per cent of practitioners had never had the opportunity to do so. Understandably, childminders were more involved in such activities than EYPs in other setting types: just over half (52 per cent) led CPD outside their settings, compared with just 22 per cent of EYPs in voluntary and community settings and a quarter of EYPs in maintained settings.

## **4.5 Summary of key findings: Impact on professional development**

- There was an increase from 71 per cent of staff in the first national survey believing gaining EYPS had led them to have a greater interest in their professional development to over three-quarters (79 per cent) in this survey. This appeared to be explained by high levels of enthusiasm for CPD among EYPs in the earlier career stages (less than eight years' experience).
- EYPs indicated almost universal involvement (96 per cent) in formal professional development and/or training in the last year.
- Most EYPs (68 per cent) felt a good balance had been struck between their needs and that of their settings.
- Well over three-quarters (84 per cent) of EYPs reported that they felt their CPD activities related directly to their work in settings.
- Over two-thirds of EYPs (69 per cent) felt that they had access to the professional development they required all or most of the time.
- Staff training events and learning conversations with peers were the most frequently cited activities that resulted in changes to EYPs' practice. Almost half of respondents (47 per cent) stated that training had encouraged them to lead on an area of improvement and just over a third (37 per cent) said the same for learning conversations.
- Overall, just under 50 per cent of EYPs routinely led CPD activities in their settings and, although more experienced EYPs were more likely to be more involved there was widespread involvement across the career stages.
- Overall, one-fifth of EYPs were involved in routinely leading professional development activities outside of their setting. This was concentrated amongst EYPs in the later stages of their career (having over 24 years' experience).

## 5. Impact on Early Years Professionals' future careers

This section looks at the impact of gaining EYPS on EYPs' career aspirations; what EYPs regarded as the major barriers to career progression; and their pay and work patterns.

In order to understand practitioners' perceptions of the impact of EYPS on EYPs' future careers, respondents were asked about their initial motivations for undertaking EYPS. Although they were asked to select their two main motivations, a number of EYPs selected more than two (see Table 6).

Table 6 *What were your main motivations for undertaking EYPS?*

Motivation	Frequency	Per cent
Improve knowledge and skills	755	37
Enhancing professional status	691	34
Enhancing career development opportunities	476	23
EYPS will be statutory requirement	388	19
To validate me as a practitioner	356	17
Improving the way I work with children	349	17
Improving chances for promotion	346	17
Confidence as practitioner	282	14
Funding/bursary from CWDC	234	11
To develop my current role	218	11
Improved pay	167	8
Total	4,262	

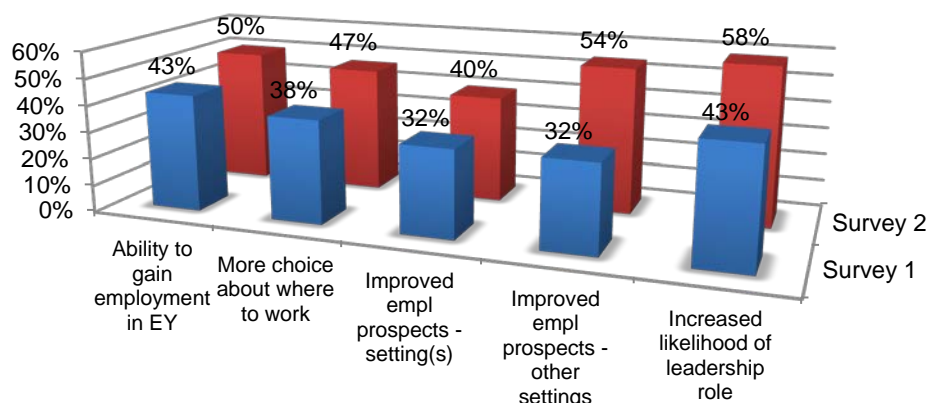
These responses closely mirrored the outcomes of the first national survey. Once again, the emphasis was on increasing knowledge and skills (37 per cent), then on enhancing their professional status (34 per cent) and career development opportunities (23 per cent). More instrumental motivations, such as promotion, pay or bursaries from CWDC, were less important. However, there were indications that practitioners at different points in their career had undertaken EYPS for different reasons. Earlier and mid-career practitioners were more likely to emphasise the role of EYPS in enhancing career development and promotion opportunities than those at later career stages.

