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| **Consultation Response Form****Consultation closing date: 16 October 2015****Your comments must reach us by that date** |
| Teachers' Professional Development Expert Group call for evidence |

**If you would prefer to respond online to this consultation please use the following link:** [**https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations**](https://www.education.gov.uk/consultations)

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

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| Textbox **Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.** |  |

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| TextBox Name: Jane Payler, Chair |
| Textbox Please tick if you are responding on behalf of your organisation. | X |
| TextBox Name of Organisation (if applicable):**TACTYC, Association for Professional Development in Early Years** |
| TextBox Address: tactyc.org@gmail.com [www.tactyc.org](http://www.tactyc.org).uk |

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial and Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's 'Contact Us' page.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, which of the following options best describes your organisation?

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| Checkbox  | Other :  TACTYC is a membership organisation with over 600 members including early years practitioners, lecturers in higher education, researchers, consultants, local authority early years teams, schools, students. Our activities include:• 'advocacy and lobbying' - providing a voice for all those engaged with the professional development of practitioners through responding to early years policy initiatives and contributing to the debate on the education and training of the UK early years workforce;• 'informing' – developing the knowledge-base of all those concerned with early years education and care by disseminating research findings through, for example, our international Early Years Journal, annual conference, website and occasional publications;• 'supporting' – encouraging informed and constructive discussion and debate and supporting practitioner reflection, the use of evidence-based practice and practitioner-research through, for example, our newsletter and website (www.tactyc.org.uk ).This response has been prepared in consultation between TACTYC Executive and the wider membership.  |

How did you hear about this call for evidence? Please select all that apply.

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| Checkbox  |  | Checkbox  | Communication from the Teachers' Professional Development Expert Group | Checkbox  |  |
| Checkbox  |  | Checkbox  | Other (please state)Foundation Years bulletin |  |  |

1 Can you give an example of great professional development practice with which you were involved, which had significant impact on pupil outcomes? If you can, describe what the participants did, what the school did, and what the external expertise was.

In answering question 1, you may wish to address:

* to what extent the professional development activity was typical of your school or group of schools compared to other schools locally;
* any links between professional development and pupil outcomes and/or career development;
* any links between professional development and appraisal/development plans; and
* how the professional development activity was chosen and evaluated.

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| There are many experiences of highly effective professional development in the early years which we could cite, which often have elements in common. For example, teachers involved in the Every Child a Talker (ECAT) programme showed significant growth in their skills and confidence in supporting children’s communication and language, as measured in self-reported before and after assessments, as well as set within a professional communication and knowledge framework. Individual setting data as well as national data recorded termly showed that children made strong progress, with the proportion of children at risk of delay decreasing while the proportion of children exceeding age expectations increased. The participants in ECAT were selected as having the capacity to disseminate and lead change in their settings; they were involved from 1-2 years in a programme of regular input from experts on knowledge and skills, modelling; individual reflection on their own resulting in individual action plans; in-school support and challenge from the tutor; and discussion over time with peers. The most effective programmes also included on-going peer coaching.**A research model of CPD**In recent years the head teacher of a Bristol Early Years (EY) National Teaching School Consortium has established a successful and growing Bristol early years mathematics strategy, along with an extensive range of continuing professional development (CPD). This strategy is based on a research model directly involving teachers and practitioners as leaders, who in turn then develop their own individual research across Bristol, developing leaders across the city. Within the research model the word training is not used, and rather than a hierarchical model of CPD, this strategy is an equal and democratic model. The whole strategy is based on a very strong model of deep level thinking through Masters level work, assessed and accredited by a higher education institution. Specialist leaders of education in early mathematics (National Teaching School) have taken the Masters level modules. Those who then have expert knowledge of the research skills support those who are developing their own knowledge about the mathematics, and there is now a leader of mathematics in every early years setting (over 180 EY settings) who involve their colleagues in research.*Successes so far:** Bristol EY Foundation Stage Profile scores have increased significantly;
* Rather than mathematics being flagged up as a weakness, case studies of OfSTED inspections have shown that EY mathematics has improved and it is now shown to be a strength in a significant number of Bristol’s early years settings;
* In their discussions with inspectors EY settings are becoming more articulate about their mathematical pedagogical knowledge and their confidence in how they support children’s mathematics has increased;
* The *Bristol Early Years Research and Development* (BEYRD) website has been developed in collaboration with the local authority: this includes the *Early Mathematics Research Hub;*
* There is a very strong EY mathematics learning community in Bristol that includes every setting and the conversations about EY mathematics continue;
* This research model of CPD is now filtering into reception classes;
* Notably this model is also used for practitioners of babies and toddlers.

