

Title of report	Early Learning and Childcare-graduate apprenticeship pilot
Public/confidential	Public
Action	For decision
Summary/purpose of report	To advise Council on the Scottish Government proposal to develop a graduate apprenticeship in early learning and childcare. The apprenticeship will commence as a pilot from Autumn 2018. The graduate apprenticeship will support the expansion of the early year's workforce by 2020 to meet the Scottish Governments policy commitments.
Recommendations	The Council is asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. note the Scottish Government plans to pilot a graduate apprenticeship in early learning and childcare from autumn 2018 2. agree that the graduate apprenticeship in early learning and childcare will be accepted by SSSC for the registration of practitioners of Day Care of Children Services 3. note the partnership arrangements with Skills Development Scotland in developing the award.
Link to Strategic Plan	Outcomes 2: Our standards lead to a safe and skilled social service workforce.
Link to the Risk Register	Strategic Risk 4: The qualifications framework and workforce development products we produce do not meet the needs of employers and social service workers.

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Documents attached	Links to document - A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland Action Plan 2017-18

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the expansion of early learning and childcare provision from the existing 600 hours to 1140 hours the Scottish Government is committed to developing new entry routes into the early year's sector at graduate level. This commitment is outlined in the document a *Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland, Quality Action Plan 2017-18* (appendix 1).
- 1.2 To widen access at degree level a graduate apprenticeship for early years will be introduced in the autumn of 2018. This builds on the 14 childhood practice programmes in Scotland which are quality assured by the SSSC and delivered at degree level SCQF level 9. This report sets out the proposal to pilot the graduate apprenticeship in early learning and childcare over the period 2018–2021, and outlines the contribution of the SSSC in developing the award in partnership with Skills Development Scotland Employers and Scottish Government.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 2017 the Scottish Government published *A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland*¹ 'Action Plan 2017-18 The Blueprint sets out the Scottish Government's commitment to double entitlement to free early learning and childcare (ELC) to 1140 hours per year by 2020 for all three and four year olds and eligible two year olds.
- 2.2 To meet this commitment it is estimated that there will be a requirement for an additional 10,000 posts in the early year's sector by 2020. The majority of new posts will be established at practitioner level which currently set at Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF) level 7.
- 2.3 The introduction of the graduate apprenticeship will also provide an additional entry route into the early year's sector at degree level and the award will be set at SCQF level 9. The graduate apprenticeship also compliments the established practice development award (PDA) in early years and childcare which is delivered at degree level SCQF level 9.
- 2.4 The Scottish Government's Quality Action Plan for early years states that from April 2018, the Care Inspectorate's scrutiny role will include a specific focus in its inspections of early learning and childcare to assess the extent to which graduate level practitioners are leading pedagogical practice and improving outcomes for children. It is anticipated that this will encourage employers to positively recruit individuals capable of gaining a higher level qualification. It will also encourage employers to develop existing practitioners to extend their skills and knowledge to gain a degree level qualification.

¹ Scottish Government 2017

3. THE GRADUATE APPRENTICESHIP PILOT 2018-2021

- 3.1 The graduate apprenticeship for early learning and childcare pilot will be funded by Scottish Government, and the development work will be led by Skills Development Scotland. The work will be overseen by the quality action reference group. The pilot is anticipated to start in autumn 2018 and will comprise of 30 apprenticeship places over a three year degree programme (2108-2021). The graduate apprenticeship programme will be based on the existing standard for childhood practice however the new standard will be informed by a reference group. These include expected features of the graduate apprenticeship programme and include meta skills which include Self-Management, Social Intelligence and Innovation.
- 3.2 The graduate apprenticeship will provide a career pathway for candidates undertaking the foundation apprenticeship in Social Services (Children and Young People). The foundation apprenticeship is successfully delivered across all local authorities in Scotland. A graduate apprenticeship progression route would provide a significant boost to foundation apprenticeship numbers because of the ease of transition into the programme and the considerable number of job opportunities that will occur in this sector. A graduate apprenticeship will also open opportunities for adult returners to retrain into the Early Learning and Childcare sector.
- 3.3 Skills Development Scotland will lead the development of the graduate apprenticeship in early learning and childcare. The SSSC as the workforce regulator for social services will contribute to the development of the standard. The SSSC will also contribute to developing the specification to appoint two learning providers to deliver the new graduate apprenticeship. The next steps in developing the award and awarding funding will include:
- Identifying 30 apprenticeship places to be delivered by two learning providers over the period 2018-2021.
 - A procurement exercise will be undertaken to award the contract to the learning providers.
 - An evaluation of the pilot will include a focus on the sustainability of the apprenticeship model in the long term.
 - As part of the evaluation the pilot will provide a learning opportunity for the SSSC to review the part of the register that is set at two different functional levels for the early years workforce set at SCQF level 7 and 9. This will inform the SSSC review of the functions of the register led by the registration manager.
 - During the pilot there will be an opportunity to gather the views of employers on the feasibility of the award in the longer term.
 - The pilot graduate apprenticeship will be accepted for registration with the SSSC at practitioner level in Day Care of Children Services.
 - The SSSC will work closely with Skills Development Scotland on the promotion of the graduate apprenticeship pilot to employers.
 - A communications strategy will be developed in parallel to the national campaign Scottish Government is currently running

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The development of qualifications and standards is a core activity of SSSC's work. There are no new financial implications or human resource implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There is no impact on people with protected characteristics and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. The SSSC rules and requirements for specialist training for social service workers (2005) require course providers to meet legal obligations including those in relation to equal opportunities and human rights.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The SSSC has a general duty to promote high standards in the education and training of social services workers. The rules and requirements for specialist training for social service workers in Scotland 2005 allow for the SSSC to carry out this duty.

7. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 7.1 A range of stakeholders including COSLA employers and learning providers are involved in the development of the standard and implementation of the pilot programme. The work is led by Skills Development Scotland with SSSC a key stakeholder in developing and promoting graduate apprenticeships. The evaluation of the pilot will be led by Scottish Government include the views of SDS employers, and students undertaking the award.

8. IMPACT ON USERS AND CARERS

- 8.1 Service user and carer's are panel members for the quality assurance of all learning programmes. As part of the quality assurance process learning providers are required to provide clear evidence to the SSSC that service users' and carers' views have been incorporated into both the academic and practice learning aspects of programmes. A service user and Carer representative will be consulted in the development of the graduate apprenticeship.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report summarises the work being undertaken by SDS and SSSC in partnership with Scottish Government to develop a graduate apprenticeship programme for early years and childcare. The Scottish Government's policy of extending funded provision of early learning and childcare requires a significant investment in workforce and capital infrastructure. To support the expansion of the workforce in early years and childcare career pathways are being developed to promote a range of entry routes into the sector. The graduate apprenticeship will enhance the existing career and qualifications pathway developed by SSSC.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS and LINKS

- 10.1 *A Blueprint for 2020: The Expansion of Early Learning and Childcare in Scotland Action Plan 2017-18.*
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0052/00526782.pdf>