

Nursery nurses in Scotland 2005
A report for Unison Scotland

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**These views are written in a personal capacity and are not attributable to any organisation by which the authors are employed or of which they are members.*

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Executive Summary

1. Significant changes in nursery school provision, standards and regulation in recent years have impacted upon the job content and skills of nursery nurses, as well as on their perceptions of their work, effort, reward, status and future prospects. This report provides data on the work experiences of Scottish local authority nursery nurses.

2. Specifically, the report provides information on the pay and grading position of nursery nurses following the 2003-04 dispute; on recent changes in the job content, work processes, qualifications and core service standards associated with nursery nursing; the views of nursery nurses on their work, pay, career prospects and status; and a comparison of nursery nurse pay with that of other occupations in local authorities.

3. The research had five components: documentary research; collation and analysis of the post-2004 Scottish local authority settlements for nursery nurses; a postal survey of 2093 nursery nurses across Scotland (31% response rate); six focus groups with nursery nurses; and collection and comparison of pay data for other occupations. The survey respondents were largely mature and experienced nursery nurses who were well placed to comment on issues and recent changes in the sector and in their work.

CONTEXT

4. The Scottish Executive has frequently espoused the importance of the early education sector. The sector is subject to legislative requirements and national care standards as well as internal review within each local authority. Taken together, these external and internal regulatory and review processes mean that the sector, and its workforce, are extensively scrutinised on at least an annual basis.

5. The early education workforce is predominately female, part-time and poorly paid. Local authority nursery nurses are better qualified and rewarded in comparison with nursery nurses in the private sector. The minimum qualification for entry to local authority nursery nursing is HNC/SVQ3, which combines theory, practice and practical placements over a two-year period.

PAY

6. Comparing the top scale point for basic grade nursery nurses as a 52-week equivalent, salaries range from £17,436 to £20,168. Notional hourly rates range from £9.58 to £11.08 with an average of £10.52 and with the most common hourly rates being £10.42 and £10.77 (for 10 and 9 authorities respectively).

7. There appears to be no systematic explanation of the positioning of individual local authorities in the salary range, either in terms of the size of the authority, the numbers of nursery nurses employed or whether authorities were largely urban or rural.

JOB CONTENT, SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

8. While job descriptions exist for nursery nurses in all local authorities, these do not reveal either the extent to which all of their designated activities are actually undertaken or the frequency with which they are undertaken. The survey data illustrated the specific and diverse activities of nursery nurses at the current time.

- There is a heavy emphasis on child development, learning and recording systems: almost all report that they promote children's linguistic, social, intellectual and sensory development *all* of the time.
- Nursery nurses make a positive contribution to strategic and operational planning, and curriculum planning and implementation *all* of the time.
- These are key skill areas that reflect their involvement in delivering a national curriculum and strongly counter the view that they are simply engaged in childcare. Most see education as the most important part of their job.
- Most are involved frequently or all of the time in communicating with parents and involving them in decisions; working with wider agencies; undertaking individual child assessment; reporting; and in managing the transition between nurseries and formal primary schooling.
- Many are also involved in specialised tasks included case conferences, team leading duties, HMI/Care Commission task groups, admissions panels and standards monitoring groups.
- The activities undertaken are largely similar across all types of nursery.

9. Respondents rate the following as the key knowledge, skills and attribute requirements of their role: (in order of frequency) an interest in children; understanding theories of child development and child care; empathy, a caring nature and patience; good teamworking skills; flexibility and initiative.

10. While most hold common entry qualifications, a significant minority had achieved additional qualifications since entry, while nearly a fifth was also working towards an additional qualification. However, respondents raise concerns over the incentive to undertake additional qualifications as this was not likely to result in higher pay or career advancement.

11. While there is no strong view that nursery nursing should be degree-led, respondents want increased 'professionalism' in order to be recognised by other groups/professionals and to deter unsuitable candidates from entering the sector. There is also a desire to be able to develop degree-level qualifications in post.

12. While almost all respondents are provided with training or CPD, an appreciable minority felt that this is insufficient to support them in their job. More than half report that they had undertaken training and/or CPD in their own time.

13. Most respondents report that their job requires higher levels of skill and has more emphasis on cognitive aspects than in the past. This stems from increases in administration; knowledge and skills requirements in relation to information and communication technologies; greater accountability and responsibility; and dealing with children (and families) with behavioural problems and special needs.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND STATUS

14. Most respondents think that they have more responsibility, use their initiative more, and have to concentrate to a higher level and work harder than before. Most rate their job as stressful. Perceptions of stress are significantly related to the degree of urbanisation in the employing authority.

15. A small majority are supportive of regulation and inspection, although many believe it has made their work harder. Only a minority believe that regulation does not enhance quality. While many feel that increased administration reduces their contact time with children, it also provides a positive opportunity to reflect on each child. Thus, less direct contact time is not necessarily associated with poorer services for children.

16. Respondents perceive that their jobs are not valued and this is reflected in the lack of career pathways available to workers in the sector. Comparisons are made with the career structures in other professions with defined leadership and management pathways and recognition of expertise both in terms of pay and status.

17. Specific issues arise in relation to senior nursery nurses. Senior nursery nurses appear to take on significantly more activities for less significantly enhanced earnings. This may explain some of the more negative perceptions held by senior nursery nurses on aspects of their work and value.

18. More than 60% of respondents are at the top of their pay scale. Most of these had taken 5-10 years to reach the top of the scale, with a significant minority taking 10-15 years. Three quarters had remained there for more than ten years.

19. Relatively few nursery nurses feel valued by their employers (38%), compared with those who feel valued by parents (95%), other agencies (85%), line managers (83%) and the public (57%). Only a minority of respondents rate their own morale and the morale of their colleagues as high. Most survey respondents had at some point seriously considered leaving local authority work.

20. Consistent with previous research, nursery nurses report overwhelmingly that the most satisfying aspects of their job is working with children and seeing them develop and progress over time.

21. While some see administrative demands as the most negative feature of the job, most respondents identify low pay and the low value attached to their work by their employers as the worst aspects. A significant minority feel negatively about how their pay compares with people doing the same job in other authorities.

NURSERY NURSING IN COMPARISON

22. Nursery nurses' pay scales in Scottish local authorities are lower than for comparable occupations in terms of entry-level qualifications/requirements (e.g. administrative, housing and finance officers), despite the latter being subject to considerably less external regulation. Nursery nurses earn considerably below annual earnings for both males and females.