Meta-analyses of research across Europe, US, Australia and UK have pointed to some important themes for effective professional learning and development: * Putting it within a system-wide framework;
* Funding of diverse types of PD as an *entitlement* to ensure access;
* Facilitated reflection and active engagement in the PD to make it work.

(Oberhuemer, P., 2013. Continuing professional development and the early years workforce. Early years, 33 (2), 103–105.) A systematic approach includes having in place a way to *evaluate and monitor change*in practice ‘after educators return to the workplace’. (Brown and Inglis 2013 cited in Hadley et al 2015: 190). Common features of such effective professional development approaches often include:* Whole setting in-house training where colleagues are able to discuss together the concepts or messages that were given by the tutor;
* Expert input with a tutor who is knowledgeable and able to differentiate to meet the needs of all learners, responding to the varying degrees of experience, knowledge and awareness of the aspect/concept being explored;
* Development over at least two sessions, or over a term or more with a gap in which participants engage in reflective activities based on applying the learning to their own contexts;
* Building a relationship with the tutor and among learners, becoming a learning community;
* Regular feedback/coaching to maintain or continue any developments in the setting over time.

Combining findings from international research, we know that professional development needs to have a range of features to make it effective, including being * Setting based
* Bringing in expertise from outside
* With the focus chosen by staff
* Allow for collaborative work between colleagues
* Include mentoring and coaching sustained over time
* Plan for and evaluate practice – change over time
* Support from internal leadership
* Wider like-minded network

(Adapted from Walter and Briggs 2012, cited in Hadley et al 2015:190, and Lightfoot & Frost 2015: 415)  Hadley, F., Waniganayake, M. & Shepherd, W. (2015) Contemporary practice in professional learning and development of early childhood educators in Australia: reflections on what works and why, Professional Development in Education, 41:2, 187-202Lightfoot, S. & Frost, D. (2015) The professional identity of early years educators in England: implications for a transformative approach to continuing professional development, Professional Development in Education, 41:2, 401-418In contrast to this form of reflective professional development, a 'top down' prescription of teaching approaches is unhelpful as it does not support teachers in critical appraisal in determining whether or how to implement approaches that will be appropriate and effective with the children in their context. The recent and continuing reduction of early years consultant support from local authorities is diminishing the opportunity for effective professional development in many areas. Where individual schools identify and buy in training these tend to be one-off events, an approach which lacks the challenge and support from a knowledgeable mentor over time which can lead to more integrated, embedded professional development. |

2 How could the standard help to promote effective professional development practice which has a positive impact on pupils’ education?

In answering question 2, you may wish to address the following questions.

* What elements of teachers’, school leaders’ and professional development providers’ practice should the standard emphasise?
* How could the standard most effectively balance supportive guidance and constructive challenge for teachers, school leaders and professional development providers?
* How could the standard encourage an evidence-informed approach to professional development?
* Are there any other standards that you have found particularly helpful? What is it about their format and content that we could learn from?
* How could the standard be introduced to schools and the wider system to maximise support and minimise workload? Please consider the process of introduction, the timescale, and the support given.

