Independent Review: Registration of the Childcare, Play and Early Years (CPEY) Workforce in Wales

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Title: Independent Review: Registration of the Childcare, Play and Early Years (CPEY) Workforce in Wales

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

Acronym/Key word	Definition
ACECQA	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPEY Workforce	Childcare, Play and Early Years Workforce
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
ELC	Early Learning and Childcare
EWC	Education Workforce Council
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NDNA	National Day Nurseries Association
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SASS	Self Assessment of Service Statement
SSSC	Scottish Social Services Council

1. Introduction

1.1 In the Childcare, Play and Early Years in Wales Workforce Plan, the Welsh Government set out the ambition 'to develop a skilled childcare and play workforce, which is highly regarded as a profession and a career of choice and recognised for the vital role the sector plays in supporting our children's development' (Welsh Government, 2017). To achieve this ambition, the 10-year strategic plan included both short-term action points, to be delivered within three years, and long-term action points, to be delivered within 10 years.

1.2 One of the long-term action points is the introduction of professional registration for the childcare, play and early years workforce (CPEY). The rationale for introducing a CPEY workforce registry in Wales includes the recognition of continuing professional development (CPD) and the opportunity for the workforce to craft their learning pathway, along which to progress as a member of a recognised profession. It also includes public assurance that measures would be taken if a member of the registry failed to adhere to the code of conduct, in line with other professions, such as teaching and social services (ibid).

1.3 The 'CPEY workforce' refers to individuals working in childcare and play for children aged 0 to 12 years, and is defined as including 'childcare practitioners and managers, childminders, leaders and assistants of playgroups and out-of-school clubs, and Flying Start practitioners' (Ibid). This is a very heterogeneous segment of the workforce. It varies in terms of types of setting where they work, job title, qualification levels, and working patterns and conditions. It is the range of these characteristics that make the introduction of a workforce registry a complex task. The aim of this study was to help the Welsh Government understand these complexities and to present potential solutions for the successful introduction of a CPEY workforce registry.

The importance of a trained and experienced CPEY workforce

1.4 There is mounting evidence that high-quality early years provision can have lasting positive effects, not only on the children who participate, but on society overall. While the evidence provides only mixed answers to the question 'What really counts as high quality?', it is clear that an experienced and trained workforce is a key driver of quality (OECD, 2020; Sylva et al, 2010).

1.5   And yet, the recognition of the importance of highly trained and experienced professionals has not translated into higher status and better working conditions. In many countries, the early years workforce is low paid and the benefits they receive, such as pension contributions, continue to be less generous than those of teachers in other education phases; meanwhile, job responsibilities and workload are high. Opportunities for continuing professional development are sporadic and progression paths unclear, which leads to a sector that struggles with recruitment and retention (Oberhuemer and Schreyer, 2022; OECD, 2020; Pascal et al., 2020).

1.6   Increasing efforts have been made to establish a long-term strategy at the national level and across countries in the past twenty years. A report published by the Organisation for the Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019) explored measures that have succeeded in helping the early years sector in different countries to retain and develop skilled staff, such as: improving wages and working conditions; increasing qualification levels, for example through the provision of appropriate monetary incentives; promoting the profession's status; attracting more men into the workforce; and balancing the need to upskill the workforce while keeping routes into the profession open to workers of different educational backgrounds.

1.7   Early years services in Wales are based on a mixed economy of providers, whereby public and private providers operate alongside each other. Such a system makes it particularly hard to establish a sound evidence base because it leads to a disjointed and incomplete data collection system. This, in turn, hinders clear oversight of policies impacts on all early years professionals. Some important questions to consider are then 'How do we overcome this fragmentation and craft policies based on a comprehensive and up-to-date evidence base?', 'How can we provide the right incentives to improve quality?', 'How can we monitor workers development efforts and ensure that only those fit to practice do so?'. Effective policies provide incentives both at an individual and system level, above all if these incentives are placed within a long-term strategy of workforce development. And in this context, the establishment of a workforce registry can represent one answer to the above questions.

Workforce registries: an overview

1.8   Workforce registries are online data systems designed to track and promote the education, training and experience of workers. They aim to be a one-stop-shop for professionals to find links to training, job listings, industry-related news and professional development planning tools. But they are not just an online database.

1.9   In the case of the early years workforce, for example, through the validation of the professional and educational achievements of early years professionals, registries aim to help raise the status of the profession by promoting a well-trained, educated, supported and fairly compensated workforce.

1.10   In this sense, registries can benefit practitioners, employers, researchers and policy-makers. Individual participants can build a profile of education and training, their accreditation and employment history. Practitioners can use the registry to identify their strengths and the areas where they need more professional development, and then to find and register for approved training. Providers use registries to document the qualifications of their staff, monitor staff training activity, and use listed knowledge and competencies as a checklist to fill gaps in their knowledge and experitse through a tailored professional development plan. They can also verify previous training, employment trajectories, salaries and titles. From a research and policy-making point of view, registries act as a coordinating mechanism for verified data on the early years workforce and can therefore give policy-makers vital information on which to base policies.

1.11   The characteristics of existing workforce registries vary from system to system. In some systems registration is compulsory, in others it is voluntary. Sometimes they are free; other times they require individuals to pay a small fee. This shows that there is no one-size-fits-all registry, but consensus needs to be reached in the specific system where they are set up to make them effective tools.

An independent review: aims and report structure

1.12   This report was commissioned to provide an independent review of the CPEY workforce, and to inform actions and next steps for its professional registration. In line with the objectives of the review, this study addressed the following research questions:

- RQ1: Who makes up the CPEY workforce in Wales? What are their job roles and in which setting type do they work?

- RQ2: How are CPEY workers classified and regarded? Are parts of the workforce already registered with existing registries and/or through professional bodies? Are CPEY workers considered as part of the education sector, the care sector, or other sectors?

- RQ3: In the case of a new registry being set up by the Welsh government, should all CPEY workers be registered? If not, are there specific subgroups that should be registered?

- RQ4: What are the experiences of other Administrations in registering the childcare and play or related workforces? What lessons can we learn from them and apply to the Welsh context?

- RQ5: What are the potential options, timelines and any identifiable financial costs for moving forward?

1.13 In the sections below we will provide an overview of the methodology used in this study. We will then report on findings from the three phases of the project: the desk-based research, interviews with key stakeholders in Wales and other administrations where a registry is in place (Scotland) or being set up (Australia), and the stakeholder engagement workshop. We then bring all the findings together to provide an overview of key areas of agreement and divergence on how to move forward with the proposed registry. Finally, we provide recommendations to the Welsh Government on the next steps to be taken to set up a workforce registry and to ensure that the full range of potential benefits materialise.

2. Methodology

2.1   We conducted a mixed-methods study, using desk-based research, semi-structured interviews and a stakeholder engagement workshop. The table below shows the planned alignment between research questions and methods.

Table 2.1: Alignment between research questions and methods

Research Questions	Desk-based research	Interviews	Workshop
RQ1: Who makes up the CPEY workforce in Wales? What is their job role and in which setting to they work?	X		
RQ2: How are CPEY workers classified and regarded? Are parts of the workforce already registered in existing registries and/or professional bodies? Are CPEY workers considered as part of the education sector, the care sector, or other sectors?	X	X	
RQ3: In the case of a new Registry being set up by the Welsh government, should all CPEY workers be registered? If not, are there specific subgroups that should be registered?		X	X
RQ4: What are the experiences of other Administrations in registering the childcare and play or related workforces? What lessons can we learn from them and apply to the Welsh context?	X	X	
RQ5: What are the potential options, timelines and any identifiable financial costs for moving forward?	X	X	

Desk-based research

2.2   Targeted desk-based research was conducted in order to provide a landscape view of the CPEY workforce in Wales and case studies of early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce registries in other countries. In relation to the research focused on Wales, the starting point was the Self Assessment of Service Statement

(SASS) data for July-August 2021 undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), which the Welsh Government provided. As the SASS data does not include all the CPEY workforce, we searched for further data in reports published by key sector organisations, such as the Childcare Wales Learning & Working Mutually (CWLWM) partners (Clybiau Plant Cymru – Kids' Clubs; Blynyddoedd Cynnar Cymru, Early Years Wales; Mudiad Meithrin; National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Cymru; PACEY Cymru), Play Wales, Social Care Wales, the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and the Welsh Government.

2.3   We considered supplementing this data with analysis of the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS), a national survey of private households in the United Kingdom with a quarterly sample of approximately 90,000 individuals. The quarterly LFS provides detailed information on demographic characteristics, education and training, earnings and employment conditions and can easily be accessed through the UK Data Service. To ensure we used data from a similar time frame as the SASS data, and to avoid using data collected in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, we examined data for the first three quarters of 2021 (the most up-to-date at the time this report was written) with the aim of creating rolling averages and stabilising results. However, after an initial analysis and consideration of the data limitations, the LFS data was not included in the final report.

2.4   Several factors led to the decision to exclude this data. First, while the LFS has a high degree of accuracy and reliability, the biases that are associated with all sample-based methods are still present. Therefore, the LFS provides estimates rather than definitive figures and these estimates can be quite erratic for small geographical areas such as Wales. Second, historically the occupation categories were not always in line with those of interest for this report, but were changed in 2021 to provide a better alignment with the job titles and roles in the early years sector. For example, the occupational code 'Childminders and related occupations', which used to group childminders with au pairs and nannies, was split into two separate categories, one for childminders and one for nannies and au pairs. This was a positive step, but it also meant that 2021 was a transition year for these codes. In fact, when we looked at the new occupation codes, not all categories were present in the data for the first three quarters of 2021, precluding the possibility of using rolling averages across quarters to stabilise the data. Third, and related to the

second point, the LFS figures were in some cases very different from those received from stakeholders in Wales. This could be due to a variety of reasons, including the points mentioned above but also the fact that during and after the pandemic the sector has undergone significant changes. With LFS data being self-reported it is likely that figures derived from this period were imprecise. To avoid misleading the reader with conflicting information we therefore decided to omit reporting LFS data.