A slightly more complex picture emerged when practitioners were asked to reflect on whether they felt gaining EYPS had actually changed their career prospects. EYPs were invited to address five potential areas of impact on their career progression:

- 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
- increased likelihood of taking on a leadership role

These areas were repeated from the first survey and across the board their responses indicated a much more widespread belief that gaining EYPS had improved their career prospects (see Figure 30).

Figure 30 *EYPS and your career prospects* (agree and partially agree responses)



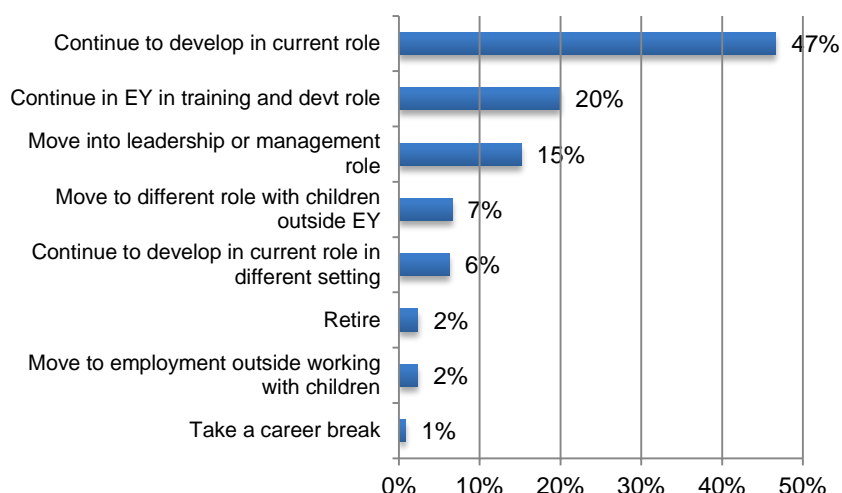
In addition, cohort analysis of EYPs who had completed both the first and second national surveys revealed that they consistently scored between one per cent and four per cent higher on all these questions than the population of the second survey as a whole. Apart from ability to gain employment in early years (where the scores were the same), EYPs who only completed the second national survey scored one per cent to two per cent lower than the second survey population as a whole in these areas. This may have reflected greater engagement with, and estimation of, EYPS among EYPs who had completed both surveys.

Analysis by experience uncovered some notable variations between EYPs at different career stages. Novice EYPs (with 0-3 years' experience) consistently rated the impact of gaining EYPS more highly than those later in their careers, particularly with regard to its impact on gaining employment and improving their prospects in their settings. Novice EYPs were also the highest ranked group in terms of EYPS increasing the likelihood that they would take on a leadership role (71 per cent compared to an overall average of 59 per cent), although this may reflect the greater professional seniority of more experienced EYPs. The overall trend was for those in the later stages of their career to respond less affirmatively than early career stage practitioners. Finally, EYPs in independent settings consistently rated the impact of EYPS on their career prospects more highly than those in other setting types.

### 5.1 How did Early Years Professionals see their careers developing in the next five years?

The overall trends in EYPs' expectations of their career development had not changed since the first national survey. Nearly half of EYPs (47 per cent) saw themselves continuing in their current role, with the next most popular options being to continue in the early years sector in some form of training and development role (20 per cent) or to move into a leadership or management role (15 per cent).

Figure 31 *How do you see your career developing in the next five years?*  
(responses = 1,567)



There were distinct patterns in practitioners' responses depending on their career stage. EYPs in the mid to late stages of their career (16 years or more) were more likely to see themselves developing their role in their current setting. Moving to a different setting was more popular among early career EYPs with 11 per cent of novice EYPs (0-3 years' experience) selecting this item, whereas moving into a leadership or management role attracted 31 per cent of responses from novice EYPs and 24 per cent from those with 4-7 years' experience. Novice EYPs were also more than twice as likely to cite moving to employment outside working with children as any other group. Late career stage EYPs (31 years or more) were understandably more focused on retirement than other EYPs, even those with 24-30 years' experience.