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| The standard should include the importance of reflection on current practice and robust research findings related to pedagogy from birth to five years. Teachers in the early years need professional development which is ongoing and seen as an integral part of the teacher’s role in deepening understanding of the complex range of child development, family, social and cultural influences as well as the curriculum. Teachers’ learning which grows out of their own enquiries into teaching and learning in their own practice is most powerful in supporting outcomes among the children with whom they work. This involves stepping back and utilising all the data available including observations, research showing effective practice, feedback from students and quality of assessments.Professional development is most effective when it is specific, and early years teachers need specific and explicit training in areas most relevant to the early years. Too often in schools whole-school professional development activities are primarily aimed at following Key Stages, and the needs of early years teachers can be marginalised. Current moves to bring 2-and-3-year-olds into schools makes specific early years professional development even more urgent, since most teachers will have had little emphasis on early childhood in initial teacher training. For Early Years Teachers employed in the PVI sector leading the pedagogy from birth to five the need for professional development is vital. Early Years Teachers working in sole-owned provision rely significantly on professional development provide by local authorities at a time when this invaluable support is diminishing. It is not enough for the DfE to assert that ‘Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.’ (Department for Education 2014 Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: 20). Decisions regarding where best to place their efforts for PD and how best to use the limited funding available for professional development need to be supported through a system-wide approach, as was previously possible with the support of local authorities who knew their local settings and catchment areas well.As Siraj and Kingston report: ‘… professional development should be appropriate for the workforce and organisational context in which they work. It should include guidance and research provided by experts and professional organisations specific to the area of the participants and be aligned with the relevant standards for practice. Specialised professional development is associated with better child outcomes and improved staff competences to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities.’ (OECD (2012) Starting Strong III: a quality toolbox for early childhood education and care (Accessed 7/2/2015) <http://www>.oecd.org/edu/school/startingstrongiiiaqualitytoolboxforearlychildhoodeducationandcare).’ (Siraj and Kingston 2015: An Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare Workforce and Out of School Care Workforce)(The current division of qualification and training between Early Years Teachers (birth–5) and early years Qualified Teacher Status (3-7) must be addressed, establishing a single qualification with QTS covering birth-to-seven. Specific areas that need to be covered, particularly in order to address inequalities in children’s outcomes, include * expertise in how young children learn, and the teacher’s role in establishing environments as well as respectful, sensitive and skilful interactions which maximise learning across informal, play and planned activities;
* understanding how to promote social and emotional development, including independence and self-regulation;
* the importance of opportunities to consolidate as well as extend conceptual development ;
* observational assessment and planning for individual children’s learning as well as groups, building on the interests, knowledge and experience of the child;
* identification of learners susceptible to failure in reaching education outcomes;
* effective partnership working with parents, understanding the complex natures of family situations and a range of different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds; communicating effectively with parents; understanding the importance of and supporting home learning ;
* inter-cultural approaches and additional languages;
* cross-curricular links and interdependent learning from language development to literacy to history and geography, maths and science, etc.;
* multi-professional working;
* effective leadership capabilities and skills.

The importance of the link between research and practice was highlighted in a recent report\* which examined the ‘contribution research can make to the development of teachers’ professional identity and practice, to the quality of teaching, to the broader project of school improvement and transformation, and, critically, to the outcomes for learners’ (p.3). Following extensive reviews of evidence internationally it was found that, ‘there is a vitally important and consistent story to tell about the relationship between research and teachers’ initial and continuing education. Research and enquiry has a major contribution to make to effective teacher education in a whole variety of different ways; it also contributes to the qual­ity of students’ learning in the classroom and beyond.’ (P.3) Policymakers and educational leaders as well as the producers and commissioners of research have a role to play in, ‘developing the capacity of teachers, schools and colleges, and education systems as a whole to self-evaluate and self-improve, through an ongoing process of professional reflection and enquiry.’ (P.8)Overall, it was found that:‘*Internationally, enquiry-based (or ‘research-rich’) school and college environ­ments are the hallmark of high performing education systems.* * *To be at their most effective, teachers and teacher educators need to engage with research and enquiry – this means keeping up to date with the latest developments in their academic subject or subjects and with developments in the discipline of education.*
* *Teachers and teacher educators need to be equipped to engage in enquiry-oriented practice. This means having the capacity, motivation, confidence and opportunity to do so.*
* *A focus on enquiry-based practice needs to be sustained during initial teacher education programmes and throughout teachers’ professional careers, so that disciplined innovation and collaborative enquiry are embedded within the lives of schools or colleges and become the normal way of teaching and learning, rather than the exception*.’ P.8

\*(BERA-RSA (2014) *RESEARCH AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION.**Building the capacity for a self-improving education system. Final report of the BERA-RSA Inquiry into the role of research in teacher education*. London: British Educational Research Association. [www.bera.ac.uk](http://www.bera.ac.uk))It is important for teachers to understand theory, pedagogy and the principles underpinning the Early Years Foundation Stage, relating their understanding to the implications of guidance, external pressures and marketing. This requires keeping up to date with developments within education, including policy changes and research- based approaches, to improve progress and ensure a thorough understanding of child development, learning, motivation and barriers to education success.Access to research journals, joint projects with universities, and sharing of good practice through informal and formal networks, media and e-mail are all supportive of teachers’ developing professionalism. For example, networks and forums developed by higher education institutions in relation to EYP/EYT programmes have provided a space for critical reflection and professional development. This is a useful model which can support collaborative research and provide more lasting effects than one-off CPD sessions or short courses. |

3 How could the standard help shape or improve the provision of professional development (including school-based professional development activities)?