23. Teachers and nursery nurses work to the same set of national regulations, including national curricula, and care standards. Yet teachers in nursery schools have very different pay rates and conditions of service, earning from £19059-£30399 in non-promoted posts. While teaching requires higher entry qualifications, teachers (unlike nursery nurses) receive little specific training in relation to pre-5 children. Without exception, nursery nurses report that there are no significant differences between their work activities and those of teachers. While few argue against for pay parity between the two groups, the majority feel that the pay differential is excessive.

24. Evaluating any job involves considering its demands in terms of knowledge and skills, effort, decision-making and responsibility and working conditions. Caring skills may often be overlooked in such evaluations. The following factors, reported by nursery nurses in our survey, are of considerable importance in any evaluation of their jobs.

25. Nature of knowledge requirements. Nursery nursing requires specific occupational knowledge, much of which is conceptual, such as understanding theories of child development and care. To work effectively, nursery nurses require ongoing training and CPD. Good literacy and numeracy are important role requirements. Nursery nurses are involved, and have considerable discretion, in planning and prioritising work within

the parameters of relevant national regulations/standards. They must be familiar with, and operationalise, a complex range of national and authority-specific regulations and standards. Nursery nurses often utilise their knowledge in complex contexts, particularly in terms of dealing with vulnerable children and/or families.

26. Skill requirements. Nursery nursing requires considerable personal, interpersonal and physical skills. These include communications skills to deal with specific demands of service users, most notably children, but also parents. Children's linguistic (or lack of linguistic) skills means that communication is a complex aspect of their work. Nursery nurses communicate factual information regularly in various forms. They use influencing skills in relation to children and parents. The nature of the communication they are engaged in will often be complex, personal and sensitive.

27. Responsibility/accountability. Nursery nurses carry out both specific and general tasks involving the exercise of judgement within existing guidelines and procedures. Their actions are highly visible to others on a daily basis. The duty to act always in the interests of children exposes all nursery nurses to informal peer supervision. Their work is subject to regular and significant inspection. The impact of errors in their work can range from trivial to momentous. The nature of the resource for which nursery nurses are responsible is supremely valuable, both to individual parents and to society as a whole.

28. Effort. Nursery nursing requires considerable mental effort, including visual concentration, aural concentration and managing emotion. The job involves maintaining concentration on several things simultaneously; maintaining concentration while shifting between tasks, and maintaining concentration in distracting circumstances. Nursery nurses require significant physical skills, both in terms of explosive physical effort (e.g. lifting or restraining children) and stamina.

29. Working conditions. Nursery nurses are at some risk of minor physical injury (e.g. lifting; minor accidental/deliberate injuries from children). They are also exposed to certain unpleasant conditions (e.g. noise). The personal care of small children has minor

unpleasant aspects. Nursery nurses must also confront the short-term emotional distress of children, and the longer-term emotional, behavioural and social distress of children and parents in vulnerable families.

CONCLUSIONS

30. There is considerable variation in pay rates for local authority nursery nurses across Scotland. There appears to be no systematic explanation as to why individual authorities have placed themselves on particular positions in the salary range.

31. The analysis of job descriptions across authorities fails to reveal any substantive differences in the activities of nursery nurses or in their qualifications and skills profile across Scotland. The job is defined by national standards with associated regulation and inspection requirements.

32. Taken in combination, these are a powerful counter to the view that the jobs of nursery nurses are different *enough* to merit differential rates of pay based on local rather than national settlement. Many nursery nurses are concerned about the inequity of differing pay rates for what they believe to be the same job.

33. The content and context of nursery nursing has changed in recent years. While many of these changes have impacted positively on the quality of service provided, they have also brought a need for higher skills and greater responsibility, effort and stress.

34. Nursery nurses see themselves as playing a critical role in the education of children and not simply as providing childcare. There is evidence that they are engaged in significant reflection on the work, skills and the nature of the contribution they make. From the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes reported in this study there are strong indications that they are delivering a professional education and care service.

35. There is convincing evidence that most nursery nurses are actually carrying out the roles and responsibilities envisioned in the Early Years Review Roles and

Responsibilities framework. Most are knowledgeable of, and work to, existing procedures, guidelines and regulation. They plan for the individualised needs of children, including those with special needs. They observe, record and report on individual children's progress. They report their activities in working positively with children, families, colleagues and other agencies. They are engaged in updating their own skills and developing their own capacities.

36. Nursery nurses appear less well rewarded than those in other non-degree posts in local authorities, despite appearing to carry out 'like' work similar to better paid degree level occupational groups. They earn considerably less than average national earnings.

37. Nursery nurses do not see their job as a career which offers adequate opportunities for development. There are concerns over a lack of career pathways and adequate pay levels commensurate with higher levels of responsibility. Importantly, nursery nurses do not feel valued by their own employers.

38. The skills, knowledge and range of tasks of nursery nurses have not previously been well understood on a national level. This may well have contributed to them being significantly undervalued. This report presents the *only* available current evidence of what nursery nurses in Scotland actually do. These findings should enable a closer consideration of the contribution of nursery nurses to be undertaken.

Nursery Nurses in Scotland 2005

1. Introduction

During the 2004 nursery nurses' strike, Unison argued that the job of nursery nurses had not been systematically reviewed since 1988¹. Yet since that time a number of significant changes have taken place in nursery school provision, standards and regulation. These changes are likely to have had some impact on the job content and skills of nursery nurses, as well as on perceptions by nursery nurses of their work, effort, reward, status and future prospects. That significant levels of discontent exist amongst nursery nurses is clearly indicated by the involvement of 4000 of their number in the protracted industrial action which culminated in the 2004 strike, a central demand of which was for a review and regrading of their work. With its 14 week duration, this represented the longest all-out industrial action in Scotland since the 1984 miners' strike.

At the time of the 2003-4 industrial dispute, COSLA indicated that the work of nursery nurses would be reviewed as part of the implementation of the Scottish local authorities' single status agreement. While preparatory work for the implementation of this agreement has been ongoing, at the time of writing, with one exception, the agreement has not been implemented in full by any Scottish local authority.

