

# EYPs wonder where they fit into the Nutbrown vision <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

The recommendations made by Professor Cathy Nutbrown in the final report of her independent review into the early years and childcare workforce have received an overwhelmingly positive response from many experts and childcare organisations in the early years sector.

Writing in Nursery World this week, Helen Moylett, president of Early Education, urges the Government to support all its 19 recommendations, praising the report for its 'principled, honest' and 'respectful' findings.

However, one group of individuals has been feeling distinctly left out and ignored by the final report.

There are now more than 10,000 Early Years Professionals who are now wondering where they will fit into the vision.

There has long been a call from EYPs to be recognised through parity with teachers and awarded qualified teacher status, but this has never materialised.

Professor Nutbrown is now recommending a new early years specialist route to QTS, specialising in birth to seven from September 2013, and that this route to QTS should eventually replace EYPS.

In her report she says, 'However hard we try, I do not believe a status that is not the same as QTS will ever be seen as equal to QTS.' But where does this leave EYPs?

While Professor Nutbrown recommends that EYPs should be given a fast-track route to QTS, not all EYPs will want to do yet more training to prove themselves, when they are already graduate leaders.

Claire Dent, lead professional for the national Early Years Professionals committee for the Aspect Group of Prospect, said that EYPs were 'disappointed', because they had been told by the Government that EYPS would be considered as equivalent to QTS.

'A lot of people could have gone on to teaching, and to be told that they have to study again and that they are not quite good enough seems so unfair.

'I'm really disappointed that, although Cathy Nutbrown recognises the value of EYPS, she still thinks the only way is to become an early years teacher. There's a feeling of anger, that EYPs have been misinformed and they feel let down. The report says that they are valuable but, sorry, you need to be teachers.'

She said that the role of EYP was 'a specific job and highly valued' and that time and money would be better spent on raising the profile of EYPS, and awareness among parents.

Rather than saying that the only way to ensure better pay and status is through QTS, she said, a better way would have been to introduce a national pay scale for EYPs. She added that it didn't make economic sense either for EYPs to have to retrain.

Alexandra Skvortsov was among the first-ever cohort of EYPs in 2006 and has been owner of Greetland Private Day Nursery in Halifax, West Yorkshire for 13 years.

Ms Skvortsov, who is highly qualified with two degrees and a Masters, as well as EYPS, said, 'Teaching a class of children is very different from interacting with a six-month old baby. I didn't want to be a teacher, I could have got QTS at any point.

'I feel a bit offended, as if EYPS is a second-rate qualification for people who can't get into teaching. We think of ourselves as specialists in our chosen work.'

The nursery's deputy manager, Helen Milne, gained EYPS two years ago, after completing an Open University degree in childhood and youth studies. She already had an NNEB and did the three-month pathway to EYPS.

Ms Milne said that if she had wanted to be a teacher she would have chosen that route.

'I always wanted to work with young children. I feel the EYP was a great way to promote work with under-threes. EYPS was supposed to be seen as being equivalent to QTS. I don't want to be a teacher - I want to be an Early Years Professional. I'm an EYP because I'm passionate about the early years.'

Dr Jane Payler, senior lecturer in early years education at the University of Winchester and chair-elect of TACTYC, the early years educators development association, said that while she was pleased with the report's recommendations for improving Level 3 qualifications, she was 'concerned for the thousands of people who achieved EYPS on the understanding that this would be the required level to lead practice across the EYFS for birth to fives.'

She added that she hoped that issues regarding how EYPs would access QTS would be thought through carefully.

'How all people with EYPS wishing to access QTS will do so when many do not have an honours degree and may not have a science GCSE, and there are cost implications of paying for terms and conditions of service for teachers.

'I sincerely hope that this will not be resolved at the expense of increasing child to adult ratios, which research shows is not in the best interests of children.'

-reprinted from Nursery World

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