2.5   There are also some limitations to the SASS data which are important to note. The SASS data also relies on self-reported information and is not completed by all registered settings. The July-August 2021 data was completed by 86 per cent of providers and it therefore provides an underestimate of the full number of workers in registered settings. Importantly, the SASS does not include unregistered childcare services, such as nannies. An additional complication with estimates based on this data, is that some workers will have more than one job and so may be counted multiple times.

2.6   Case studies of other countries were focused on those that already had workforce registries (Scotland, the United States), and those with similar ECEC systems and exploring the potential of a workforce registry (Australia). Nordic countries, which have a reputation for high-quality ECEC, were also considered but not included in the final report (see Annex D). The rationale behind this choice was that these countries do not have workforce registries and therefore could not contribute any new understanding for how a workforce registry might operate in Wales.

Interviews

2.7   Findings from both strands of the desk-based research informed the next stage of the research, which was based on a series of interviews with Welsh CPEY stakeholders, organisations responsible for the early years workforce registry in Scotland and those exploring a workforce registry in Australia. Most interviews were conducted in small groups to maximise the number of people providing input and lasted no more than 60 minutes. See Annex A and B for interview topic guides and a list of organisations respectively.

2.8   To understand the experiences around registration and/or how it would be perceived in Wales, 11 semi-structured interviews were conducted with

representatives from the following organisations: Social Care Wales; Education Workforce Council; Early Years Wales; Mudiad Meithrin; National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) Cymru; PACEY Cymru; Play Wales; Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs; Care Inspectorate Wales; Unison Cymru; and Local Authority Childcare and Play Teams.

2.9 To understand more about, and learn from, other countries' experiences of implementing a workforce registry, we conducted interviews with representatives from the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) who are responsible for the Scottish early years workforce registry, and the Scottish Government; and individuals from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). Whilst additional case studies from other countries were included in the desk-based research, interviews were only conducted with countries whose experiences could provide insights that were relevant for the Welsh context.

2.10 Interviews were transcribed verbatim, anonymised and analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2021) using NVivo software. The approach taken was a mixture of deductive and inductive: based on the interview topic guides we began with a list of broad themes to structure the analysis, such as who should be included in the registry, whether the registry should be free or fee-based and the role of qualifications. However, this was also an iterative process and as interviews were analysed additional themes and sub-themes were added, based on the issues raised by participants. For example, participants were not asked about the pay and working conditions of the CPEY sector; however, this issue was prevalent as participants raised it themselves in relation to some of the other questions discussed. We therefore included a sub-theme of 'low pay of the workforce' in relation to a broader theme 'the wider context of the CPEY workforce'. The process of analysing the interviews involved detailed reading of the interview transcripts and coding of the text under all relevant themes and sub-themes. Once all interviews were coded, all themes and the text coded within them were reviewed, which resulted in some merging, some separation and reorganisation of the themes.

2.11 The Welsh stakeholder interviews were analysed together, using one evolving coding framework. This was the most appropriate approach, not only in order to preserve anonymity and because interviews largely took place in groups, but also because the objective of the interviews was to take all relevant viewpoints into

account, rather than to highlight the relative position of different groups. The interviews with Scotland and Australia were analysed separately with a separate thematic framework, in order to focus on lessons learnt that can helpfully inform the setup of a registry in Wales.

Stakeholder engagement workshop

2.12 The final stage of the project involved further engagement with stakeholders through a two-hour workshop, with the aim of identifying areas of consensus and of divergence among the group, and from these to draw final conclusions and recommendations for the Welsh Government on how to best move forward with the creation of a workforce registry.

2.13 The workshop took place virtually and included both stakeholders from Wales and representatives from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Social Services Commission to gain further insights from the Scottish experience in setting up a registry (see Annex C for a list of organisations). The workshop was designed following the key principles and stages of design thinking (DT) in order to maximise collaborative innovation but was adapted to fit the two-hour online format. The workshop was structured into three sections:

- **Presentation of initial findings to stakeholders.** In the first section stakeholders were reminded of the objectives of the independent review into a CPEY workforce registry in Wales. They were then briefed on the findings from both the desk-based research and interviews, in relation to the knowns and unknowns about the CPEY workforce in Wales, and how workforce registries operate in other countries, focusing on Scotland but also drawing on examples from the United States. Finally, the team presented the key themes that emerged during the interviews and that were the focus of the rest of the workshop.

- **Consensus building in breakout groups.** Participants were organised into three groups ensuring a mixture of representatives from different organisations in each group. Each group was provided with discussion questions and prompts in relation to one of the three key topic areas:

  o defining the CPEY workforce and who should be included in a workforce registry

- o the practicalities of a registry, such as: whether it should be free or fee-based, how to handle the registration of workers who cover dual roles, and the conceptualisation of the workforce within the care versus education debate

- o the role of qualifications, continuing professional development and other related elements in a registry

The groups were then tasked with identifying points on which there is agreement, any outstanding issues to be resolved and suggestions on how to resolve these issues.

- **Discussion, feedback and next steps.** In the final section of the workshop all groups came back together and one person from each group briefly summarised the areas where consensus has been reached, ongoing challenges and ideas for next steps. The discussion was facilitated by Natalie Perera, CEO of the Education Policy Institute and a visual summary of the discussion was shared in real time. All stakeholders were invited to feedback on other groups' discussions. The workshop closed with a summary of the key takeaways from the consensus building exercise and next steps.

2.14   After analysing the workshop discussion, we synthesed the findings from the three stages of this research in order to arrive at the final recommendations for the Welsh Government.

3. Findings from desk-based research

The CPEY workforce in Wales

3.1 For the purposes of this review the focus is on the CPEY workforce as defined in the 10-year strategic plan, i.e. individuals who work with children aged 0-12 years within childcare or play (Welsh Government, 2017). However, we acknowledge the importance of the wider workforce supporting children, specifically in education and in the case of workers covering multiple roles. Therefore, we include information on nursery teachers and support workers. We do not include residential childcare workers who are already under the remit of social care. We also focus on workers rather than volunteers, though we explored the inclusion of volunteers in the interviews and stakeholder engagement workshop.

3.2 Estimating the exact size of the CPEY workforce in Wales is difficult and highlights one of the potential contributions a workforce registry could make. Some parts of the workforce are already registered individually: this includes nursery school teachers and nursery learning support workers, who work in schools and are required to register with the Education Workforce Council (EWC) and childminders who are required to register with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Additionally, childcare services are required to register with CIW, provided they are open for more than two hours in any one day and at least six days in any calendar year (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2020), though individual workers in these settings are not currently required to register.

3.3 The case of playworkers deserves a separate mention because while individuals working with children aged 0-12 through playwork are considered part of the CPEY workforce, and therefore a group to potentially include in the registry, the definition of playworker is much wider. Playworker is defined as 'a person who uses play as part of their work or volunteering activity; or they manage or coordinate play' (Welsh Government, 2010). The playwork workforce includes those working in a broad range of settings, including play centres, out of school clubs, staffed adventure playgrounds and Integrated Children's Centres (Play Wales, 2020). Estimating the number of playworkers is particularly difficult, as they also work in settings that are not registered with CIW, and with a different age range than the remit of the CPEY workforce as defined above (Play Wales, 2020).

3.4   The most recent estimates of the CPEY workforce come from Care Inspectorate Wales SASS data (Table 3.1) which shows the number of individuals working at registered childcare services or registered as childminders as of July-August 2021. Based on these figures the overall size of the workforce is approximately 14,800 people, of whom 1,100 were childminders and just over 13,500 were workers at children's day care (including creche, full day care, out of school care, sessional day care and open access play provision).

Table 3.1: Number of workers at registered CPEY services, July-August 2021

Type of care	Number of staff
Childminder	1,100
Children's day care workers	13,656
Creche	57
Full day care	9,814
Open access play provision	76
Out of school care	1,803
Sessional day care	1,906
Total	14,756

Source: CIW SASS data

3.5   As described in the methodology section, there are some limitations to the SASS data, which relies on self-reported information and is not returned by 100 per cent of providers. Importantly, these figures do not include unregistered childcare services, such as settings operating for less than two hours a day and nannies. An additional complication with estimates based on this data, is that some workers will have more than one job within the sector or in other sectors and depending on whether they report one or more of their roles the figures may represent an overestimate or an underestimate (Stedman and Lewis, 2022). Early years teachers are also not represented in these figures. According to the Education Workforce Council in 2020 there were 116 nursery teachers and nursery support workers (40 teachers and 76 support workers).

3.6   Obtaining reliable data on the number of playworkers was less straightforward[1]. As Table 3.1 shows, the CIW SASS data only capture a small fraction of the play work sector (76 workers in open access play provision and 1,803 in out of school childcare).This further highlights the limitations of the SASS data(because the CIW SASS data is based on registered settings and relies on the setting itself reporting against the questions. Settings may interpret questions differently, and even where a staff member holds a playwork qualification may choose to report them as a childcare worker where they also hold a childcare qualification. A significant proportion of the open access playwork workforce are based in unregistered settings (Play Wales 2020). Separately , Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs, the national organisation for Out of School Childcare Clubs in Wales, estimated that there were 5,500 playworkers (with an additional 1,000 volunteers) in March 2020 in the clubs they support (Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs , 2020).

3.7   Finally, an additional difficulty with estimating the size of the CPEY workforce in Wales is that many of these categories are not clear cut and overlap, for example out of school care may include playworkers and childcare workers. With all these caveats in mind, in Table 3.2 we combine different data sources to give a more complete picture, though some parts of the workforce, such as nannies, are still notably missing due to a lack of reliable data (see methodology section on why figures from the Labour Force Survey, which has estimates for the number of nannies, were not included). Taking the most recent estimates from the data summarised in Table 3.2, the overall size of the CPEY workforce in Wales is approximately 20,300 workers.

