

# Early Years Workforce Strategy 2018-2021





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## Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the Slough Early Years Workforce Strategy 2018-2021

The strategy supports the early years workforce which includes employers and managers of early years and childcare provision, namely, though not limited to; nurseries, schools, children's centres, pre schools, childminders and training providers.

The strategy aims to support the sector in its efforts to recruit and retain staff and volunteers to the early years workforce with a focus on expanding the number of male childcare workers who currently only make up 2% of the early years workforce.

The strategy reflects the government's commitment to supporting the early years sector to thrive, in the best interests of children, parents and the staff. "If children are to have the best experience in their earliest and most formative years we must invest in and value those who are shaping their early development" Caroline Dineage MP, Minister for Women, Equalities and Early Years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy>

The Slough Early Years Workforce Strategy encompasses:

- promoting careers in the sector to increase the number of people joining the workforce.
- the creation of publicity and information sharing that is designed to reach the wider workforce and support them to consider careers working with children
- recruitment and retention approaches across the early years sector
- the promotion of continuous professional development
- the identification of specialist roles such as working with children with SEND
- details relating to the apprenticeship levy and available support for professional development.

As a council we are committed to early years services and acknowledge the significant role in the early years workforce plays in the early intervention and preventative agendas.



Councillor Shadnum Sadiq  
Cabinet member for children  
and education



Cate Duffy  
Director of children,  
learning and skills

## Introduction

The Slough Early Years Workforce Strategy aims to support the early years sector to remove barriers to attracting, retaining and developing the workforce in line with the guidance published by the DfE in March 2017<sup>1</sup>.

The Slough Early Years Workforce Strategy underpins details contained in the service plan for the Slough Early Years Service and demonstrates the value of the early years workforce in achieving the objectives of Slough's Five Year Plan<sup>2</sup>. Specifically, it addresses outcome one: 'Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful'.

Settings follow the Early Years Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup> and requirements contained in the Childcare Register<sup>4</sup> with regard to the qualifications and ratios across all forms of childcare. The need to comply with the statutory qualifications ratios and ensure sufficient staff is a key driver for workforce development in the early years sector. A continual focus on workforce development ensures providers can increase the number of places for children in a range of settings to give parents choice of quality, accessible and affordable childcare.

The annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2017<sup>5</sup> demonstrates the recruitment of staff is pivotal in securing an appropriate workforce to meet the statutory duty to provide adequate places for children and families across the borough. The Childcare Sufficiency Refresh in 2017 indicated the need for several hundred additional childcare places in Slough, beyond 2019. Providers developing additional places will need to recruit additional qualified practitioners to maintain statutory ratios.



**Michael Jarrett**  
Service Lead, early years  
and development

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-workforce-strategy)

<sup>2</sup> [www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/five-year-plan.aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/five-year-plan.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)

<sup>4</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/become-a-registered-early-years-or-childcare-provider-in-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/become-a-registered-early-years-or-childcare-provider-in-england)

<sup>5</sup> [www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/childcare-sufficiency-assessment.aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/council/strategies-plans-and-policies/childcare-sufficiency-assessment.aspx)

# Context

Data regarding Slough's labour market shows some significant differences between Slough and our statistical neighbours.

Data taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS)<sup>6</sup> shows that 9.6% of households in Slough are workless households; this is lower than our statistical neighbours Hillingdon, Hounslow, Luton, Reading and Redbridge.

The qualification levels of Slough residents are also lower than the majority of our statistical neighbours. The data shows that 68.5% of the Slough workforce is qualified to level 2 (GCSE equivalent) and 54.6% to level 3 (A-Level equivalent). Whereas the data for the south east shows that 78.6% hold level 2 and 61.1% level 3.

Gross weekly pay for people in the south east averages £596.80 whereas the average in Slough is £557.00 per week.

The ONS data shows that Slough residents have lower levels of qualifications and pay than people in other areas of the south east of England.

The percentage of people who hold foreign and other professional qualifications in Slough is 14.8%; higher than many of our statistical neighbours.

The Early Years Service will encourage the workforce to obtain verification of their qualification status in order to support the development of individual career pathways.

Analysis of national and local data informs our strategies for the attraction, retention and development of Slough's childcare workforce and the attainment of outcome one in the Five Year Plan.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

## Increasing the workforce

The Slough Early Years Service takes every opportunity to promote Slough as a great place to work. In a recent national survey <sup>7</sup>, Slough was rated the best place to work in the UK.

We want early years to be seen as a positive career choice. There is a need to expand the early years workforce by recruiting people from a range of backgrounds and increasing gender diversity. Nationally only 2% of the workforce is made up of male childcare workers, according to the latest providers survey undertaken by the Pre-School Learning Alliance in 2013. The Early Years Service provides advice to people considering career changes to help them make informed decisions about routes into the early years sector. Appendix 1 shows a list of job roles, qualifications and potential salaries across the sector.