However, in June 2005, the Scottish Executive announced that it would undertake a review of all early years' education, including nursery provision. This review began in July 2005. Its objectives were to examine and define the roles and responsibilities of staff in the sector; improve workforce planning; simplify and modernise the relevant qualifications system; provide greater opportunities for workers to move between different areas of early years provision; and assess the potential impact of this work for pay and conditions. Whilst scheduled for completion within one year, the findings of this review have not yet been made public. We will refer in this report to all of the deliberations of the *National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce*

¹ N. Georghiou (2005) *Nursery Nurse*, Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) Briefing 04/19.

(hereafter, Early Years Review) that are publicly available². These are not, however, a complete record of the review process. In the absence at this date of its final report, however, the deliberations of the Early Years Review provide some indicators as to the key questions and issues that are the subject matter of the review.

Throughout this report, we have used the generic term *nursery nurses*. We acknowledge that the title of those workers formerly known as nursery nurses has changed in recent years in some authorities to, variously, child development officers, early years' workers/practitioners and others. Given the variation in nomenclature, however, we have opted to use the generic term for ease of reading.

2. Research objectives

The Early Years Review Career Pathways Working Group highlighted the need for research to identify the thoughts and experiences of workers in the early education and childcare sector. This report provides current data on a range of issues relevant to the work experiences of nursery nurses in local authority nursery establishments across Scotland.

In line with the objectives specified by Unison in commissioning this research, the report will focus on the following issues:

1. The pay and grading position of nursery nurses after the 2003-04 dispute.
2. Any notable variations in nursery nurse pay and hours across the country.
3. Recent changes in the job content, work processes, qualifications and core service standards associated with nursery nursing.
4. The views of nursery nurses on their work, pay, career prospects and status.
5. The relative rewards of nursery nursing in relation to occupations of similar qualifications/skill levels.

² Scottish Executive, National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/Early-Education-Child-Care/EarlyYearsReview/intro>.

3. Research outline and methodology

This research has five components:

1. Documentary research.
2. Collection and analysis of the 2004 local authority settlements for nursery nurses across Scotland.
3. Focus groups with nursery nurses.
4. Postal survey of 2093 nursery nurses.
5. Collection and comparison of pay data for other similarly skilled/qualified occupations.

3.1. Documentary research

Existing published data was collected and analysed in order to provide the context for the primary data collection. This focused on the public policy and pronouncements in relation to early years education and childcare, the regulatory framework of pre-5 education and care in Scotland, and the deliberations of the Scottish Executive's Early Years Review as published on their website.

3.2 Collection and analysis of 2004 local authority settlements

The timescale of this project precluded a direct approach to local authorities under the Freedom of Information Act to request the necessary data. Instead, data on each of the local settlements from 2004 was obtained from a number of sources. Firstly, we collected all data held by Unison centrally. We then supplemented this data through an email request to all Unison branches for whom either a copy of their 2004 agreement or associated job description was not available directly from Unison. Eighteen Unison branches were contacted to request copies of either one or both of the documents previously mentioned, resulting in 10 documents being provided to us. Lastly, where we had no information on a particular authority, we relied on data on Scottish local authority settlements collected and published by IDS.

3.3. Focus groups of nursery nurses

Six focus groups were conducted with nursery nurses in three local authority areas (2 in each area). Participants were all recruited from different establishments with help from local Unison branches. The local authority areas were selected on the basis that they reflected a mixture of urban and rural working environments³.

Participants were chosen to provide representation from staff involved in:

- extended day provision and nursery schools/classes
- urban and rural locations across Scotland
- delivering services to a range of age groups (0-3 and 3-5 years)

A total of 39 participants took part in the focus groups. These were conducted in Unison branch offices in the early evening. Attendance at the group discussions was excellent given the limited time-scales involved in this study. Details of attendance at each of the discussion groups are provided in Table 3.3.1 below.

Table 3.3.1: Establishment type and attendance at focus groups

Area	Classification	No. of participants
Group 1	Nursery school/class	7
Group 2	Extended day-care	9
Group 3	Nursery school/class	6
Group 4	Nursery school/class	6
Group 5	Extended day-care	6
Group 6	Nursery school/class	5

Throughout each of the focus group discussions, the topics under investigation were drawn from the same guide to allow for comparison across groups, sectors and areas. A copy of the topic guide and the individual focus group summaries are in Appendices B and C respectively.

³ Despite repeated efforts we were unable to obtain access to our first agreed rural area. We thus switched our attention to branches in another rural area who agreed to support the research.

Although we cannot say that the views of participants in the focus group discussions are representative in any statistical sense of those held by the wider population of nursery nurses in Scotland, the responses illustrate a range of experiences and opinions on issues of concern to nursery nurses as a whole, and help to add depth to the views expressed in the survey data.

3.4 Postal survey of nursery nurses

In 2002, there were 7500 nursery nurses working in council run nursery schools, day nurseries and special schools⁴. Of this number approximately 5000 are members of Unison⁵. This amounts to a density of approximately 67%.

A postal survey was sent out to 2093 Unison members in Scotland in November 2005. This represents around 42% of nursery nurse members. The sample was stratified by local authority to ensure a proportionate representation in each authority. The members were selected randomly from a database supplied by Unison who also distributed the questionnaires. Each member was guaranteed anonymity and the only identifier used was a local authority code for the purposes of allowing a regional focus to the subsequent analysis. The survey is reprinted in Appendix B.

Around 5% of the responses were unusable for a variety of reasons (mainly due either to surveys having been sent to ex-nursery nurses, or because potential respondents had removed the local authority identifier). This left 615 useable completed questionnaires, giving an overall response rate of around 31%. This is above the norm for a postal survey (around 25%) and is comparable with many employee surveys. However, it is less than we might have hoped for, given the purpose of the exercise and the expected relationship between the union and its members.

The table below shows the absolute and percentage response in each local authority:

⁴ Georghiou, SPICE 04/19

⁵ Personal correspondence, Carol Ball, Unison.