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[1] Playworkers operate in a range of diverse settings. The workforce includes those working in open access playwork provision and out of school childcare clubs. For registration purposes, Open Access playwork is defined as provision where children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters and they are not prevented from coming and going as they wish. Out of School Childcare is defined as childcare outside of the child's full time school day and includes care provided before school, after school and during the school holidays. They may be delivered as standalone clubs or as part of full day care provision.

Settings that run for less than 2 hours a day or for fewer than 5 days a year are not regulated and are unregistered.

Table 3.2: Combining estimates of the CPEY workforce

	CIW SASS data (Jul-Aug 2021)	Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Club (May 2020)	Education Workforce Council (2020)	Total
Childminders	1,100			
Childcare practitioners	13,580			
Nursery teachers and support workers			116	
Playworkers (out of school clubs)		5,553		
Total				20,349

Sources: CIW SASS data (2021); O'Toole, (2020); Education workforce Council (2020)

Case studies of workforce registries in other countries

3.8 This section summarises findings from the desk-based research on the experiences of other administrations in setting up and/or managing a workforce registry. The focus is on countries whose early years sector is similar in structure to the one present in Wales (i.e., based on a mixed-market system) and have some experience of implementing an early years workforce registry, which includes Scotland and most states in the United States. Additionally, Australia was included as a country that is also exploring the introduction of a workforce registry at federal level.

3.9 Nordic countries were considered for inclusion, given that they are often used as a benchmark of quality to strive towards in terms of their early childhood education and care. However, the ECEC systems in the Nordic countries are based on quite different historical, philosophical and pedagogical traditions, and are strongly decentralised and autonomous systems, making comparison with the Welsh context difficult. In addition, the workforce is quite homogeneous in terms of qualification levels, which are generally high, and benefits from a high status in society. One could argue that these characteristics make the presence of a workforce registry unnecessary. Therefore, we did not include these countries in the discussion of our findings (See Annex D for a summary of the ECEC systems in Nordic Countries).

Similarly New Zealand was initially included given the country's increasing focus on ECEC quality improvement. However, it does not currently have, nor plans to have, an early years workforce registry.

Scotland

3.10   Scotland is the first country in the UK to have a fully regulated early years workforce (Hevey, 2017), though different organisations are responsible for registering different parts of the workforce. Three registries are currently in place for the following groups of early learning and childcare (ELC) workers:

- early years teachers (nursery and reception year), who are registered with the General Teaching Council

- childcare workers in day care services for children, who are registered with the Scottish Social Services Commission (SSSC)

- childminders, who are registered with the Care Inspectorate

3.11   The registration of these three groups of early years workers came about at different times following the different histories of development of the three registration bodies. The General Teaching Council is the longest established body, set up in 1965 under the Teaching Council (Scotland) Act 1965. Since 2005 it has been a legal requirement for all teachers working in Scottish local council schools to be registered with them; this was extended to independent and grant-aided schools in 2017. The council was created to give teachers more control over required entry qualifications, following a teaching staff shortage and a relaxation of entry requirements and an associated decline in standards in the profession in the 1960s (Matheson, 2015). To become an early years teacher it is necessary to have a degree-level qualification and qualified teacher status (Siraj and Kingston, 2015). To maintain their registration teachers are required to engage with ongoing Professional Review and Development (The General Teaching Council for Scotland, nd).

3.12   The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) was more recently established in 2001 with the aim of protecting social service users and raising standards and supporting professionalism of the social services workforce (Siraj and Kingston, 2015). Initially the registry was focused on social care and was part of a drive to professionalise the social care workforce as this became a more significant sector in

response to the needs of an ageing population. Since 2003 social workers have been required to register with the SSSC following the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 (Healthcare News Scotland, 2019). Other parts of the social care workforce were gradually introduced over time, and childcare workers, along with other groups, were phased in following new legislation in 2009 (Care Inspectorate Scotland, nd). The rationale for the registration is improved professionalisation of the workforce, protecting those it serves, raising and making clear expected standards, and requiring particular qualifications to ensure a high-quality workforce. The hope is also that this professionalisation will encourage people to join the workforce and that eventually wages will reflect the professional standing (Healthcare News Scotland, 2019). Workers across the public, private and voluntary sector are included, but not volunteers. There is no dual registration – so workers already required to register with another body are not included (Scottish Government, 2009). The 2009 regulations meant that childcare workers were now required to be registered as soon as practically possible, with a grace period, and taking into account the number of applications that need to be processed. The government also held a consultation in advance of the legislation and held events with the voluntary and private sector. The implementation of the registry was slow, with difficulty getting organisations to comply initially (Scottish Government, 2009). There are three levels of registration with the SSSC, associated with different levels of responsibility and qualifications: lead practitioner/manager, core/independent practitioner and support worker (Hevey, 2017). Being registered commits childcare workers to follow the SSSC professional code of conduct, continuing professional development, as well as to hold or be working towards the required qualifications for their level of registration (Scottish Social Services Council, nd).

3.13   Finally, the Care Inspectorate was established in 2011, following a longer history of multiple organisations that were responsible for monitoring different social care services (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE); the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) and The Care Commission). Childminders have been legally required to register with the Care Inspectorate since it was established, following the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 (the Act). Though childminders are encouraged to follow the SSSC code of conduct they are not required to and there are no specific qualification requirements for registering as a childminder (Siraj and Kingston, 2015). Childminders were not included in SSSC

registration as they were recognised as having a unique role compared to other parts of the workforce. Often being the sole worker in their setting, it is potentially more challenging to attend training and gain qualifications and their roles are less clearly designated, potentially taking on all three of the distinguished roles of manager, practitioner and support workers (Scottish Executive, 2006). However, their exclusion from the same qualifications and training requirements as those registered with the SSSC leads to more diversity in terms of quality amongst childminders (Siraj and Kingston, 2015). This particularly affects people living in very rural parts of Scotland who may not have access to other choices of early learning and childcare, and younger and more vulnerable children who are more likely to be cared for by a childminder (Ibid). This problem is recognised amongst childminders themselves and the Scottish Childminding Association are calling for training to be made a requirement of registration to ensure high standards of quality as well as increase professionalisation (ibid). The Independent Review of Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (2015) made recommendations to make induction or pre-registration training a requirement for registration to provide a childminding service under the Public Services Reform Act. Additionally, the review called for childminders to be registered with the SSSC with the same conditions as the majority of the early learning and childcare workforce (Ibid). As well as raising standards of childminder services, including childminders in the SSSC registry would also bring benefits to childminders in terms of advocating for better pay and conditions as well as support with qualifications (Ibid).

3.14   For each of the three registries a registration fee is charged to individuals, as detailed in Table 3.3. In the case of childcare workers registered with the SSSC the level of the fee is dependent on the category under which workers register, with higher fees for managers and lower levels of fees for practitioners and support workers. Though information on the cost of setting up and maintaining the registries was sought, this information is not publicly available.

Table 3.3: Registration requirements for the early learning and childcare workers in Scotland

Workforce group	Registration body	Qualifications	Other requirements	Fees
Early years teachers	The General Teaching Council	Degree level teaching qualification and qualified teacher status	Continuous engagement in professional review and development	Annual registration fee of £65 for all registrants
Childcare workers	Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)	Three levels of qualifications for associated levels of seniority: managers; practitioners; support workers	To follow the SSSC code of conduct; to complete continuing professional learning within each registration period	Three levels of fees: £80 for managers; £35 for practitioners and £25 for support workers. Fee for Disclosure check and renewal fee every 3-5 years
Childminders	Care Inspectorate	No qualifications required	Encouraged to follow SSSC code of conduct but not required to	Registration fee of £28 and annual continuation fee of £17

3.15   The SSSC registry is currently under review, with a public consultation which was open between the 20 December 2021 and the 14 March 2022, with proposals to be taken to the Council meeting at the time this report is being written (SSSC, nd b). Proposed changes include reducing the number of parts of the registry (from 22 to five, with ELC workers as one of the five categories), removing the registration period which is either five or three years and bringing in an ongoing registration period, changing the grace period within which workers have to apply and a number of changes to qualifications. The inclusion of childminders in the SSSC registry is not one of the changes being considered.

United States

3.16   Current ECEC policies in the United States have a focus on improving quality of
        provision for children under five at their core. These efforts started about a decade
        ago and have received significant and sustained financial support through both
        states' respective Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grants and Race to
        the Top–Early Learning Challenge awards.

3.17   A key element of the quality improvement plans relates to the development of a
        skilled and experienced workforce. The focus is particularly strong on training given
        that no state requires early years professionals to obtain a degree prior to being
        hired (Ackerman, 2016). Workforce registries have been set up as one way to keep
        track of these improvement plans.

3.18   The majority of states (48 out of 51) now have some form of early childcare and
        education workforce registry (McLean et al., 2021), though these have different
        characteristics in different states. The main function of the registries is to track the
        training needs of the childcare workforce and most registry websites also facilitate
        individuals searching for training (Ackerman, 2016). This demonstrates a clear
        focus on staffing development and quality improvement (National Workforce
        Registry Alliance, nd a). Additionally, the registries provide data on the size and
        characteristics of the early years workforce to inform policymakers (National
        Workforce Registry Alliance, nd b). During the pandemic the registries fulfilled many
        additional roles including keeping providers informed on Covid-related
        announcements and recommendations; matching workers with available roles; and
        distribution of additional funding (National Workforce Registry Alliance, nd a).
        Across states there is a mix of mandatory, voluntary and incentivised registries
        which affects how representative they are of the ECEC workforce (Ackerman,
        2016). Incentives for registration used by states include financial incentives, as well
        as access to training that is not publicly available (Ibid). A survey of all U.S state
        registry websites in 2016 found that none of the registries charged a fee (Ibid).