## Careers working with children

The Slough Early Years Service has developed a range of marketing materials to demonstrate the wide range of possible careers working with children and the rewarding nature of these roles. Continuous and regular promotion of these materials on the SBC website, in children's centres, libraries, schools, job centres as well as in the residents' newsletter - the Citizen, will be supplemented by additional targeted campaigns.

## Information sessions: "Ever thought about a career working with children?"

These sessions are designed to provide details for prospective early years practitioners regarding the qualities and qualifications required to enter the workforce. The sessions share details on pathways for those who wish to work with children and offer an opportunity to explore the range of career options in early years. These career opportunities include such diverse roles as sports coaches, cooks, business managers and other roles in educational establishments. Information sessions are held regularly throughout the year, at various locations across Slough. We promote the dates and details of these sessions via The Family Information Service (FIS), the SBC website<sup>8</sup> and posters in a variety of locations. People with overseas qualifications are signposted to advice from the National Agency for the Recognition and Comparison of International Qualifications and Skills (NARIC)<sup>9</sup>. This can be used to check if an individual's qualification can be accepted for work in childcare settings and schools in the UK. National data<sup>10</sup> shows that 14.8% of the Slough workforce has 'other' international qualifications that may need authentication in this way. This is considerably higher than the south east average of 5.3%.



<sup>7</sup> [www.glassdoor.co.uk/List/Best-Cities-for-Jobs-UK-LST\\_KQ0,23.htm](http://www.glassdoor.co.uk/List/Best-Cities-for-Jobs-UK-LST_KQ0,23.htm)

<sup>8</sup> [www.slough.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.slough.gov.uk/earlyyears)

<sup>9</sup> [www.naric.org.uk/naric](http://www.naric.org.uk/naric)

<sup>10</sup> [www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157286/report.aspx?town](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157286/report.aspx?town)

## Volunteering – a route into paid employment

The Slough Borough Council website contains details of current volunteering opportunities<sup>11</sup> along with full details about the Early Years Service 'Parent Champions'. The Family Information Service (FIS) recruit and train parents from local communities in Slough to advocate the benefits of accessing childcare, family activities and parental participation in their children's learning and development. Details of this and other volunteering opportunities are promoted by both FIS and Slough's network of children's centres.

FIS offer free impartial information and guidance about a wide range of services for children, young people and their families, including details about working with children. A full description of the role of FIS can be found in Appendix 2.

The Slough Early Years Service utilises links and contacts with a range of partners to support workforce development. For example we maintain a dialogue with local colleges and universities to support the quality of course opportunities at different qualification levels and also provide signposting and information services to the Job Centre and providers interested in offering apprenticeships. The Early Years Service attends job and career fairs to promote career opportunities in Slough.

The Slough Early Years Service supports settings to consider employing apprentices when they plan an expansion of their workforce. Regular briefings, workshops and information sessions for setting managers explore the possibilities and responsibilities associated with apprenticeships. These workshops are led by an apprenticeship expert in order to ensure providers are offered appropriate advice regarding the type of scheme available to them. The objective is to make full use of the funding stream and maximise the qualification level attainable.

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<sup>11</sup> [www.slough.gov.uk/jobs/volunteering-opportunities.aspx](http://www.slough.gov.uk/jobs/volunteering-opportunities.aspx)



## Retaining the Early Years workforce

Nationally the sector reports that difficulties in retaining staff impacts on their business. Data from the latest Early Years and Childcare Provider Survey in 2013 showed that the staff turnover in full day care provision was 12% whilst in sessional care the figure was 18%. Slough settings report similar levels.

Progression along career pathways for some staff members has been problematic in recent years as significant numbers of early years practitioners do not hold relevant GCSEs. Current developments in the range of qualifications on offer will enable practitioners in Slough to make more achievable steps. The ability to use functional skills qualifications to access apprenticeships at level 3 will enable practitioners to commence studying and improve their GCSE qualifications whilst working towards a childcare level 3. Apprenticeship qualifications at levels 4 and 5 are currently under development and are designed to support practitioners to undertake study for higher qualifications whilst working.

High quality provision requires a well-qualified workforce. Nationally, 77% of group based childcare settings have staff qualified to at least level 3 relevant to childcare. In Slough, 59% of staff hold a level 3 or higher qualification and there is an obvious need to encourage staff professional development.<sup>12</sup>

Working in partnership with Reading University, the provision of regular information briefings for current practitioners will support the current workforce to engage in further study to degree, Early Years Teacher and Qualified Teacher Status levels.