Table 3.4.1: Survey response rates across Scottish local authorities

Local Authority	no. sent	no. received (useable)	% response
Aberdeen City	47	10	21
Aberdeenshire	34	16	47
Angus	41	8	20
Argyll & Bute	23	4	17
Clackmannanshire	21	8	38
Dumfries & Galloway	19	9	47
Dundee	70	16	23
East Ayrshire	68	10	15
East Dunbartonshire	29	9	31
East Lothian	35	16	45
East Renfrewshire	43	7	16
Edinburgh City	169	53	31
Falkirk	49	20	41
Fife	156	37	22
Glasgow	381	105	28
Highland	56	26	46
Inverclyde	58	13	22
Midlothian	29	9	31
Moray	6	4	67
North Ayrshire	60	13	22
North Lanarkshire	126	27	21
Orkney Islands	8	1	12
Perth & Kinross	42	16	38
Renfrewshire	115	27	24
Scottish Borders	16	8	50
Shetland Islands	6	0	0
South Ayrshire	40	21	52
South Lanarkshire	127	36	28
Stirling	42	9	21
West Dunbartonshire	89	26	29
West Lothian	86	19	22
Western Isles	2	0	0

As can be seen, there is a wide variation in the response rates.

3.5. Nursery nursing pay in comparison

Secondary data was considered in order to analyse the job, and in particular the pay, of nursery nurses in relative terms. This focused largely upon data available from learndirect and from IDS. We were also able to consider a range of job evaluation factor scores from an unidentified authority in order to present a more detailed breakdown of the job of nursery nurses relative to certain other local authority employees.

4. Nursery nursing: the changing context

4.1 Early years education in Scotland: policy and regulatory framework

The Scottish Executive has frequently espoused the importance of the early education sector:

“High quality early education, childcare and playwork help children to get the best start in life, promoting all-round development in the crucial formative years ... Quality services for children help parents as well, allowing them to balance work and family life.”⁶

In the last decade, there has been a significant shift in both the provision and regulation of early years education. The overall framework for policy on childcare and early education emerged from the 1998 Green Paper ‘Meeting the childcare challenge: A childcare strategy for Scotland’ (Scottish Office, 1998). This set out an overall aim of universal public provision of quality part-time pre-school education co-ordinated with affordable childcare for children aged 0-14. Subsequently, s32 of the Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act 2000 amended the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 to place a duty on local authorities to provide early education to those children as prescribed by Scottish Ministers. This duty has been in force since April 2002 under the terms of The Provision of School Education for Children under School Age (Prescribed Children) (Scotland) Order 2002, which required local authorities to provide 412.5 hours (an average of 10.8 hours per week in term time) per year of pre-school education to 3 and 4 year olds).

⁶ Scottish Executive, *Working with Children: A Guide to Qualifications and Careers in Early Education, Childcare and Playwork*.

The early education sector is subject both to legislative requirements and national care standards. The current regulatory regime stems from the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. The Act provided for the establishment of the Scottish Social Services Council, a body charged with the duty of "... promoting high standards of conduct and practice among social services workers, and in their education and training" and the registration of all staff working within services regulated by the Care Commission (see below). The Council has 4 key tasks: to establish registers of key groups of staff; to publish codes of practice for all social services staff and their employers; to regulate workforce training and education, and to undertake the functions of the National Training Organisation for the Personal Social Services. Individuals may register with the Council if they have, or are working towards, a relevant qualification. The early years and childcare workforce are intended to be registered with the SSSC by 2005-06.

The 2001 Act also instituted a new system of regulation and inspection for childcare providers through the establishment of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (the Care Commission). The Care Commission is charged with registering and inspecting a wide range of care services, including early education and childcare, according to national care standards and regulations. National Care Standards have been developed by the National Care Standards Committee on behalf of the Scottish Ministers. The care standards provide information to service users about the service they can expect and also, together with regulations, provide the basis for assessing services. The relevant standard governing nursery provision is the *National Care Standard: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16*⁷.

In the arena of pre-school education, the quality indicators of *The Child at the Centre*⁸ (a well established tool for self-evaluation in pre-school centres) and the *Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5*⁹ also help to describe national expectations. Here, the Care Commission works in conjunction with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE),

⁷ National Care Standards Committee, *National Care Standard: Early Education and Childcare up to the age of 16* (First publication July 2002, revised July 2003; revised March 2005).

⁸ Scottish Executive Education Department (2000) *The Child at the Centre*.

⁹ The Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1999, *A Curriculum Framework for Children 3-5*.

which became an Executive Agency in April 2001. In accordance with the 2001 Act, HMIE and the Care Commission undertake annual integrated inspections of early education providers to monitor the quality of education and care provided. While any relevant regulations are mandatory in establishments providing early years care and education, the aforementioned standards and performance/quality indicators are taken into account by the Care Commission in its deliberations and recommendations. The first integrated inspection reports were published in 2003.

In addition to all of the above, nursery establishments are also subject to internal review processes within each local authority. Taken together, these external and internal regulatory and review processes mean that the sector, and its workforce, are extensively scrutinised on at least an annual basis.

The system of integrated inspections illustrates the inextricable links between education and care for children aged 0-5.

“There is a growing appreciation that education and care in the pre-school setting are interlinked. As such, services that have traditionally been thought of as providers of care are now recognised as also playing a role in educating young children”.¹⁰

The existence of a *Curriculum Framework for Children 3 to 5*, with its focus on ‘...encouraging the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of children’, reinforces this connection, as does the focus of the Early Years Review on both care and education/learning. In addition, the Scottish Executive and Learning and Teaching Scotland are currently developing “*Care and Learning for Children: Birth to Three*” guidelines to accompany the existing guidelines, reinforcing the clear existence of a learning agenda across the 0-5 age range.

¹⁰ Education and Training in Scotland National Dossier 2005

More recently, this emphasis on the relevance of learning for all of Scotland's children has been incorporated in the Scottish Ministers' high-level vision for children and young people:

"We have ambition for all our young people and we want them to have ambition for themselves and to be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. All Scotland's children and young people need to be nurtured, safe, active, healthy, engaged in learning, achieving, included, respected and responsible if we are to achieve our ambition for them."¹¹

4.2 Nursery provision within local authorities

Just over half of the provision for children in pre-school education and daycare is provided in local authority establishments, with the remainder provided by private and voluntary organisations¹². Within local authorities, there are a number of different types of establishments providing early education and care, albeit all to the same national regulation and standards. We focus here on those services provided wholly and directly by local authorities (thus excluding private/voluntary sector partnerships with local authorities in the provision of early education and childcare). Firstly, there are nursery schools, which are free-standing establishments staffed by teachers and nursery nurses, under the overall direction of a head teacher. Secondly, there are nursery classes attached to primary schools, staffed by teachers and nursery nurses, also under the direction of a head teacher, who need have no specific training in nursery education. Thirdly, there are extended day establishments. These were originally part of the health care system and staffed by nurses. In the 1960s, most of these establishments became incorporated within social services, and in most authorities, have been subsequently incorporated within education services. Extended day establishments, as their title suggests, provide education and care outwith normal school hours, often from 8am until 6pm. There are examples of establishments that are physically combined, where the provision of

¹¹ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/11/17164834/48365>

¹² Summary results of the 2002 Pre-school and Daycare Census, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00192-03.asp>

education and care for the under threes is directed by a nursery head of service, and the provision for the three to fives is directed by a head teacher. In addition, a small number of nursery nurses work in other types of establishment, such as special schools and hospitals.