Australia

3.19   Australia does not yet have an early years workforce registry at federal level, though
        most states register early childhood teachers, i.e. professionals who hold an early
        childhood degree, and Australia is planning to introduce registration of early
        childhood teachers across all states over the next three years as part of their 'ten-
        year strategy to ensure a sustainable, high-quality children's education and care

workforce 2022–2031' (ACECQA, 2021). At this stage, when early childhood teachers are required to be registered, this happens in relation to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, which is less tailored to early childhood teachers working outside of school settings (Ibid).

3.20   As part of the same strategy Australia plans to introduce a system of registration for educators who are not teachers over the next six years, with the same rationale as for teacher registration: with benefits to workers in terms of professional recognition and increased access to professional development; as well as benefits to employers in relation to checking workers qualifications (Ibid). Australia is in the early stages of this process, undertaking a similar exercise as this report, researching options for a national registration system at particular qualification levels, and looking to learn from international examples of successful registration systems (Ibid).

3.21   An additional benefit of a registry is the potential of real-time workforce data and to this end Australia also plans to undertake a national workforce census every three years, with a long-term plan to develop a live national workforce database over the next ten years (Ibid).

3.22   The key learning points from the case studies in terms of how registries operate in other countries are:

- There is not a one-size-fits-all way to set up a workforce registry. The examples of Scotland and the United States show a wide range of features that can work in terms of who should be included in the registry, whether the registration should be free or fee-based, voluntary or mandatory.

- In the case of existing registries, only staff working in registered settings are included. Volunteers and people working in unregistered settings are not required to register, neither are nannies and au-pairs as they are considered a private service.

- The conceptualisation of the workforce as working in 'care' or 'education' has consequences in terms of how the registry is set up. Scotland provides an example of a workforce that is registered across multiple registration bodies, with those working in school settings registered within education, childminders registered with the Care Inspectorate and childcare workers registered within social services. On the other hand, in the United States registries were set up

specifically for the early years workforce, not in connection with existing registries, and are very closely linked to quality improvement efforts on a wider scale.

4.   Findings from interviews

4.1   In this section we summarise the key findings from the group interviews with representatives from various Welsh sector organisations. Where relevant, we include findings from the interviews with Scottish and Australian representatives in order to draw lessons from their experiences of setting up a workforce registry. The findings are reported anonymously and organised thematically.

Defining the CPEY workforce and who should be included in a registry

4.2   Respondents acknowledged that the CPEY workforce is diverse, and it includes people working in many different types of settings and many roles. While there was agreement among participants that the sector should be seen as a whole, with every segment of the workforce playing an important part in children and families' lives, there was not full consensus on who to include in a workforce registry and how.

4.3   People working in day care settings, such as practitioners employed in creches, full day care centres and sessional day care settings, were seen as an obvious segment of the CPEY workforce to include in a registry and one that did not present difficulties. Other groups were considered more complicated in the sense that their inclusion in a registry would require giving more thought, and finding solutions, for several issues to avoid serious unintended consequences. Below we discuss these groups more in detail.

Playworkers

4.4   Playworkers are themselves a diverse group, as described in the previous section, which includes people with multiple roles and/or working in multiple settings, staff in unregistered settings, volunteers, students and seasonal workers. They also work with children beyond the age range established in the 10-year plan and their work overlaps with that of youth workers, who register with the Education Workforce Council.

4.5   Participants explained it is complicated to define where playwork sits in relation to the rest of the CPEY workforce. This is not only because of the broader age range of the children, but also because it differs from both education and care in terms of the philosophical approach (for example valuing play in itself rather than focusing on the educational benefits of play), as well as the skillset required when focusing on

play. One participant also explained that there would be benefits from greater integration in terms of understanding playwork and receiving playwork training for other parts of the CPEY workforce who work with children under the age of three.

4.6   These unique characteristics of playwork make the practicalities of registration less straightforward. Some interview participants felt that playworkers are a marginalised part of the CPEY workforce and that including them in the registry could help with having more information about them and with supporting them in their profession. These participants, therefore, felt it is important that playworkers do not miss out on the opportunity to register. On the other hand, some participants felt that accounting for all the nuances of this group (including the different age range included in playwork, the focus on play that is distinct from both education and care, and the parts of the workforce that work in unregistered settings, are seasonal workers or volunteers, discussed above) through a registry would be difficult. It was suggested that if playworkers could not be included in a way that accommodates their diverse characteristics, then they should not be included in the CPEY registry, as there were fears about a detrimental impact on an already shrinking group.

Childminders

4.7   Childminders are a group that presents some important differences because they are self-employed and already required to register (as settings) with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Some interview respondents explained that the bureaucracy of the current registration requirement is already felt as a burden by some childminders and there was a perception that this was one of the factors that had contributed to some people leaving the profession. The number of childminders registered with CIW decreased from 2,025 in March 2020 (CIW, 2021) to 1,100 in July-August 2021 (according to the SASS data), but numbers had been declining even before the pandemic (CIW, 2021). Therefore, there were concerns that adding further registration requirements for this group would compound this issue.

4.8   Participants acknowledged that childminders have different characteristics to the rest of the CPEY workforce: they are self-employed, often work on their own, and for these reasons potentially have limited capacity for CPD. Some argued that childminders should be included in the registry but made a case for a phased approach, with other groups being registered first and childminders only included once the registry is well-established. Interview participants also made clear that

registration of childminders would need to be approached very carefully, as already the number of childminders has reduced significantly since the pandemic. In the context of talking about older generation childminders in particular, one participant highlighted the need to ensure that registration did not introduce a barrier by requiring good IT skills to complete the registration process. Many agreed that if childminders are to be included in the registry there is a need to make clear what the benefits are as well as to avoid confusion in relation to the different types of registration. One participant also stressed the importance of clear terminology to avoid families getting confused about the status of particular settings that they use.

4.9   In Scotland, childminders are registered as a service with the Care Inspectorate and are not included in the ELC workforce registry with the SSSC. Interview participants from Scotland made clear there are no plans to include childminders in the SSSC register in future, precisely because they are mindful of the burden already placed on childminders as sole traders and they do not want to add to this. To be included in funded places under Scotland's early years expansion, childminders already have to meet the same qualifications criteria as those on the register. This means there would not necessarily be an upskilling benefit of including childminders on the register.

Nannies

4.10   Nannies are employed by parents and currently have the option of joining CIW's Childcare at Home Voluntary Approval Scheme. Interview participants were hesitant about whether nannies should be included in a registry. This is because some participants felt that it was unclear what additional benefits could be gained from being part of a CPEY registry beyond those already provided by the voluntary approval scheme. Participants also cautioned against introducing barriers to working as a nanny by requiring registration.

4.11   In Scotland nannies are not included in the registry because they are not regulated by the Care Inspectorate and are therefore beyond the remit of the register. One participant from the Scottish interviews explained that they are 'an entirely private workforce' and there are currently no plans to change this.

4.12   Interview participants gave different suggestions in relation to including people working in unregistered settings. Some see it as important because it would be beneficial to know more about these workers and better support them, while others do not see it as practical. Discussing whether workers in unregistered settings should be included in a registry led participants to reflect on whether the registry should be focused on individual workers' qualifications and roles or types of settings. One participant explained that a worker's qualifications are a more important criteria for whether or not they should be included in a workforce registry, noting that which settings people end up working in is partly a product of luck or opportunity. For example, they added, a highly qualified worker may be based in an unregistered setting because that particular job suits them, and they should not be excluded from a registry because of this. The fact remains that including workers in unregistered settings would make the logistics of registration difficult because they are many in number and, by virtue of being employed in unregistered settings, they are difficult to identify.

4.13   In Scotland the legislation for registration is setting-based and the registry focuses on registered settings only. Lines of inclusion are drawn based on whether workers are employed in settings which are regulated by the Care Inspectorate. This approach is in line with one of the main functions of the registry which was described in interviews as relating to safeguarding. It is also in line with the experience of the registries in the United States, where only people working in registered settings are part of a workforce registry.

Workers employed in multiple roles

4.14   Interview participants highlighted that many people in the workforce hold multiple roles**.** For example, someone might work as an early years support worker during the day and as a play worker after school hours. Relatedly, participants raised the issue that some parts of the CPEY workforce are already registered, for example early years teachers and support workers are registered with the Education Workforce Council and childminders are registered (as a setting) with Care Inspectorate Wales. Interview participants offered a few suggestions for how to accommodate this, including registering each worker only once under their main role determined by the proportion of time spent in different roles, and having a

system either to note other roles or to coordinate with other registration bodies to avoid the burden of dual registration.The approach taken in social care was given as an example for accommodating different roles within the same registration body, where people with different roles register for one role, based on the amount of time they spend in each role, but their other positions are also recorded. An alternative position held by some was that it is important to register each worker under each role with the appropriate registration body, regardless of how much time is spent in each position.

4.15 Again, the Scottish experience provides an example of how to handle dual roles. Generally speaking, workers are required to register under each role (though they only pay one registration fee as discussed below), unless they are registered with another regulatory body, such as the General Teaching Council, in which case they do not need to register with SSSC.[2] The rationale behind this rule is, one participant explained, to avoid the same worker being regulated differently by alternative bodies. The register itself has three levels of registration related to three broad role categories: managers, practitioners and support workers. Of course, the number of roles that people can have exceeds these three simple categories with more nuanced distinctions. However whilst individual job titles might be more varied workers have to place themselves within the most appropriate of the three categories, based on qualification level. One participant from the Scottish interviews reflected that it might be beneficial to have more categories, in line with the development of different types of roles within the sector. Nevertheless, they also felt that the simplicity of having a small number of categories for registration was an advantage.

Workforce conceptualisation and status

4.16 The diversity and multiplicity of roles covered by the CPEY workforce also raises issues of how workers are conceptualised. Historically, care and education have been thought of as separate disciplines and this approach has translated into a split view of the workforce and its practices. Despite efforts to integrate the two components as both necessary for the provision of high-quality early years services, the debate is ongoing in many countries. In turn, how CPEY workers are conceptualised has important implications for the set-up of a registry in terms of

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[2] The SSSC website lists all regulatory bodies that this rule applies to at

whether a role should be considered as falling within the 'care' or the 'education' remit, if the registry should sit within an already existing organisation and, if so, which one, or if a completely new and separate registry should be set up.