## 5.2 Early Years Professionals not employed in the early years sector

Data was also collected on EYPs who were employed outside the early years sector (representing five per cent of the total population) or not employed at the time the survey was conducted (also five per cent). It is important to highlight the need to be cautious in making generalisations from these percentages as the actual numbers of respondents not working in the sector are very small. In addition three of those not employed and six of those employed outside the sector were volunteering in early years settings.

Just over two-thirds of EYPs who were not employed gained the status in 2010 or 2011, which is likely in part to reflect both the time lag between completing EYPS and finding employment and the more difficult economic climate. Forty-five per cent of the EYPs who were not employed had undertaken Pathway 4 (full pathway). Three-quarters (74 per cent) had worked in early years since gaining EYPS, mostly in private or LA settings as early years workers or senior early years workers. Surprisingly perhaps, 56 per cent stated that they held a degree related to early years. They tended to be fairly early in their career, with just over half having less than seven years' experience in early years. Seventy per cent of EYPs who were not employed had worked in an early years setting since they had gained EYPS. The most common reason given for having left their previous job among this group of EYPs was redundancy (22 per cent), followed starting a PGCE (21 per cent), maternity leave (14 per cent) and relocation (both 13 per cent).

In addition to being the most likely Pathway group not to be employed, Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs were also the most likely not to be working in the early years in the sector (27 per cent of this group of EYPs had gained the status via either Pathway 4 Full or Pathway 2 Short EPD). However, there were no obvious patterns in terms of when EYPs outside the sector



had gained EYPS. Half of them had worked in early years since gaining EYPS, almost a third (32 per cent) as owner/manager and a fifth as early years worker, mostly in private (38 per cent) and LA settings (28 per cent). Overall, 26 per cent of Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs were either not employed or working outside the sector. This compared with nine per cent of Pathway 1 (Validation) EYPs and seven per cent of Pathway 2 (Short EPD) EYPs.

Unsurprisingly, EYPs who were not employed or working outside the sector, but who had previously worked in early years, were less positive about EYPS improving their ability to gain employment in the sector than either current EYPs or those who had not worked in the sector since gaining EYPS. Just over two-thirds (36 per cent) disagreed or partially disagreed that their prospects had improved. Similarly, 40 per cent disagreed that gaining EYPS had given them more choice about where to work in early years.

### 5.3 Barriers to career progression and mobility

Based on the responses in the first survey, EYPs were asked in which of four broad areas the biggest barriers to progressing their career in early years lay:

- domestic – covering areas such as personal ties and financial commitments
- career – covering areas such as pay and the lack of opportunities to progress
- personal – covering areas including lack of confidence and stress
- loyalty – to colleagues and/or children.

As Table 7 indicates, the overall pattern of responses broadly mirrored the first survey but with a less overall emphasis being placed upon career issues and slightly more on personal issues.

Table 7 *What do you consider to be the biggest barrier to progressing your career in early years?*

Barrier	Frequency	Per cent
Career issues	949	67
Domestic issues	264	19
Loyalty	158	11
Personal issues	54	4
Total	1,425	

In the first national survey the career issues that dominated responses were a lack of an obvious career path (65 per cent), low pay (56 per cent), and the limited number of EYP roles (52 per cent). In the second survey (see Table 8), these issues still dominated but there was some indication that concerns over the lack of an obvious career path were diminishing (from 65 per cent in the first survey to 52 per cent in the second survey).