While the regulatory framework is the same for all types of provision, historically there have been differences in the activities undertaken by teachers and nursery nurses in different types of establishment. Specifically, it is claimed by some that until relatively recently, nursery nurses were not responsible for the completion of paperwork in relation to assessing and evaluating children in nursery schools and classes, and that these activities were undertaken by teachers, albeit that the input of data for evaluation/assessment might be provided by nursery nurses. As nursery nurses have expanded their responsibilities in terms of recording and assessing in recent years, however, the nature of the division of tasks between teachers and nursery nurses has arguably become more controversial. Indeed, Glasgow City Council has recently announced its intention to redeploy teachers from nursery schools and classes and replace them with Child Development Officers. It is undoubtedly the case, as the Early Years Review notes, that it will be important to manage the relationship between teachers and other early years workers as the early years workforce is developed.

4.3 The early years and childcare workforce

“It is clear that the childcare sector suffers from a negative public image ...many see jobs in childcare as suffering from poor pay and conditions.”¹³

There is widespread acknowledgement that the early education workforce is predominately female and part-time, and that wages overall are generally low.¹⁴ In 2002, the number of staff in pre-school centres in Scotland was estimated as 22,000 (including

¹³Scottish Executive, *Childcare: The Training challenge. An Action Plan for the Training and Development of Workers*. in *Early Education, Childcare and Playwork*.

¹⁴ *ibid*.

both private, public and voluntary sector establishments).¹⁵ Virtually all of these workers are women.¹⁶ Women are more dominant in this sector than in the broader social care workforce in Scotland. The sector tends not to be ethnically diverse.¹⁷ Local authority nursery nurses tend to be better qualified (81% of staff working in local authority-run centres have qualifications)¹⁸ and receive better pay and conditions than their counterparts in the private sector.

A workforce survey¹⁹ suggested that in order to widen the appeal of this work and improve the quality of the workforce it would be necessary to:

- Enhance its status, through more extensive training and qualifications
- Offer clearer career progression
- Increase pay levels

Following on from this the Executive's integrated Strategy for the Early Years consultation document (2003) outlined an intention to

- Increase the number of qualified workers
- Expand the workforce and widen opportunities for training
- Encourage both progression up the career ladder, and also lateral movement across the early years and childcare sector as a whole
- Encourage diversity among the workforce that better reflects society

It is clear that these concerns over levels of earnings, lack of a career structure and lack of standardisation of qualifications are shared not only by nursery nurses and their union, but also by the Scottish Executive. Hence the commitment of the Early Years Review to "... ensuring that the employment opportunities for workers in the sector are improved

¹⁵ Scottish Executive (2002), *Interchange 73: Early Education and Childcare Workforce survey*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive. Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/ic73-00.asp>
Pre-school and childcare workforce statistics (2004), A Scottish Executive National Statistics Publication.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Rolfe, Metcalf, Anderson and Meadows (2003) *Recruitment and retention of childcare, early years and play workers: research study*, National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

¹⁸ Personal correspondence with Carol Ball, Unison, based on data provided to the Early Years Review.

¹⁹ Scottish Executive (2002) *Interchange 73*.

and that the status of the sector is raised.”²⁰ In addition, research indicates that parents see staff experience and training as the second most important criterion (next to accessing the required amount of childcare) when choosing childcare²¹.

Research in Britain and in the US also indicates that there is an important relationship between the qualifications of early years workers and positive outcomes both for children (in terms of academic and social attainment) and society as a whole (in terms of employment participation and avoidance of youth crime).²² Looking specifically at qualifications, Annex C of the *National Care Standards: early education and childcare up to the age of 16 (2003 version)*, illustrates the relevant current entry qualifications for nursery workers. At nursery assistant level, these include National Certificate Units in Childcare and Education; SVQ2 Early Years Care and Education, SVQ2 Playwork, or PDA Classroom Assistants. For nursery nurses/early education and care workers, the relevant qualifications are HNC Childcare and Education, SVQ3 Early Years Care and Education or PDA Classroom Assistants.²³ A more extensive specification of relevant qualifications is produced by the SSSC.²⁴ For most local authorities, the minimum qualification to enter nursery nursing is HNC/SVQ3. What is worth noting, however, is that nursery nurses currently are required to have qualifications that combine theory, practice and practical placements, over a two year period.

5. Nursery nurses’ pay in Scottish local authorities

Prior to the 2003-4 dispute, local authority nursery nurses across Scotland had a national pay agreement and national conditions of service (‘the blue book’). From 1998, the agreement on single status (‘the red book’) indicated that once single status was implemented, placement on grades would be decided locally. During the 2003-04 dispute

²⁰ Scottish Executive, National Review of the Early Years and Childcare Workforce, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/Early-Education-Child-Care/EarlyYearsReview/intro>.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*

²³ In the recent past most nursery nurses entered nursery nursing with an SSNEB registration

²⁴ Scottish Social Services Council, Qualifications Criteria for Phase Two registrants – early education and childcare workers.

COSLA argued that the job of nursery nurse was so different across Scotland that it did not make sense to have standardised pay and grading.²⁵ It should be noted, however, that during the dispute the COSLA Technical Working Group did propose a national framework. In the end, the 2004 dispute was settled on the basis of 32 local agreements, replacing the existing national agreement.