4.17   The interviews showed that even in Wales the care versus education debate is far from settled. Some participants suggested that Social Care Wales would be well placed to have responsibility for the registry, given their established relationships with the sector and with Care Inspectorate Wales, as well as their experience of registering social care workers. They also acknowledged that this move would still require careful marketing to make sure the early years sector feels properly included and not simply an add-on.

4.18   However, not everybody agreed that Social Care Wales would be the natural fit for the CPEY workforce because some segments of the CPEY workforce fall outside of its remit. This is the case for playworkers, who work with a much broader age range. Additionally, some interview participants highlighted that placing the register within social care could hinder the efforts to fully integrate education and care in early years, and therefore maybe a separate registry that brings education and care together for the early years is what is needed.

4.19   One of the key lessons from the interviews with the Scottish representatives is that whilst the ELC workforce is registered within care, alongside adult social care and children social care, there is a drive to acknowledge and emphasise its educational role. This follows a wider effort at national level to acknowledge the fact that the work in the early years is part of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, which starts at age three. One Scottish participant pointed out that now, compared to when the registry was set up, many in the sector feel more aligned to education than to care. Therefore, while the interview participant described the registry as working well, they also acknowledged that the way it has evolved has left three different bodies responsible for registering different parts of the workforce. They continued that, if starting from scratch, they would give more consideration to placing the ELC registry in education rather than care, given their understanding of ELC is now different.

4.20   Another suggestion, which would see registration independent from both care and education, was for the responsibility for the registry to sit with local authorities, However, there were also strong concerns that the registry would not have as much

authority if it was not centralised. Additionally, Australia offers an example of the challenges in achieving consistency in a registry that is not centralised.

4.21 A final view was that each CPEY role should be considered on a case by case basis and registered with the appropriate organisation depending on whether it falls within the remit of care or education. However, this option also carries complications because there are roles for which this distinction is not so clear and it would need to be decided whose responsibility it is for making a decision about these cases. The case of playworkers was brought forward but the same is true for other cases, such as staff working multiple jobs.

Qualifications

4.22 The ultimate goal of the 10-year strategic plan is to develop a highly skilled CPEY workforce through clear progression paths supported by recognised qualifications and CPD (Welsh Government, 2017). The Welsh Government has already started work in this area and participants discussed this topic at length. One of the possible benefits of the registry that stakeholders discussed was the provision of professional recognition for a workforce which includes very experienced workers, but who lack formal acknowledgment of this. Some saw the registry as a potential tool for supporting workers transitioning between roles as they work towards the required qualifications.

4.23 However, drawing on the example of registration of learning support workers with the EWC, stakeholders cautioned about the importance of clarifying rules around minimum qualification requirements at the time the registry is set up rather than returning to address this later. Reflecting on the experience of EWC being asked to bring support workers onto the register without a previous discussion of minimum qualification requirements, one stakeholder pointed out that the process led to a situation in which workers in different settings may face different qualification requirements despite doing similar work.

4.24 In considering if, and how, to set minimum qualifications for workers to be allowed to register, it is important to keep in mind that in the case of the CPEY workforce qualifications are already set out in the National Minimum Standards. However, not all practitioners are required to have a mininimum qualification to start working in the sector. In fact, participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring that

qualifications do not become a barrier into the sector, emphasising that ultimately it is important to attract the right people to work in CPEY and to avoid losing more experienced staff who might be put off by having to return to education. One proposed solution was to use a 'confirmed competence' approach, which is already used in the social care sector and in other countries, such as Australia. The 'confirmed competence' approach would allow people without formal qualifications to register by using their work experience as proof of competences.

4.25   Another solution to ensure qualification requirements do not present a barrier is to allow a grace period for workers to complete the required qualifications after the point of registration. This is one of the features of the Scottish registry, where workers have a five-year grace period to achieve qualifications necessary for the level they are registered under. If after this period they have not completed the qualifications, they are removed from the register.

4.26   Relatedly, stakeholders highlighted the need to remove barriers for people who gained equivalent qualifications in other countries. In Scotland the SSSC has responsibility for reviewing prior learning of workers from other countries or UK territories and deciding whether it meets the National Occupational Standards in Scotland. Similarly in Australia a separate organisation is responsible for reviewing the qualifications of workers who come from abroad and deciding whether or not they meet the requirements. In Wales, Social Care Wales plays a similar role and is now taking forward an international qualifications equivalency pilot, which could help solve this issue. In the specific case of childcare qualifications, though, there is awareness that some qualifications might not be recognised via the qualification framework and people coming from abroad might need to take additional level 3 qualifications.

Continuing Professional Development

4.27   Stakeholders recognised that one of the potential benefits of a registry is the opportunity to support workers' upskilling and CPD. This support could take a number of forms. At the simplest level, the registry could be used as a tool for logging and keeping track of CPD hours, which would benefit both employees and employers. For example, one participant conceptualised the registry in line with how they work in the United States, where they are a one-stop shop for an individual to see everything related to themselves, track the training from first aid and

safeguarding to wider CPD, support with the planning of their career path and looking for a new role. At a more advanced level, another participant thought a registry could facilitate access to CPD directly and lead to a more efficient provision of CPD by matching supply and demand more effectively.

4.28   Whilst on the whole stakeholders agreed with the benefits of CPD hours being made a requirement to maintain registration, they drew attention to a number of factors that need to be addressed for this to work. First of all, consideration was given to the need to ensure CPD is accessible to workers across the CPEY workforce as there are currently unequal opportunities. Making CPD accessible includes ensuring that workers are given the time needed for CPD as well as removing financial barriers both for the individual worker to enroll in CPD activities as well as for the setting to cover for staff time. It was suggested that if CPD is made a requirement to maintain registration then employers should be required to ensure their workers have the time needed to complete the CPD hours. This highlights the need for any requirement of CPD hours to be accompanied by investment in CPD provision to avoid unintended consequences.

4.29   Another issue stakeholders raised was the need to consider an inclusive definition of CPD, recognising that CPD is not just about formal learning in courses, but also about learning through work-related activities, individual reading, reflective practices or shadowing.

4.30   Again, interview participants drew on lessons from other registries in Wales, such as social care workers' registration. Social care workers are required to log their CPD every three years, when they renew their registration. The number of CPD hours required is related to the level of seniority of the worker: a manager has to demonstrate 90 hours of CPD and a worker has to demonstrate 45 hours. One participant explained that the challenge is ensuring that people regularly log their CPD, rather than just at the end of their registration period.

4.31   In light of this and what is mentioned above in terms of access to, and the definition of, CPD it is important to remark that there is, in fact, ongoing work in progress in this area in social care. This is partly in terms of facilitating access to online learning through a portal for registered professionals. This is also in terms of reviewing the definition of CPD, emphasising the importance of how it improves workers' practice and ultimately the outcomes for the individuals they provide for.

4.32   The example of teaching assistants' registration was brought forward as a warning that introducing a registry alone does not automatically deliver improvements in CPD. In the case of teaching assistants this is not due to a lack of provision of CPD or a lack of demand for CPD from workers, but because the workforce is thinly stretched, without time to attend CPD. One participant, for example, explained that time pressures on teaching assistants mean that they are unable to use working hours for CPD. The participant noted, however, that the popularity of CPD sessions outside of working hours is an indicator that there is strong demand for CPD among teaching assistants. The professional learning grant for schools is to be used to fund teachers and teaching assistants within schools to engage with professional learning. However, teaching assistants are employed under local authorities' terms of conditions and whether or not they access CPD is dependent on the individual school where they are employed. Unlike for teachers teaching assistants and support workers do not always have performance reviews. This is something the Welsh Government is trying to address in schools and which will also be highlighted in the New Professional Learning Entitlement (NPLE) that is being co-constructed with the sector.

4.33   Looking to how CPD is incorporated in registries in other countries, the early childhood teacher registry in Australia does include CPD requirements, however the amount of CPD required varies by state and territory. In the case of the Scottish registry, workers are required to complete a minimum number of CPD hours specifically related to safeguarding, though it is currently under review whether other elements of CPD ought to also be included in the registration requirements. Additionally, as one participant explained, the SSSC has a workforce development remit. Under this remit it creates resources and supports individuals with their ongoing learning, but also directs people towards other national offers. To this end the SSSC also functions to identify potential skills gaps, informed by stakeholder surveys on emerging needs, and publishes regular workforce skills reports every two to three years.

A free or fee-based registry

4.34   The majority of Welsh stakeholders felt strongly that any registry should be free. There were concerns that charging for registration would aggravate recruitment and

retention issues at a time when already a lot of workers have left the sector. It was further highlighted that CPEY workers generally earn minimum or a very low wage.

4.35   However, some expressed the view that a small fee would not be a problem for most workers if they pay it annually or once every few years. Additionally, the point was made that having a fee gives the registration some credibility, makes it more of a commitment and highlights that the workers are paying for a service which they should benefit from. Depending on how the registry is funded, it was suggested that fees might also be relevant to what can be offered in terms of CPD support.

4.36   Both the Education Workforce Council and Social Care Wales currently charge a fee for registration. Participants discussed how some professions get their fee paid for by employers or local authorities. This is also the case for some workers in Australia, which does charge registration fees, though these vary by state and territory. Fees are also sometimes subsidised by government or large employers, in recognition that the workforce is poorly paid and to avoid additional burdens especially since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, interview participants from Wales thought it would be unlikely for settings to be able to pick up any registration fee given the financial insecurity of the sector.