In answering question 3, you may wish to address how this might vary for different types of provision or provider; for example:

* individual, in-school, third-party (other school, higher education institution, private or any other type of provider); and
* programmes, workshops, coaching or mentoring, enquiry or distance / on-line learning support for professional development provision teachers may access.

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| The standard should have regard to the sector it intends to address, especially as these standards for professional development will be voluntary. Meaningful representation from the early years in the maintained and PVI sectors should be included on any decision and development panels to ensure an appropriate standard is able to be achieved. We are concerned about level of early years expertise among the members of the Teachers’ Professional Development Expert Group. It is crucial that specific issues relevant to early years teachers are represented on the panel, but the current constitution of the panel suggests that the distinctive nature of early years pedagogy is not understood, recognised or valued. It is particularly important for the early years that the standards are meaningful for the practitioners and teachers within the sector. Barriers to professional development include the cost of training, supply cover and available time due to some operating hours of business, i.e. open from 8am - 6pm.On-line professional development, although accessible, can lack the elements of collaboration, interaction, dialogue and relationships. However, leaders in the field of open online, blended and distance learning put in place effective means of creating and sustaining practice-based collaborative learning, group identity and dialogic methods, which can be flexible and adaptive. Coaching and mentoring is a positive approach; affordability needs to be considered in terms of staff time. Again, online means can be used judiciously, and can facilitate extending networks beyond the immediate vicinity. However, they need to be well-designed, carefully mediated and of the highest quality. It is also important to remember the statutory right for supervision within the EYFS (DfE, 2014), and the opportunities this offers for coaching. External packages that can be bought in by the Head or manager of the setting can be useful; however, confidence and subject knowledge to deliver external materials will need to be considered, as well as appropriate support made available to those undertaking such activities. Higher education institutions can play a role in supporting in-setting delivery.Network events and joint action research projects can be very inspiring and effective if attendance and commitment is maintained. An important element here is whether staff are given financial support to attend, and whether settings are funded to provide cover during the time staff are engaged in professional development.  |

4 What short-, medium- and long-term approaches might help to remove barriers to professional development and could be reflected in the standard?

In answering question 4, you may wish to address:

* time and structures, including timetabling and impact on workload;
* costs and prioritisation; and
* sourcing, accessing and engaging with knowledge and external expertise.

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| A commitment to professional development by the leaders of the school/setting would ensure inset days, attendance at networks, conferences and training is considered for all staff. An annual cycle of planning for professional development should be related to the whole setting development needs alongside individual teacher development. This will become an increasing challenge with extension of nursery education to 30 hours per week.Joint in-school focus across a phase on particular identified aspects of learning will enable on-going discussion, exploration, and development as a part of normal work life. Although budgets are increasingly constrained, subsidised training events from the local authority, higher education institutions or charity providers may occasionally help places to be affordable. Targeted use of the Early Years Pupil Premium for high quality professional development can be a highly effective way to improve children’s outcomes. If professional development is to be effective in supporting improvements in children’s experiences, development and learning, there needs to be a careful blend of system-wide oversight and facilitation, with adaptation and adoption of approaches at local level to meet local needs - and to ensure local ownership. |

5 Is there anything else you would like to contribute to help us shape the standard so that it is useful in different types and phases of school?

In answering question 5, you may wish to include:

* any other issues that you would like the standards to address, and
* any specific, innovative ideas you would like us to consider.

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| The capacity of early years teachers to develop their own practice in response to what they learn is often constrained by external expectations from inspectors, leading teachers to adopt approaches they think will win approval rather than critically examining evidence and making informed professional decisions in regard to the children for whom they are responsible. It is vital that inspectors are specifically trained in early years pedagogy, including a clear understanding of how young children learn and how early years practitioners need to respond, to enable constructive discussions of practice. |

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

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| Textbox **Please acknowledge this reply.** | x |
| TextBox tactyc.org@gmail.com |

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, please confirm below if you would be willing to be contacted again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

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| Checkbox  | Yes | Checkbox  |  |

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/255180/Consultation-Principles-Oct-2013.pdf)

The key Consultation Principles are:

* departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
* departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and use real discussion with affected parties and experts as well as the expertise of civil service learning to make well informed decisions
* departments should explain what responses they have received and how these have been used in formulating policy
* consultation should be ‘digital by default’, but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy
* the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please email: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk

**Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.**

Completed responses should be sent to the address shown below by 16 October 2015

Send by post to: Henry Clarke, Department for Education, Sanctuary Buildings, L2 Teacher Quality Division, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Send by e-mail to: pd.expertgroup@education.gsi.gov.uk