Prior to the dispute, local authority nursery nurses in Scotland were paid from approximately £10,000 (for a newly qualified nursery nurse) to a maximum of just under £14,000. Unison had called for a starting salary of £18,000 rising to £21,000 with a promoted post. The purpose of this section of the report is first, to look at the distribution of pay and hours across local authorities in Scotland. The data was derived from a number of sources (branch returns to Unison; a summary document produced by Unison during the dispute as settlements were reached; some information provided by Unison officers during the course of this research and some figures from an Incomes Data Services Report published in 2005).²⁶ The settlement data was produced in a variety of formats and is not 100% complete in every respect. Appendix A contains as uniform a presentation as is possible with the data we have, subject to the overriding priority of providing as full a picture as possible. Secondary analysis of the data is also provided for the purpose of estimating the degree of variation in local settlements. This is useful in its own right and also for the purposes of helping to explain the differences in attitudes towards pay among nursery nurses which are outlined in Section 6.

Given the variation in the quality and completeness of the data and the fact that the majority of nursery nurses are at the top of their scale, the clearest illustration of the variation in salaries is given by looking at the top of the scale for 52-week equivalents. In addition a notional hourly rate, also based on 52-week equivalents is also calculated for the purposes of comparison.

²⁵ Georghiou, SPICE 04/19.

²⁶ IDS Pay Report 921 (January 2005) Salaries within Scottish Local Government

Table 5.1 contains the salary (as at January 2006) for each local authority and an associated hourly rate. As can be seen from the table the salary ranges from £9.58 to £11.08 with an average of £10.52 and with the most common figures (for 19 authorities in total) being £10.42 and £10.74. It should be noted that the annual salary shown here is not necessarily a reflection of what nursery nurses actually earn since the majority are not on 52-week contracts.

Table 5.1: Scale and salary data by local authority

No.	Local Authority	Top Scale point	Salary at top of scale ²⁷	Hourly rate ²⁸	Ranking (highest to lowest)
1	Aberdeen City	26	20168	10.70	4
2	Aberdeenshire	26	20168	10.70	4
3	Angus	24	18966	10.42	5
4	Argyll & Bute	22	17876	9.82	7
5	Clackmannanshire	26 / 24 ²⁹	20168	11.08	1
6	Dumfries & Galloway	24	18966	10.42	5
7	Dundee	25	19545	10.74	3
8	East Ayrshire	26/ 25 ³⁰	20168	11.08	1
9	East Dunbartonshire	26	20168	11.08	1
10	East Lothian	25	19545	10.74	3
11	East Renfrewshire	26/ 25 ³¹	20168	11.08	1
12	Edinburgh City	24	18966	10.42	5
13	Falkirk	25	19545	10.74	3
14	Fife	26	20168	10.77	2
15	Glasgow	24	18966	10.42	5
16	Highland	21	17436	9.58	9
17	Inverclyde	24	18966	10.42	5
18	Midlothian	25	19545	10.74	3
19	Moray	25	19545	10.74	3
20	North Ayrshire	25	19545	10.74	3
21	North Lanarkshire	25	19545	10.74	3
22	Orkney Islands	24	18966	10.42	5
23	Perth & Kinross	SCP38 ³²	18490	9.61	8
24	Renfrewshire	24	18966	10.42	5
25	Scottish Borders	24	18966	10.42	5
26	Shetland Islands	22	17876 ³³	9.82	7
27	South Ayrshire	25	19545	10.74	3
28	South Lanarkshire	SCP40 ³⁴	19029	9.89	6
29	Stirling	25	19545	10.74	3
30	West Dunbartonshire	24	18966	10.42	5
31	West Lothian	24	18966	10.42	5
32	Western Isles	-			

²⁷ These are the rates which pertain at January 2006 for those working 52 weeks. There were two cost of living increases of 2.95% in April 2004 and April 2005. These are the only changes in salaries since the settlements of 2004. For some authorities eg Glasgow the April 2004 cost of living increase came before the dispute was settled.

²⁸ The hourly rate is calculated for a 52-week equivalent by dividing by (35x52) for most authorities. In the case of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire the annualised hours are (36.25x52), for Fife (36 x 52), and for Perth & Kinross and South Lanarkshire the annualised hours are (37x52). For some councils the figure used for calculating an annualised rate is 52.14; however, we have used 52 throughout for a standardised comparison.

²⁹ Some authorities have a qualification bar before the top of the scale (in the case of Clackmannanshire the scale goes to point 26 but there is a qualification bar at point 24). The salary figure shown is for point 26

³⁰ See footnote 29

³¹ See footnote 29

³² New scale

³³ Nursery nurses in Shetland are also paid an Islands allowance in addition to the figure quoted here.

³⁴ See footnote 32

Figure 5.1 below shows the variation in hourly rates by local authority in graph format (with the local authorities numbered as in Table 5.1 above).

Figure 5.1: Hourly pay rates by local authority

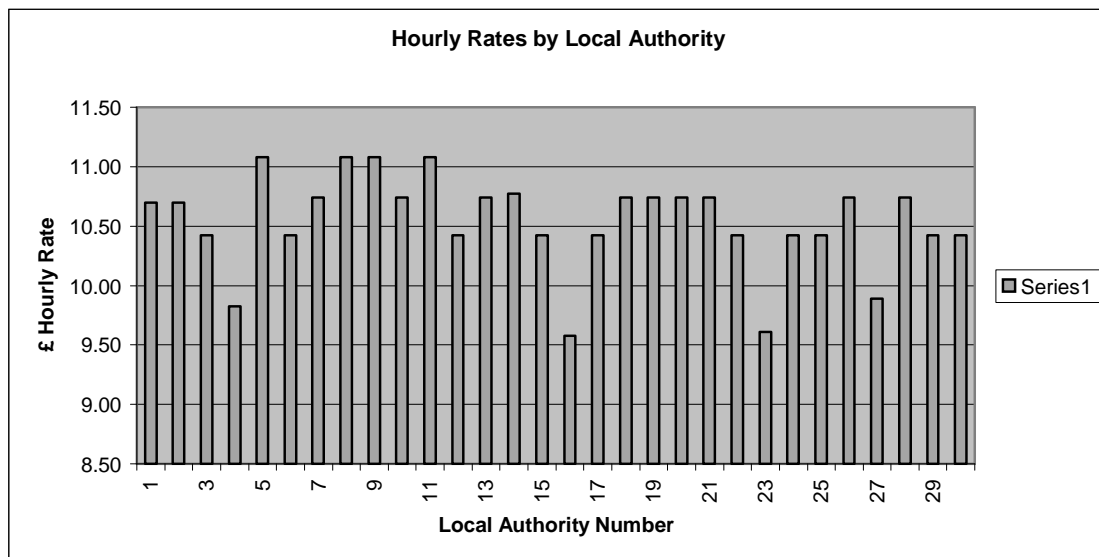


Table 5.2 below groups local authorities in terms of their position on the current salary distribution.