4.37   One approach to registration fees is to set the levels broadly in line with pay scales, so that workers likely to be on the lowest wages pay the least. For example, Social Care Wales charges different fees depending on the role of each individual: £30 for a social care worker and £80 for a manager per year. Likewise, in Scotland there are three different fees for the three categories of ELC workers, with managers paying £80, practitioners paying £30 and support workers £25. (In addition to the initial registration fee, workers then pay an annual fee for the first five years and then a further fee to renew their registration.) Interview participants suggested that in Scotland they have not found the fees to be a problem, with the workforce seemingly accepting that registration is part of being a practitioner and that people get support and resources in return.

4.38   A final point discussed in the interviews with representatives from Scotland was the the initial plan for registration fees to eventually provide adequate funding to cover the costs of maintaining the registry. Despite the registry being introduced two decades ago, this goal has not yet been realised. One participant explained that this is because the funding required for the registry was underestimated, although some

of the higher costs are likely driven by other workforces included in their registry rather than the ELC workforce.

Mandatory or voluntary registration

4.39   Stakeholders believed that on the whole if a registry is introduced it should be mandatory; if it were voluntary, there are concerns that those who could benefit most from registration would not be the ones to choose to register. Some stakeholders also argued that a non-mandatory approach would undermine other potential benefits of a registry, such as providing complete and consistent workforce data. There were concerns raised in one interview, however, about a mandatory approach being a barrier to joining/remaining in the workforce, with a leaning more towards a voluntary approach with clear benefits.

4.40   In the Scottish case, registration is mandatory. This is a reflection of the primary role of the registry being safeguarding, as one Scottish interview participant explained. In Australia the largest two states have mandatory registration of all early childhood teachers. However, the plan established in the National Children's Education and Care Workforce Strategy (2022-2031) is to make this consistent across all states eventually (ACECQA, 2021).

The wider context of the pandemic, low pay and poor working conditions

4.41   The establishment of a CPEY workforce registry should be set within the wider policy context that affects the early years sector. One unavoidable consideration is the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on early years provision, both from the demand and the supply side.

4.42   From the demand side, reduced and/or irregular attendance at early years settings during and after the pandemic has led to increased operational challenges and financial insecurity for the settings. However, several interviewees pointed out that the Covid-19 crisis had also had the positive effect of showing the crucial role of the early years sector to the wider public. Several people, thus, felt that this was an opportune time to think about the establishment of a workforce registry. In their view, a registry could provide the opportunity to increase the status of the CPEY workforce and to obtain better data to be used as leverage for future advocacy and policy efforts.

4.43   From the supply side point of view, however, many participants felt it was important to acknowledge that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated previously existing problems. Beyond the consideration of whether it is appropriate to ask workers who are low paid to pay a fee to register, as discussed above, recruitment and retention issues worsened during the pandemic and participants worried that a registry would create an additional barrier to entering, or staying, in the early years sector. Therefore, at the time when the sector is still losing practitioners to other sectors of the economy, there was some concern about the timing.

4.44   A key issue that was prevalent throughout the interviews was the low pay and poor working conditions that the CPEY workforce face, which cannot be ignored in any conversation about professionalism. The problem of low pay feeds into issues of recruitment and retention, and gives rise to a number of worries about barriers and potential unintended consequences that a registry might cause. For example, against a backdrop of low wages there was a concern that introducing more bureaucracy or additional hoops to jump through might lead to workers moving to work in other sectors such as retail, which pays better and has no registry requirements. Additionally, it is the low pay of the workforce which led to most stakeholders opposing a fee for the registry. This is in line with findings from a recent survey which found low pay to be one of the main reasons for recruitment and retention issues cited by settings (Stedmand and Lewis, 2022).

4.45   The case of Scotland also highlights a potential issue with low pay and raises concerns that if introducing a registry achieved the increased professionalisation and qualifications of the workforce, this also might lead to workers leaving private, voluntary and independent settings to work in schools, where pay and conditions tend to be better compared to other early years settings, leading to further recruitment and retention issues.

4.46   In general, improving pay was seen as an essential part of any effort to improve the status of CPEY workers. It was widely acknowledged by participants that the potential benefits of the registry for workers – to improve recognition and status alongside increased professionalisation – will be limited if the issue of pay and working conditions are not also addressed at the same time. Some participants made clear that if the goal is to professionalise the workforce, then registration plays

a very small part and what is needed is actually funding settings at a level that enables them to pay people a reasonable wage for the qualifications that they hold.

Suggestions for introducing the registry

4.47   Participants gave some suggestions for how a registry might be effectively introduced. First, they emphasised the importance of clearly communicating the purpose and the benefits of a registry. A gradual approach, giving workers plenty of time and notice in advance was also seen as important. For example, several participants suggested that piloting or introducing the registry in a phased approach, starting with one area, one group of the CPEY workforce or managers in nursery settings, could improve the chances of success. Participants that had knowledge of the approach taken by Social Care Wales, which first registered managers and then moved on to frontline workers, commented that the strategy had been effective because managers were able to clearly communicate the benefits to the workers they supervised and took responsibility for ensuring the next phase of registration for other workers in their settings. Australia has also taken a phased approach, starting with early childhood teachers first, with a view to including other early childhood educators with vocational qualifications later. However, some participants cautioned about the dangers of a phased approach, such as that groups of workers for whom registration is less straightforward might be left behind.

4.48   A 'get ready' campaign and additional stakeholder engagement in advance was also seen as an important element of a phased approach. Participants remarked on the importance of having the workforce buy-in and, therefore, that they need to feel that the registry will bring important benefits with it, such as improving their professional status, providing opportunities for development and supporting their career progression. A 'get ready' campaign that regularly engages the workforce and keeps them informed on the process and next steps was seen as crucial to communicating the benefits.

4.49   In an effort to make the purpose of the registry clear, some participants also discussed the possibility of using a name other than 'registry' as this word could lead to confusion with the mandate for settings and childminders to register with the Inspectorate. Other names, such as 'professional membership' or 'professional body' could better signal the individual nature and the professionalisation purpose of the CPEY registry.

4.50   Given the findings discussed above in relation to qualifications and CPD, stakeholders deemed it important that the details of how to support training and qualifications were ironed out before the set-up of the registry. Stakeholders brought forward several suggestions for how to accommodate differences in qualifications – for example, allowing for a grace period for people to gain the qualifications, as well as taking an approach of 'confirmed competence' to include workers who have adequate experience but no formal qualifications matching the requirements. It was also suggested that the introduction of the registry ought to be accompanied by required minimum qualifications, which will necessitate first a review of existing qualification levels across different roles. Finally, some participants observed that in order to decide about categories and organisations responsible for different registrations, the many roles need to be properly reviewed in detail. These suggestions might not all be relevant for the circumstances of the early years sector but are a clear indication that some important decisions about qualifications and CPD must be made *before* any registry is introduced.

5. Findings from the Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

5.1 In this section we present findings from the stakeholder engagement workshop. The workshop took place virtually and included Welsh stakeholders, as well as representatives from the Scottish Government and Scottish Social Services Commission, to gain insights from their experience of a workforce registry. Following a short presentation on the findings from the desk-based research and interviews, participants were divided into three groups, ensuring a mixture of organisations were represented in each group, to discuss key issues which had been identified through the interviews as requiring further discussion to bring different perspectives together for consensus building. Each group was given one of the following topics, and was provided with prompts and discussion points in relation to this. The three topics were:

- defining the CPEY workforce and who should be included in a workforce registry

- the practicalities of a registry, such as: whether it should be free or fee-based, how to handle the registration of workers who cover dual roles and the conceptualisation of the workforce within the care versus education debate

- the role of qualifications, continuing professional development and other related elements in a registry

5.2 In the final section of the workshop all groups came back together and summarised the areas of agreement, outstanding challenges and ideas for next steps in relation to their assigned topics. All of the groups then had a chance to respond and feed into each others' conclusions. In this section we summarise the key insights from this activity in relation to the three topic areas discussed.

Topic one: determining who should be included in the registry

5.3 In line with what had emerged during the interviews, stakeholders were broadly in agreement that the whole of the CPEY workforce should be included in the registry, including for example childminders. The decision about who to include in the registry was seen as tied to the purpose of the registry. For example, if the primary function is to improve safeguarding, then everyone needs to be included, even volunteers (though there might be differences in *how* some groups are included, for example waiving fees for volunteers). This discussion highlighted the need to clarify the purpose of the registry as stakeholders were not all in agreement.

5.4   Participants drew attention to a number of outstanding issues that needed to be thought through in more detail than the time allowed by the workshop. These included how to handle groups that are less straightforward to register, for example seasonal workers, parent and toddler groups leads, and staff employed in settings that are not required to register because they operate for less than two hours, such as breakfast clubs.

5.5   Participants shared some initial ideas for addressing these more complicated registration categories, including a period of grace for seasonal workers. Another suggestion was to take a phased approach, as has been the case in social care, focusing on one role at a time, for example, managers to be registered first, before moving on to register frontline workers. Another suggestion was to start the registration process with workers in settings that are registered with Care Inspectorate Wales before moving on to other groups.

Topic two: practical elements of a registry

5.6   Although there was not complete agreement on this, there was a broad consensus that in order for the registry to be meaningful and worthwhile it should be mandatory. Similarly to the question of who should be included, workshop participants argued that whether the registry should be mandatory relates to the primary purpose of the registry – if one of the functions of the registry is safeguarding then this necessitates that it is mandatory rather than optional. Workshop participants also saw increased professionalisation as an important function of the registry and highlighted the need to be careful not to blur the lines between professional registration and safeguarding. As was found in the interviews, workshop participants also acknowledged that the registry alone would only go so far in this aim of increased professionalisation and that pay and working conditions also need to be improved.

5.7   On whether or not the registry should be free, participants had some concerns that a fee-based registration would be an additional burden and a barrier to recruitment, especially for a low paid workforce. It is considered essential that the fee is not interpreted as having to pay to work and to highlight the potential of the registry to signal the professional nature of their work as well as the benefits they can expect in return.

