

£1 million to develop early years workforce ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

£1 million to help children get the best start in life was announced today as an independent review of the early years workforce was published.

The money will be used to implement some of the review's recommendations around early years staff development.

The Scottish Government commissioned the review of the early learning and childcare and out of school care workforce and was led by children's expert Professor Iram Siraj.

The review was published as Education Secretary Angela Constance met primary teachers studying a Masters course on early years at the University of Strathclyde.

Ms Constance said:

"Ensuring every child in Scotland gets the best possible start in life is a priority for this government. I welcome Professor Siraj's review on our early learning and out of school care workforce. It sets out a number of thought-provoking and challenging recommendations, both for Government and for those who educate and train early learning and childcare staff.

"The early years are a crucial point in a child's development, therefore it is vital that we invest in those tasked with caring for and educating our young children. By boosting skills and recognising the value of the early years workforce, we will attract the brightest and best to the sector.

"I'm pleased we can allocate £1 million to continue staff development in the sector. We will now consider all the recommendations carefully and in full with the Reference Group who supported the Chair with the review, and this will inform how the funding is used. We will publish our full response in the autumn."

Professor Iram Siraj said:

"I was honoured when asked to chair this review of the early learning and out of school care workforce in Scotland. It was encouraging to find that my requests for information and evidence were met with passion and eagerness across the whole sector. As a result, rather than remedying weaknesses within the sector, I was able to recognise the strengths of the current system and make recommendations to develop these strengths and build on existing good practice.

"Compared to other nations, Scotland has set a very exciting agenda for its children, including those in their earliest years but there is always room for improvement.

"I know that some of my recommendations will be challenging but I am confident that, when implemented, they will result in a stronger, higher-quality workforce – and that this will, in turn, improve the public's confidence in the sector. In addition to the benefits for Scotland's children and families, it will also have a positive impact on the wider economy."

Jean Carwood-Edwards, CEO of Early Years Scotland, and member of the Core Reference Group involved in the review, said:

"Early Years Scotland welcomes Scottish Government's commitment and willingness to support this independent review.

"Working with, or on behalf of Scotland's children is the greatest privilege and the most important job that anyone can do. What happens in the earliest years of a child's life determines to a large extent, the quality and direction of their future life path.

"These first months and years are therefore critical for children, communities and society at large. It is for this reason that we must invest in children, and in so doing, must also invest in our workforce to ensure that they are valued, highly skilled, qualified and equipped for this rewarding and challenging role."

-reprinted from the Scottish Government

Region: Europe ^[3]

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