Table 5.2: Low, mid and high paying local authorities

Low	Mid	High
< £10.16	£10.17-£10.70	£10.71-11.08
Argyll & Bute Highland Perth & Kinross Shetland Islands South Lanarkshire	Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire Angus Dumfries & Galloway Edinburgh Glasgow Inverclyde Orkney Islands Renfrewshire Scottish Borders West Dunbartonshire West Lothian	Clackmannanshire Dundee East Ayrshire East Dunbartonshire East Lothian East Renfrewshire Falkirk Fife Midlothian Moray North Ayrshire North Lanarkshire South Ayrshire Stirling

From Table 5.2 above, we can see that there is no systematic relationship between the numbers of nursery nurses employed in each authority and the level of the pay settlement. However, with one exception (North Lanarkshire) the authorities which employ the biggest groupings of nursery nurses pay rates in the mid to low range.

From Table 5.3 below it can be seen that the rural authorities are, on average, lower paid in comparison with the other authorities. This average however hides a large degree of variation within that group, as around 40% of those authorities are actually paying hourly rates in the top range of the scale.

Table 5.3: Hourly rates by local authority type

Local authority grouped by type	Mean hourly rate
Urban	10.64
Urban-Rural	10.69
Rural	10.33

It is worth noting that there appears to be no systematic explanation as to why individual authorities have positioned themselves on particular positions in the salary range, neither in terms of authority size, numbers of nursery nurses employed or degree of urbanisation. Comparable authorities, for example, Highland and Moray, occupy different ends of the salary range. In addition, not only did the analysis of job descriptions across authorities fail to reveal any substantive differences in the activities of nursery nurses but, as Section 6 will illustrate, there are also overwhelming similarities in the day to day activities reported by nursery nurses themselves. In terms of hours, most nursery nurses work a 35-hour week, with those employed by Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire working 36.25 hours, those employed in Fife work 36 hours while those employed by Perth & Kinross, and South Lanarkshire work 37-hour weeks.

6. The work experience of early years workers in Scottish local authority nurseries

6.1 Sample Characteristics

While the Early Years Review has highlighted the need for diversity in the early years workforce (in particular, the need to attract males, older workers and those from ethnic minorities), not surprisingly, the sample was predominantly female and mainly aged in the mid to upper career age-range between 40-49 years with a mean age of 44 years (41%). Most were white (Table 6.1.1).

Table 6.1.1 Gender, age and ethnicity of sample

Gender	%
Female	>99
Male	<1
Number of cases	612
Age	
20-29	5
30-39	24
40-49	41
50-59	28
60+	2
Number of cases	612
Ethnicity	
White	99
Other	1
Number of cases	612

In terms of their key labour market and organisational characteristics, more than four fifths were basic grade nursery nurses (81%)³⁵ and most were also based in schools and classes (68%) with another large group in extended day care settings (18%).

³⁵ A variety of job titles were used across local authorities to designate these workers.

Table 6.1.2 Job level and type of establishment

Title	%
Nursery nurse	81
Senior nursery nurse/team leader	14
Depute or head of centre	5
Number of cases	612
Type of establishment	%
Schools and classes	68
Extended day care	18
Other (eg special schools)	14
Number of cases	612
Contract	%
Permanent	99
Temporary	1
Number of cases	612

The respondents overwhelmingly had permanent (99%) rather than temporary contracts. Their experience as qualified nursery nurses ranged from 1 to 43 years (average 20 years). Not surprisingly given the profile of children within the early years sector, the majority currently worked with children aged 3-5 (85%)³⁶. Most also worked 35 hours per week (57%), while 14% worked longer hours. Around a quarter described themselves as part time workers (24%). The longest working week reported was 37.5 hours.

Local authority nursery nurses are normally employed on either 39 or 52 week contracts (with the former predominating in nursery schools and classes, and the latter in extended day provision). Of those surveyed, 41% were on 52 week contracts and 59% were on 39 week contracts.

In short, these were largely mature and experienced respondents who appear to be particularly well placed to comment on issues (including recent changes) in the sector relating to their type of work.

³⁶ However, around two thirds of these respondents had also previously worked with children aged under 3.

6.2 Job content

The Early Years Review raised the questions of what early years workers do now and what they should be doing in the future. The review indicated that there are a huge variety of workers in the sector with varying levels of responsibility and different staffing structures across local authorities. While job descriptions exist for nursery nurses in all local authorities, these rarely reveal the extent to which all their designated activities are actually undertaken. It is also possible that there are variations within local authorities and in different establishments. For example, while the participation of nursery nurses in a range of tasks or initiatives is referred to in many local authority job descriptions, the extent and nature of their involvement may vary between different establishments and different head teachers/establishment heads.

The survey data enables us to present a picture of the specific and diverse activities of nursery nurses at the current time, specifying the key components of the job and the frequency with which key tasks are undertaken (Table 6.2.1).

Table 6.2.1 - Job components and frequency of tasks

Component	Never	Some times	Frequently	All of the time
	%	%	%	%
Plan a curriculum programme for each child to HMIE and/or Care Commission standards	6	8	18	68
Implement a curriculum programme for each child to HMIE and/or Care Commission standards	4	6	14	76
Observe, record and report on children's progress/development	<1	4	9	86
Be involved in Individualised Educational Programmes	4	26	32	37
Set up challenging and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning situations to motivate learning and to help children develop a variety of skills	<1	3	9	88
Encourage children's development through listening, talking and responding to children in a range of learning contexts	0	2	4	94
Encourage children's language development and be aware of ways to stimulate language through play, books, stories and by personal interaction	0	2	4	94
Make positive contributions to strategic and operational planning	<1	4	23	73
Encourage children's literacy and numeracy	0	2	11	87
Encourage children's awareness of equalities issues	0	7	24	69
Adhere to the Scottish Social Services Council code of practice for carers	3	3	10	84
Liaise with tutors of nursery nurse students	10	33	31	25
Keep up-to-date with early years initiatives/developments and participate in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	1	7	36	57
Communicate with and involve parents in decisions	2	8	25	66
Liaise with other agencies (social workers, speech therapists, police, other establishments/schools)	2	18	39	41
Prepare and present reports for parents/carers and other agencies	11	19	34	36
Support, mentor or develop students, temporary or new staff	4	20	38	38
Assist in planning/follow-up to HMIE and Care Commission visits	4	16	31	49
Support vulnerable families and encourage them to access other agencies (i.e. health, social work)	6	26	28	40
Facilitate transition of children to school settings	3	15	27	54
Other(<i>Please specify</i>)	4	4	16	75