5.8   Stakeholders acknowledged that there could be some benefits to charging registration fees, including workers having greater ownership of the registry, being more likely to seek out the benefits of the registry and potentially the registry being a mechanism for better contact with workers. There was clear agreement that if any registration fee were charged, it should be low enough to ensure it is manageable. Stakeholders emphasised once again the importance of clearly communicating what the benefits of the registry are in order to justify any fee that is charged as well as the registration process overall. As in the interviews, the example of school support staff was brought forward as a reminder that the link between CPD and the registry needs to be strong for the benefits to materialise.

5.9   Finally, for workers who would have dual registration, it was suggested that registrants should pay only one fee, and that there should be collaboration and mutual recognition across different registries, which can be achieved through clear communication channels. It should be possible to identify multiple roles within one registry, so the information collected is organised at the individual level, to avoid double counting.

5.10   In line with what was discussed in the interviews, stakeholders also emphasised the importance of carefully considering where the registry should sit and who should have responsibility for it. Key to answering these questions is how workers' roles are conceptualised: stakeholders described how some workers fit within the education sector, while others within care, but also how for some roles this categorisation is less clear. For example, playworkers are told they are not providing education as they are not focused on educational outcomes, but neither do they fall within care. Participants suggested each role should be considered as to where it would fit best.

Topic three: the role of qualifications and continuing professional development

5.11   One of the areas of agreement among stakeholders was that qualifications should not be a barrier for people to register. In other words, workers should not be prevented from joining the registry because at the time the registry is introduced or they enter the sector they do not have the required qualifications. Workshop participants referred to the example of how the registry works in Scotland, where workers have a five-year period when they can work towards the required

qualifications. However, participants also suggested the need to be mindful of the public perception of registration and that the public will see registered people as being qualified.

5.12 Participants recognised the need to be mindful of ongoing recruitment and retention issues, as well as parts of the workforce that might be technically unqualified though potentially trained, such as seasonal playworkers. To account for this, participants were supportive of other routes to registration, so people are not prohibited from registering if they do not hold a formal qualification, for example taking a 'confirmed competence' approach to make sure experienced workers are included. In addition, there needs to be a route for people who want to come into the sector but do not have any relevant qualifications, as discussed above in relation to a grace period to gain qualifications.

5.13 There were some outstanding questions in relation to qualifications, including registering people who work in settings that do not have to register their provision with the Inspectorate as they operate for less than two hours per day. As these settings do not have a qualification requirement for their hires, the question was how to set a qualification requirement for these workers to be part of a workforce registry.

5.14 Again, the issue of dual roles required some thought – participants acknowledged the need to have mutual recognition of qualifications where a worker is registered with more than one body.

5.15 Stakeholders agreed that a possible benefit of the registry is to value CPD and the importance of building a community of practice as part of the registration. Ongoing monitoring of CPD is important for this, including of CPD that takes place outside of formal courses, such as reading and writing reflections on work. Participants also recognised the importance of supervision and appraisal as part of this and how a registry could facilitate CPD taken across settings. This function of the registry will likely also cut across issues around unqualified workers. It could be useful to have a way to monitor all the variety of CPD people could undertake. It was felt by participants that this could be a very positive outcome of registry.

5.16 Along with the registry drawing attention to the importance of CPD, there is a need for improved funding and access, according to stakeholders. For example, childminders are often restricted in their access to CPD and there is a need to go

beyond twilight sessions as a solution for this. There is also a need to make sure CPD is genuinely continuous across the time frame available rather than focused on at the end of a registration period to meet requirements.

Key insights from the engagement workshop

5.17   The findings from the engagement workshop highlighted the following key points:

- Overall among stakeholders there is agreement in principle to a workforce registry, because of the professionalisation it can bring

- It is important to clarify the purpose of the register, which should guide decisions about some of the issues that were discussed

- There is a need to avoid unintended consequences, including those related to regulatory burden, fees and the potential impacts on recruitment and on the offer of services for children and families

- Clear communication of the potential benefits of the registry to the workforce is important and this relates to clarifying the purpose and function(s) of the registry

5.18   Importantly, none of the issues that were raised by stakeholders were seen as insurmountable. Instead, they require careful consideration of the many actions to take before setting up a registry and in the initial stage of its operations. We will lay out these actions in the next sections.

6.   Conclusions

6.1   The aim of the study was to carry out an independent review to inform Welsh Government actions and next steps for the professional registration of the childcare, play and early years (CPEY) workforce.

6.2   The desk-based research conducted at the beginning of the project provided a useful background for the interviews and workshop with key stakeholders as it highlighted some clear knowns and unknowns. For example, it was straightforward to obtain up-to-date data on the number of workers at children's day care centres, of childminders, and of nursery teachers and nursery support workers as this data is available in administrative datasets, official government data or existing workforce registries. On the other hand, these data have limitations due to their self-reported nature, which leads to these estimates not being completely accurate. In addition, it was much more difficult, or not possible, to gather a full picture of other groups of people working with children under age 12, in line with the CPEY definition in the 10-year strategy. The number of playworkers, seasonal workers, people working in unregistered settings or holding multiple roles, nannies and au pairs, and even volunteers is still uncertain as no official datasets track their numbers and movements across settings.

6.3   This segment of the CPEY workforce is not insignificant: neither from the point of view of its size, with some estimates pointing to approximately 5,500 playworkers, nor from the point of view of their role in providing important services to children and their families. These unknowns highlight one potential benefit of the establishment of a workforce registry in providing more complete date on the CPEY workforce. However, a registry should not exist for the simple reason of providing a count of workers.

6.4   In fact, the unknowns are not just about workers' numbers but also their qualifications, their working conditions and their career trajectories, and have practical and policy implications for how to best support these workers. It is important to place these factors in the wider context of a recruitment and retention crisis in the CPEY sector, which preceded, but was aggravated by, the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 has shown to parents/carers and the wider public the important role of the early years sector and has, therefore, created fertile ground to increase

the workforce status. However, it also poses the additional question of how to proceed with the set-up of a registry without creating additional burdens.

6.5   Through desk-based research and interviews, we also sought to gauge the cost of setting up and managing a registry. However, it was not possible to extrapolate an estimate. This is due to two main reasons. First, in many cases, like in various states in the United States, registries were set up as part of a wider quality improvement effort, which was linked to federal and state level funding for a wide range of activities. Registries were established as a tool to track these efforts but without a specific price tag attached. The case of Scotland, however, highlighted the fact that the registry requires continuous government funding. In fact, even after being in place for 20 years the fees on their own do not come close to covering operational costs. Second, the cost of the registry will be heavily dependent on which of the recommendations presented below the Welsh Government will decide to act upon.

6.6   The work carried out through this project showed that there was general agreement on the positive role that a registry can play in increasing the professionalism and status of the CPEY workforce. Several issues were brought forward as important to act upon before setting up a registry for its benefits to materialise. However, stakeholders did not see these issues as insurmountable.

6.7   It was also clear that the purpose of the registry needs to be clearly communicated and that should be a continuous endeavour, as the purpose will ultimately be the guide to how to answer some unresolved issues. It was clear that many stakeholders believed that the registry can become a powerful tool to increase the CPEY workforce professionalism, but only if done right. This does not imply getting it right from the beginning but rather taking an approach of continuous revision and consultation with the sector.

7. Recommendations

7.1 In line with the findings discussed in the previous sections, below we provide our recommendations to the Welsh Government.

7.2 Interviews and a stakeholder engagement workshop showed that there is overall agreement in principle with the establishment of a CPEY workforce registry and the inclusion of the CPEY workforce as a whole to guarantee that no group is 'left behind'. However, the findings also highlighted important areas that need to be clarified and practical elements of a registry that need to be sorted out for the potential benefits of the registry to materialise. In Table 7.1 and 7.2 we provide an overview of the work that the Welsh Government should undertake before and during the set-up of the registry. The specific recommendations to the Welsh Government stem from these tables.

Table 7.1: Action for Welsh Government before the set-up stage

Issue	Why it is important	Action
Lack of agreement on how to conceptualise the CPEY workforce (care v education debate)	The conceptualisation of the workforce has implications for who should be registered and whose responsibility it is to determine qualification requirements, trainings, code of conduct, etc.	More work should be carried out to decide who might be responsible for registering the workforce, including a consultation.
Lack of agreement on how to proceed with the registration of certain groups, such as: • Playworkers • Childminders • People working in unregistered settings • People holding dual roles • Volunteers	A conscious decision on who to include in the registry and whether they should be included since the start is needed to avoid unintended consequences, such as: • Regulatory burden, which could negatively impact on provision of services • Negative impact on recruitment and retention	Clarify the ultimate purpose of the registry and who should be part of it, considering the option of taking a phased approach, whereby registration could start with one group of workers Decide what information should be collected as part of registration, considering the following options: a) qualifications

		b) CPD activities/hours
		c) employment history/work experience
		Consult with the sector about these options
The benefits of registration need to be clear	Clear benefits are necessary for workforce buy-in	Once the decision on the registration body is made , organise a 'get ready' campaign that articulates the benefits to employers, practitioners and the sector as a whole.
		Consider a different name to avoid confusion with the mandated registration with the Care Inspectorate, particularly in the case of childminders, and to highlight the aim of increasing professionalism and status
The link between registry and qualifications requirements needs to be well defined	To avoid the mistakes experienced in other registries due to entry requirements and qualifications being an afterthought	Set clear entry qualifications and • Provide workers with a grace period to obtain qualifications • Adopt a 'confirmed competence' approach for experienced workers who lack formal qualifications • Resolve the issue of recognition of qualifications obtained in other countries Maintain links with other work carried out on qualifications and career

		progression path set out in the 10-year workforce plan
Any CPD requirement needs to be matched by available, affordable, quality CPD opportunities	To ensure the registry leads to increased professionalisation of the workforce	As the Register embeds, work with sector bodies to understand existing CPD opportunities for the sector in terms of: • Availability • Accessibility • Definition of CPD Work with sector bodies to understand what is needed at individual, setting and sector level to ensure high-quality CPD is available and can be accessed Assess whether additional funding is required both to remove the financial barrier to CPD for individuals and help settings release staff for training