Research shows the quality of the early years education and childcare for pre school children is higher when practice is led by graduate level staff. Evidence also clearly shows that settings which employ more highly qualified staff are more likely to attract a good or outstanding grading from Ofsted.

The Slough Early Years Service maintains a focus on sector development and the accessing of new funding streams so they can provide managers of settings in Slough with information about career progression and the attainment of further qualifications. The Early Years Service encourages the Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings to focus on increasing their current staff skills. Managers are encouraged to have regular contact with the Early Years Service to be kept up to date on new opportunities available to them to support the growth of their existing staff. PVIs can also access the Early Years Service - Professional Development Portfolio.



<sup>12</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspection-outcomes-of-early-years-providers-by-staff-qualifications--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspection-outcomes-of-early-years-providers-by-staff-qualifications--2)

# Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

The Slough Early Years Service - Professional Development Portfolio<sup>13</sup> is available across the sector. The portfolio contains suggestions for workshops and courses that are delivered by members of the team. We are committed to providing incentives for all providers to engage in CPD by keeping charges low, using a cost-recovery model to determine costs and brokering attendance for individuals in group training sessions. This strategy is designed to address the issue, outlined in the Nutbrown report; Foundations for Quality<sup>14</sup>, of cost being the main barrier to accessing CPD.

The Slough Early Years Service holds several termly opportunities for providers to meet and network with other stakeholders from the Early Years Sector.

Networking and information sharing sessions include:

- Managers Fora
- Head Teachers' meetings
- Early Years Cluster meetings
- Childminder Cluster meetings
- Bristol Standard Network meetings
- Early Years Senco Network meetings
- I Talk Network meetings
- Children's Centre Service Partnership Network meetings
- Children's Centres Advisory Board.

Standing items at these meetings include safeguarding, health and safety, funding updates and the apprenticeship levy (see Appendix 3 for further details).

Slough's maintained nurseries and children's centres are at the centre of a key initiative to develop excellence hubs for the guidance and dissemination of best early years practice. The Early Years Service is a key facilitator of this developing partnership and will continue to support all partners as they maximise opportunities to positively influence practice, provision and improved outcomes for children.

<sup>13</sup> <https://thelink.slough.gov.uk/early-years/continuous-professional-development>

<sup>14</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/nutbrown-review-foundations-for-quality](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nutbrown-review-foundations-for-quality)

## Supporting children with SEND

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Refresh of 2017 clearly identified places for children with SEND as being a priority for development in Slough.

PVI settings in Slough are supported to be inclusive by the area SEND advisor but further place development is required. The Slough Provider Agreement contains information about additional funding which can be applied for to support individual children to access a setting. However, the service is also aware that practitioners need specialist skills and knowledge to provide high quality support for children with SEND and their families. The provision of training for practitioners to develop relevant skills and qualifications is a high priority for the service, and The SENDCO Network meetings, which are held termly, have a training element at every session.

Also, currently on offer is a Level 2 'Principles of working with individuals with learning disabilities training programme'. This workshop-based evening course is designed to be easily accessible for practitioners in the early years sector and will be repeated if required. Further developments include plans to set up a vocational training qualification for Level 3 practitioners.

## Summary

The main priorities driving this strategy have been determined by analysis of key national and local data sets and the information provided by the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

Addressing Slough's place development requirements beyond 2018 whilst continuing to maintain and develop the quality of early years provision will require an increasing number of suitably qualified practitioners. Focusing on the recruitment of new people to join the workforce will help to support childcare settings in their expansion as they provide additional places for the children of Slough. The sector wide development of the use of the apprenticeship levy will be a key driver for enhancing qualification levels in the children's workforce. Improving the qualifications and skills levels for the children's workforce supports families to be able to access high quality education and childcare in the area of their choice.



## Appendix 1: Job roles, qualifications and potential salaries across the sector

The Slough Early Years Service will promote the use of Qualifications Finder<sup>15</sup> to support the wider workforce to access current and relevant information regarding qualification requires.

The table below indicates possible rates of salaries for a variety of jobs.

For information about the national minimum wage go to [www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates](http://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates).

