

NEWS RELEASE – for immediate use, issued 12 JANUARY, 2017

New Skills Plan To Grow Childcare sector by 11,000

Steering Group takes action to help tackle national target

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) has highlighted a need for the nation's Early Learning and Childcare sector to attract a more diverse workforce to create an additional 11,000 jobs by 2020 to meet expected demand.

SDS has worked with partners to create new national [Early Learning and Childcare Skills Investment Plan \(SIP\)](#) for the sector.

The [plan](#) was created with a sector-led Steering Group made up of 15 organisations including employers and partners such as Scottish Government, the Scottish Funding Council, the Scottish Social Service Council, the Care Inspectorate, the Care and Learning Alliance, Early Years Scotland and the Scottish Childminding Association.

SDS Chief Executive, Damien Yeates said: "The Skills Investment Plan recognises that the Early Learning and Childcare sector has the ability to meet growing demand for a skilled workforce.

"There are challenges to meet to ensure growth at such an ambitious level in the sector.

"The Plan identifies areas that need to be addressed, such as the lack of flexible learning opportunities; a need to attract more candidates from diverse backgrounds including males, those aged over 25 and people from minority and ethnic backgrounds and to ensure the demand is met with the creation of a high quality skilled workforce."

An Action Plan has been developed by the Steering Group to guide skills planning and investment, tackle the challenges and help maximise opportunities by strengthening links between organisations to help them work more effectively together.

The publication of the SIP, which is available [online](#) via the SDS website, follows the Scottish Government's nationwide recruitment campaign launched by First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon.

The Scottish Government provisionally estimated up to 11,000 additional workers across all levels of expertise may be required for the expansion to 1,140 hours free Early Learning and Childcare provision for three and four years olds and eligible two year olds.

The focus of the SIP is to provide robust evidence of the current skills base and profile of the sector and give employers and stakeholders a clear direction on what it can do to attract a wider and more diverse range of high quality candidates in order to fuel its expansion.

Members of the SIP Steering Group attended the launch of the Early Learning and Childcare Skills Investment Plan at Tannoch Tots nursery in Tannochside, North Lanarkshire.

Tannoch Tots supports its 17 staff with training and development opportunities and currently has three nursery assistants undergoing Modern Apprenticeships.

Tannoch Tots Co-director, Carla McGuinness said: “Investing in developing the skills of our workforce through apprenticeships is a vital part of how we deliver our service and all levels of the nursery team, from childcare assistants to senior management, are currently undertaking some form of training.”

One of the nursery’s employees, 26 year old Nicolle Walker, started working towards her SVQ level 4 Social Services (Children and Young People) last year and is now manager with responsibility for training her own team. Nicolle said: “The skills I’ve gained through my Modern Apprenticeship have given me the tools and confidence to mentor and support my own trainees, which includes delivering training sessions to help them enhance their knowledge.”

Minister for Childcare and Early Years Maree Todd said: “Improving education and closing the attainment gap is this government’s key priority. That is why we are almost doubling the amount of funded nursery education, from 600 to 1,140 hours, as well as the amount invested within the sector, from £420 million to £840 million.

“The expansion of early learning and childcare is a truly transformational policy and the quality and dedication of our current workforce is key to making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up.

“This Skills Investment Plan, developed by and for the industry, reflects the collaborative approach required to meet the future skills and workforce requirements of our expanded provision.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

To read the Early Learning and Childcare Skills Investment Plan log on to:

www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/early-learning-and-childcare-SIP

Early Years and Childcare Steering Group members:

Skills Development Scotland

ADES Early Years Networks in Angus, North Ayrshire, Edinburgh

Care and Learning Alliance

College Development Network

COSLA

Department of Works and Pensions

Early Years Scotland

National Day Nurseries Association

Scottish Childminding Association

Scottish Funding Council

Scottish Government

Scottish Social Service Council

Scottish Qualifications Agency

Scottish Training Federation

The Care Inspectorate

Action plan Mission Statement:

“Attracting, nurturing and retaining a diverse early learning and childcare workforce to support children, their families and communities to ensure the best possible start in life”

The Strategic Objectives to achieve this mission and address the themes are:

- Raise the profile and attractiveness of the sector and actively increase diversity
- Better promote routes in to and pathways through the sector
- Ensure take up opportunities for progressing, re-skilling and upskilling the workforce
- Engage Early Learning and Childcare employers

Commitments from the Steering Group partners within the action plan include:

- Supporting a recruitment campaign with the creation of an information portal to signpost potential candidates.
- Create awareness of the high quality career opportunities available in the sector to a diverse audience, through a programme of events and with the support of partner organisations.

- Creation of an online career development resource to provide potential candidates with information on qualifications and routes to learn.
- Continued investment in skills provision and promote models of work based learning. Develop part time, out of hours and distance learning opportunities to develop a more flexible system.
- Support continual professional development of the workforce, which will include the introduction of a new £2m inclusion fund that enables staff to support children with additional needs.
- Promote leadership development opportunities within the sector, which will include the creation of a training course for school management teams on what drives quality in the industry.
- Promote skills messages to employers and engage with the Scottish Apprenticeship Advisory Board to gain more in-depth input and insight from employers regarding the skills demand and system.