Table 7.2: Action for Welsh Government during the set-up stage

Issue	Why it is important	Action
Lack of agreement on the financial terms of the registry	Need to balance keeping registration low cost to avoid negative impact on recruitment and retention with signalling that workers are getting something back	Consider what the best approach to registration fees and timings is in terms of: - registration being free or fee-based; - fees being dependent on the role; - registration being annual, periodic or ongoing
The link between registry and CPD requirements needs to be strong	A strong link between the registry and CPD would help the workforce upskill and achieve higher professionalism	Make the registry a one-stop shop where individuals can log and keep track of their CPD Allow for linking to other types of requirements and training, such as Disclosure and Barring Service certificates, first aid and safeguarding training

Recommendations

Before the set-up stage

7.3   The Welsh Government should set up a working group tasked with the following:

- Work with the sector to develop robust options for who should be responsible for setting up and maintaining the registry, considering whether it should be under the remit of Social Care Wales, the Education Workforce Council or a different body

- Work with the sector to develop robust options for which group(s) of the workforce should be registered and how, considering the option of taking a phased approach, whereby registration starts with one group of workers. Such a phased approach could include recommendations on the following details:

- o The registration process could proceed by group of workers, starting with a group for which there is full agreement for their inclusion such as childcare workers in registered settings

- o The registration process could start with workers in managerial roles before moving to frontline workers

- o A clear timeline should be created and published for other groups to join once the initial set-up phase is completed and clear actions for how to handle issues specific to each group have been taken

- Recommend what elements of the workforce should be part of registration, considering the following options: qualifications, CPD activities/hours, employment history/experience, or all of these.

7.4 The Welsh Government should formally consult with the sector and public more generally on the elements of the registry considered by the working group.

7.5 Once the consultation is complete, the Welsh Government should:

- Consider feedback and where appropriate, refine proposals

- Continue sector engagement activities to make sure the purpose of the registry is clearly communicated. Such activities could include newsletters, social media campaigns, workshops and regional seminars

- Consider the right name for the registry to ensure the language signals the true function

- Organise a 'get ready' campaign, i.e. an information campaign aimed at making the CPEY workforce aware of the details and timeline of the registration

7.6 The Welsh Government should decide on matters related to registration fees and timings deciding whether registration should be free or fee-based, and in the latter case whether fees should be dependent on the role and if registration should be annual, periodic or ongoing.

7.7 The Welsh Government should make clear plans as to how to link qualifications and Continuing Professional Development to the registry. In particular, the Welsh Government should:

- Ensure that qualifications are not a barrier to enter the sector

- Work with sector bodies to understand the CPD offer both in terms of the existing offer as well as in terms of what counts as quality CPD;

- Assess whether additional funding is required both to remove the financial barrier to CPD for individuals and help settings release staff for training.

During launch stage and first year of registry operation

7.8   The Welsh Government should continue to consult the sector, for example through surveys or focus groups of the first group that is registered to evaluate the functioning of the registry and understand if anything needs to be changed before other segments of the workforce are added.

7.9   The Welsh Government should organise a consultation process before the other groups are added.

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Annex A: Interviews Topic Guide

Topic guide for stakeholders in Wales

1. Background and context

Aim: To gather background information on participant

Please state:

- Your role and responsibilities

- How long you have been working in the sector

- How long you have been working at current organisation in this role

2. View of the CPEY sector and workforce

Aim: To understand who they see as 'being part of the CPEY workforce'

- Who do you see as being part of the CPEY workforce (job title and/or job role; settings where they work)?

- Who in these groups is already registered?

- Please provide details of how this registration works

3. Knowledge of what a workforce registry is and own stance

Aim: To understand how much they know about 'workforce registries' (in general and in Wales) and their stance regarding them (in favour, against, neutral, not knowing enough)

- Can you explain what a workforce registry is?

[if yes]

- How do you see it working in Wales? Who should be part of it?

- How should it work? Probe for information about: voluntary v mandatory; free v fee-based; specific groups v everybody working with children; people working in any setting or not; children age range they work with; who should be responsible for it; whether linked to qualifications; possible functions: CPD, code of conduct, etc.

- If you do not see it working well in Wales, why is that?

- If you do not see it working well in Wales or are against the set up of a registry, what do you think should be done instead?

[if no the interviewer will provide a brief explanation making sure to keep the explanation simple and value-free]

- How would you see it working in Wales? Who should be part of it?

- How should it work? Probe for information about: voluntary v mandatory; free v fee-based; specific groups v everybody working with children; people working in any setting or not; children age?
- If you do not see it working well in Wales, why is that? (Highlights possible challenges)
- If you do not see it working well in Wales or are against the set up of a registry, what do you think should be done instead?

4. Knowledge of other Administrations

Aim: To understand their knowledge of the experiences of other Administrations in registering the CPEY or related workforces

- Do you know any examples of workforce registry in other Administrations?

[if yes]

- How do you see a similar system working in Wales?
- What lessons can we learn from them and apply to the Welsh context?

[if no, move on to next question]

5. Reviewing what has been said

- Participant invited to take a few minutes to review what discussed
- Opportunity used to double check on anything that is not clear
- Probe for any more details they would like to provide

6. Final thoughts

- Anything else you would like to add?

Topic guide for stakeholders outside of Wales

1. Background and context

Aim: To gather background information on participant

Please state:

- Your role and responsibilities
- How long you have been working in the sector
- How long you have been working at current organisation in this role

2. View of the CPEY sector and workforce

Aim: To get insight into the key features of the early years system in their country

- What are the key elements of the early childhood sector in your country?
- Who do you see as being part of the early childhood workforce (job title and/or job role; settings where they work; age of children served)

3. Description of the workforce registry in their country

Aim: To understand how the workforce registry work in their country

- Who among these groups is already registered?
- Details of how registration works. Probe for information about: voluntary v mandatory; free v fee-based; specific groups v everybody working with children; people working in any setting or not; children age range they work with; who is responsible for it; whether linked to qualifications; possible functions: CPD, code of conduct, etc.
- How the registry came into existence (who set it up, how much did it cost, how was it paid for)

4. Experiences of the registry so far

Aim: To understand how well the registry has worked to date and if it has served the purposes for which it was established

- What has worked well so far?
- What has not worked well?
- In hindsight, do you think things should have been done differently and, if so, how?
- Key lessons learned
- What lessons we can learn from you/your experience and apply to the Welsh context

5. Reviewing what has been said
- Participant invited to take a few minutes to review what discussed
- Opportunity used to double check on anything that is not clear
- Probe for any more details they would like to provide
6. Final thoughts
- Anything else you would like to add?

Annex B: List of Organisations Participating in the Interviews

Organisation
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority
Care Inspectorate Wales
Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
Early Years Wales
Education Workforce Council
Local Authority Childcare and Playwork Teams
Mudiad Meithrin
National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA Cymru)
PACEY Cymru
Play Wales
Scottish Government
Scottish Social Service Council
Social Care Wales
Unison Cymru

Annex C: Stakeholder Engagement Workshop: Participating Organisations

Organisation
Bridgend LA
Caerphilly LA
Care Inspectorate Wales
Ceredigion LA
Clybiau Plant Cymru Kids' Clubs
Early Years Wales
Education Workforce Council
HMI Estyn
Merthyr LA
Mudiad Meithrin
NDNA Cymru
PACEY
Play Wales
RCT LA
Scottish Government
Scottish Social Services Council
Social Care Wales
Swansea LA
Unison
Vale of Glamorgan LA

Annex D: Early Childhood Education and Care in Nordic Countries

1. The Nordic countries make up the northernmost part of western Europe, extending into the Arctic. They include Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Åland and in most definitions Greenland, as there are long-standing political and linguistic ties.

2. These countries share a common heritage dating back at least to the Viking Age, with several unions in the past and close cooperation today. From a socio-economic point of view, they also share a history of progressive social policies and high standards of living.

3. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that Nordic countries have a reputation for high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). There are some important differences across countries. For example, while Finland has a unitary system of ECEC, organised in two stages for children aged up to seven, Sweden has a unified education system that covers children aged 1-19 years. Denmark also has a unitary system of early childhood education and care for children aged 6 months up to 6 years. However, the responsible authority at the national level is currently the Ministry for Children and Social Affairs, while in Finland and Sweden ECEC is under the remit of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Education and Research.

4. In terms of funding, organisation and management of the ECEC system, Nordic countries again present some differences. For example, in Finland it is the responsibility of the municipalities or of private service owners/providers. In Sweden, the government is responsible for setting out policy goals and guidelines and funding frameworks but the system itself is highly decentralised. At the local level, the 290 municipalities are responsible for the planning and organisation of public provision. The providers of independent ECEC centres, attended by roughly one fifth of Swedish children up to school entry age, are responsible for their management. Finally, in Denmark the funding, organisation and regulation of ECEC provision falls under the responsibility of the local municipal authorities.

5. Despite these differences, the Nordic countries share a history of strong focus and investment in ECEC, which has translated into very high-quality services for children and families. While other European countries put ECEC on the policy agenda only in the 1990s, in the Nordic countries social services for families with

children were considered the key to the Nordic welfare model and date back to the 1970s. Therefore, these systems have grown organically and have been placed in a central position in society since early on. This, in turn, has translated into high levels of public investment to provide universal places and high-quality of provision that is led by highly qualified staff.

6. From the perspective of this study, the ECEC systems in Nordic countries are much less fragmented than Wales, where the provision is based on a mixed market and the ECEC workforces in Nordic countries are much more homogeneous, above all in terms of qualifications, entry routes, CPD and career progression. This makes the need for a registry unnecessary.