Qualification level	Job role	Possible salary range	Possible qualifications	Apprenticeships
Volunteering	Parent champions			
Volunteering	Parent volunteers		City & Guilds Working with Parents	
2	Preschool assistant	Living wage + per hour	Preschool Certificate	
2	Childcare assistants	Living wage + per hour	NVQ Childcare & Education	Children and Young People's workforce
2	School support staff/teaching assistant	£11K to £14K+ per annum	NVQ Teaching Assistant	Teaching Assistant
2	Learning mentors	£11K to £14K+ per annum	CTLLS Adult teaching	
2	Out of school worker	Living wage + per hour	Playwork NVQ	
2	Nursery assistant	Living wage + per hour	NVQ Children, Learning & Development	
3	Childminder/home based childcare	Self-Employed	NVQ Childcare & Education /Early Years Educator	
3	Nursery practitioner	£14K to 20K+ per annum	NNEB/NVQ Childcare & Education/Early Years Educator	Early Years Educator
3	Childcare room leaders	£17K to 21K+ per annum	NNEB/NVQ Childcare & Education/Early Years Educator	Early Years Educator
3	Youth worker	£17K to £21K+ per annum	Certificate Youth Work Practice	Youth Work
3	Preschool leader	Living wage + per hour	NNEB/NVQ Childcare & Education/Early Years Educator	Early Years Educator

<sup>15</sup> [www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-qualifications-finder)

Qualification level	Job role	Possible salary range	Possible qualifications	Apprenticeships
3	Residential childcare worker	£17K to £21K+ per annum	Diploma Health & Social Care	
3	Out of school worker	Living wage + per hour	Playwork Diploma	
3	Outreach/family support worker	£17K to £21K+ per annum	Childcare & Education/NNEB	
4	Nursery practitioner/ Nursery room leader	£15K to £17K+ per annum	Early Childhood Studies/Early Years Practice	Children, Young People & Families Practitioner
3	Outreach/ Family Support Worker	£17K to £21K+ per annum	Childcare & Education/NNEB	
4	Nursery practitioner/ Nursery room leader	£15K to £17K+ per annum	Early Childhood Studies/ Early Years Practice	Children, Young People & Families Practitioner
4	Childcare practitioner	£14K to £21K+ per annum	Early Childhood Studies/ Early Years Practice	Children, Young People & Families Practitioner
5	Managers of nurseries	£23K to £28K+ per annum	Early Years Foundation Degree	Children, Young People & Families Manager
5	Early year senior Practitioners	£23K to £28K+ per annum	Early Years Foundation Degree	Early Years Senior Practitioner
5	Children's home Manager	£30K to £40K+ per annum	Social Work	Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare
6	School nurses	£24K to £30K+ per annum	Degree	
6	Health visitors	£26K to £35K+ per annum	Degree	
6	Youth workers	£15K to £25K+ per annum	Degree	
6	Teacher	£26K to £31K+ per annum	Degree with QTS	Apprenticeship including QTS

Qualification level	Job role	Possible salary range	Possible qualifications	Apprenticeships
6	Early years teacher	£26K to £28K+ per annum	Degree with EYTS	
6	PE Teacher	£22K to £30K+ per annum	Degree with QTS	
6	Special needs co-ordinators	£26K to £31K+ per annum	Degree with QTS	
7	Head Teacher	£35K to £90K+ per annum	Masters Degree	
7	Educational Psychologist	£35K to £90K+ per annum	Masters Degree	



## Appendix 2: Family Information Service (FIS)

FIS offers free impartial information and guidance about a wide range of services for children, young people and their families. The website has a Google tool which provides a translation and audio service to users. There is an opportunity to meet members of the team at our regular outreach sessions which are held in community venues such as libraries and schools.

The FIS website holds lots of information about services and activities in Slough and is a useful resource that schools and professionals may wish to refer parents to.

[www.sloughfamilyservices.org.uk](http://www.sloughfamilyservices.org.uk)

This website includes full details on:

- the Local Offer for information and services, with activities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) provides free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support services to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND.

Early Help Assessment Advisors offer advice, guidance and support to practitioners from all agencies on thresholds of needs/risk, the assessment process and signposting to appropriate services.





## Appendix 3: Apprenticeship funding

Recent legislation regarding the apprenticeship levy will benefit employers and individuals contributing to workforce development.

Apprenticeships are available to all age groups and the funding can be used for existing staff and staff new to the employer's workforce. This government reform is intended to increase the quantity and the quality of apprenticeships so more individuals have a chance to pursue a successful career.

Apprentices should be employed in a salaried job and therefore may be paid commensurate with the role and subject to market rates. These costs cannot be taken from the levy, only training costs can be paid for by the levy. In Slough Borough Council they should be given the same employment conditions as other employees.

Large employers with a gross salary bill more than £3 million each year pay 0.5% via HMRC. This money is then available to them to pay for the cost of apprentice training, but not their wages.

Employers who do not pay into the levy fund are able to share the training costs for an apprentice with the government.

- For employers with more than 50 employees there is a 90% discount on the cost of training.
- For employers with fewer than 50 employees the training is free.

Settings should contact training providers who will organise these payments.

The training must be a recognised training program. These can be found on Find an Apprenticeships<sup>16</sup> and the Institute for Apprenticeships<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://findapprenticeshiptraining.sfa.bis.gov.uk>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards>