Table 8 *Career issues*

Career Issues	Frequency	Per cent
Low pay	626	66
Limited number of EYP roles	523	55
Lack of obvious career path	493	52
Lack of status	360	38
Lack of suitable role models in your area	124	13
Lack of mentoring	110	12
Total	2,236	

Low pay was fairly consistently cited across career stages, although early career EYPs were slightly more concerned about it than those approaching retirement. Attitudes to the limited number of EYP roles available were also fairly consistent, with novice EYPs a little more concerned and mid-career EYPs a little less concerned than the mean. Low pay seemed less of an issue among EYPs working in maintained and LA settings.

As far as domestic issues were concerned (Table 9), the pattern of concerns that emerged was similar to the first survey. The major difference since 2010 was a growing concern with financial commitments (from 22 per cent to 36 per cent).

Table 9 *Domestic issues*

Domestic Issues	Frequency	Per cent
Additional caring responsibilities	135	51
Work life imbalance	106	40
Financial commitments	94	36
Personal ties	82	31
Access to low cost adequate childcare	27	10
Not family friendly career	11	4
Attitudes of domestic partners	9	3
Total	464	

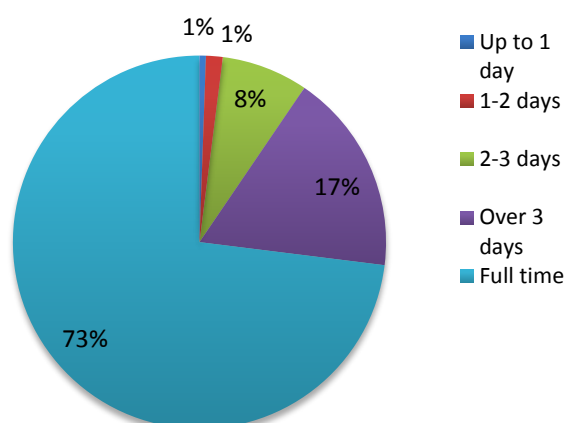
Additional caring responsibilities were a greater concern for EYPs in later career stages and novice EYPs, as well as for EYPs in voluntary and community settings. Novice EYPs were much less concerned with work-life balance, especially compared to mid-career EYPs for whom, like EYPs in maintained settings, it was the most pressing domestic issue.

In the previous survey, the impact of personal loyalty to colleagues and children on career progression prompted a higher response rate than had been expected. In the second survey we asked practitioners to differentiate between their loyalty to children or colleagues. Colleagues emerged as a slightly higher priority than children, attracting 86 per cent of responses (as opposed to 71 per cent). Finally, lack of confidence was the most commonly cited personal issue (67 per cent), followed by stress (44 per cent).

## 5.4 Pay and work patterns

Responses indicated that 73 per cent of EYPs employed in early years worked full time and 90 per cent worked more than three days (see Figure 32). These proportions were slightly lower among childminders and those in maintained settings. EYPs working for LAs but not in children's centres were the most likely respondents to work full time.

Figure 32 *How many days of the week do you work?* (responses = 1,798)



The majority of EYPs in the sample (71 per cent) earned under £25,000 per annum. This was less than the average weekly pay for the UK as a whole in September 2011, which was £464 per week, or £24,128 per annum (ONS, December 2011). Fifty-seven per cent of EYPs earning less than £25,000 worked full time (classified as 35 hours a week or more), which represented a slight decrease since the first survey when 60 per cent of full time EYPs were in this salary category. Furthermore, 218 EYPs (13 per cent) stated that they worked 45 hours a week or more.

The higher levels of pay (over £30,000 a year) were most common among EYPs working for LAs (29 per cent) or in maintained settings (30 per cent), although it should be emphasised that this related to relatively small numbers of respondents. In contrast, only four per cent of childminders and EYPs working in voluntary or community settings earned such salaries. In fact, 23 per cent of childminders, many of whom worked part time, earned less than £8,000 a year, and 59 per cent earned less than £18,000. Half of EYPs in voluntary and community settings also earned less than £18,000 a year. Overall, 26 per cent of EYPs working full time (taken to be 35 hours per week or more) stated that they earned less than £18,000 a year. The majority of them (51 per cent) worked in private settings. Ninety-four per cent of EYPs working part time earned less than £25,000 a year and half of EYPs working between half time and full time hours earned less than £18,000 a year. Almost one-third of Pathway 1 (Validation) EYPs (32 per cent) earned £30,000 or more a year, compared with only 4 per cent of Pathway 4 (Full) EYPs and 7 per cent from Pathways 3 and 5.

The impact of gaining EYPS on EYPs' earnings was also explored. Just over a third of practitioners (34 per cent) had seen their earnings increase after gaining EYPS. This proportion was highest among EYPs working in maintained (46 per cent) and voluntary and community settings (41 per cent). The majority (72 per cent) of those who had received an increase were confident or very confident that the increase was related to gaining EYPS. Only 20 per cent stated that there was no connection. Confidence about the link was particularly high among EYPs working in voluntary and community (82 per cent) and private settings (76 per cent) and among Pathway 5 ECS (81 per cent) and Pathway 3 (Long EPD) EYPs (80 per cent).

## **5.5 Summary of key findings: Impact on Early Years Professionals' future careers**

- The main reasons EYPs gave for undertaking EYPS were to increase knowledge and skills (37 per cent) and enhance their professional status (34 per cent) and career development opportunities (23 per cent).
- There was a widespread belief amongst EYPs that gaining EYPS had improved their career prospects. Fifty-eight per cent thought that undertaking EYPS had increased the likelihood that they would take on a leadership role and 54 per cent thought it had improved their prospects of employment in other types of early years setting.
- Comparing responses with the first national survey indicated a much more widespread belief among EYPs that gaining EYPS had improved their career prospects in all areas.
- Those at the start of their careers (0-3 years) consistently rated the impact of gaining EYPS more highly than those who were later on in their careers.
- Five per cent of EYPs in the sample were employed outside of the early years sector and five per cent were not employed. They were less positive about the impact of EYPS on their career prospects than EYPs working in the sector.
- Nearly half of EYPs (47 per cent) saw themselves continuing in their current role with the next most popular options being to continue in the early years sector in some form of training and development role (20 per cent) or moving into a leadership or management role (15 per cent).
- The main career barriers were low pay (66 per cent), the limited number of EYP roles (55 per cent) and a lack of an obvious career path (52 per cent).
- Seventy-three per cent of EYPs working in the early years sector worked full time and 90 per cent worked more than three days a week.
- The majority of EYPs (71 per cent) surveyed earned less than £25,000 per annum.
- Just over a third of practitioners (34 per cent) had seen their earnings increase after gaining EYPS. This proportion was highest among EYPs working in maintained (46 per cent) and voluntary and community settings (41 per cent).
- A majority (72 per cent) of those who had received a pay rise since gaining EYPS felt that it was a factor in obtaining this increase.

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# Glossary

**BME** Black and Minority Ethnic

**CPD** Continuing Professional Development

**CWDC** Children's Workforce Development Council

**ECS** Early Childhood Studies Degree

**EYPS** Early Years Professional Status. The professional accreditation awarded on successfully completing assessment through a recognised pathway. The acronym can be freely used and must be clearly relating to the status/award and not to the individual practitioner.

**EYP** Early Years Professional. A practitioner who has successfully achieved Early Years Professional Status through a recognised pathway and assessment process. To promote proper recognition and understanding the title is capitalised and in reports and papers will be written in full in any initial mention and any headings or titles. This report uses the term in full throughout the Executive Summary and in headings for due emphasis on the individuals who have achieved EYPS. The acronym EYP can be used being mindful of the previous point. It must be clearly relating to a practitioner and not to the professional status. The plural can be used and must use a lower case (EYPs) to avoid confusion with EYPS.

**Early years practitioner** is a generic term for anyone working in direct practice with children in the early years and childcare sector at any grade, qualification or role.

**GLF** Graduate Leader Fund

**LA** Local Authority

**NPIQL** National Professional Qualification for Integrated Centre Leadership

**PGCE** Postgraduate Certificate in Education

**PVI** Private, voluntary or independent early years care and education providers

**QTS** Qualified Teacher Status

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