The figures are interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, the heavy emphasis on child development, learning and recording systems: over nine tenths thought they promoted children's linguistic, social, intellectual and sensory development *all* of the time. Secondly, the positive contribution being made to strategic and operational planning (73%), and curriculum planning (68%) and implementation (76%) *all* of the time. These are all key skill areas that reflect their involvement in a delivering a national curriculum and offer a strong counter to the view that nursery nurses are simply engaged in basic childcare. In contrast these are skills that are an integral part of an active learning and development culture based on a standard curriculum. It was notable that, for most categories, less than a tenth never did *any* of these tasks.

In addition, the Early Years Review also highlighted activities undertaken by nursery nurses that were not included in existing job descriptions, but still reflected aspects of the job content. These were strongly highlighted in the survey: communicating with parents and involving them in decisions (91% frequently or all of the time); working with wider agencies (91% frequently or all of the time); involvement in individual child assessment (69% took part in individualised educational programmes frequently or all of the time), reporting (70% frequently or all of the time); and responsibilities at times of the transition between nurseries and formal primary schooling (81% frequently or all of the time).

For the most part, the picture presented by the survey is largely one of similarity across all types of nursery establishments. However, there were some statistically significant differences:

- Almost all of those employed in schools and classes would observe, record and report on progress all of the time (92%), compared with 82% in extended day care and 71% in other establishments
- For 77% of respondents in extended day care establishments, communicating with parents was a constant activity, compared with 64% in schools and classes and 60% in other establishments

- Respondents in ‘other’ establishments were more likely to be continually involved in liaising with other agencies (57%) compared with 50% and 35% of their colleagues in extended day care (50%) and especially schools/classes (35%)
- While 36% of respondents in all types of establishment reported that they prepared and presented reports all of the time, respondents in extended day care (50%) did so more frequently (compared with 31% and 30% for schools/classes and other establishments)
- Supporting vulnerable families was a significantly more continuous aspect of the job for workers in extended day care (61%) compared to ‘other’ establishments (44%) and in schools/classes (34%). There was, however, no difference in the proportions of workers who were involved in supporting vulnerable families frequently
- Nursery nurses in ‘other’ establishments were less likely than others to be involved on a frequent basis in preparing for HMI or Care Commission inspections.

Whilst there was a significant relationship between respondents reporting involvement in facilitating children’s transitions to primary schools, this is likely to reflect the age characteristics of the children in each establishment. Respondents in schools/classes reported more frequent involvement largely because the numbers of children making a transition to school are disproportionately higher within the group of children for whom they are responsible.

All of the above components were raised in the focus groups. Curriculum planning and implementation however, was a strong focus of contention in the focus groups with those in school settings. Respondents raised concerns over variable practice in nursery schools within individual authorities; the responsibilities of nursery nurses, both in relation to

nursery nurse colleagues and to teachers; and the recognition of these responsibilities in terms of pay. For example³⁷:

“... every school, every class can be different ... in planning and implementation it shouldn't be an individual issue, it shouldn't be a personality issue, it should be a matter of standard practice..” (NN, school, 29 years)

“... you have teachers who come in on supply and they say ‘You do it, you take charge’ and they let you do it but they’re still getting paid for it.” (NN, School, 9 years)

We also asked respondents whether they had been involved in a variety of specialised roles (Table 6.2.2).

Table 6.2.2 – Involvement in specialised tasks*

Involved in	%
Team leading duties	56
Admission panels	27
Case conferences	64
A standards monitoring group	22
A task group dealing with HMIE/Care Commission recommendations	44
Number of cases	612

*respondents were allowed to tick as many tasks as applicable

Most had also been involved in senior duties (56%) and more specialised tasks associated with case conferences (64%). What is striking, however, is that nursery nurses in extended day establishments were significantly more likely to be involved in all but one of these more specialised activities (Table 6.3.2).

³⁷ All quotes describe respondents in terms of their current position (NN=nursery nurse), their current establishment (nursery schools and classes; extended day establishments or other), and their total number of years experience in nursery nursing.

Table 6.2.3 – Involvement in specialised tasks by establishment*

Type of establishment	Team leading	Admission Panel	Case Conference	Standards Monitoring group
Nursery schools/classes	51	18	54	15
Extended day	72	50	94	39
Other	63	39	78	29
Number of cases	581	577	600	565

*respondents were allowed to tick as many tasks as applicable

In terms of the Early Years Review vision of future roles and responsibilities³⁸ for the sector, it is clear from the above tables that many nursery nurses already do many of the key tasks highlighted by the review.

In the survey, nursery nurses were asked about the allocation of their time between direct contact with children, preparation for contact, paperwork, scheduled reflection time and other time. What is most striking about the responses is that around two thirds of all nursery nurses spend upwards of twenty per cent of their time doing things other than being in direct contact with children. This figure differs significantly between establishments, with those in extended day nurseries spending a markedly greater proportion of their time in other activities. This, as might be expected, is also true of deputies or heads of centres. More surprisingly however, is the fact that there are far smaller differences between nursery nurses and seniors in terms of their allocation of time across these categories. There are also considerable differences between establishments when it comes to time allocated to paperwork. Those nursery nurses working in extended day nurseries reported spending a far higher proportion of their time in paperwork (with twenty-four per cent reporting that they spend more than a fifth of their working time on paperwork compared to those in nursery schools or classes, where the equivalent figure is only around eight per cent).

³⁸ Early Years Review, Roles and Responsibility Framework, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1124/0013888.pdf>

Tables 6.2.1-6.2.3 indicate the tasks/activities nursery nurses are engaged in. The Early Years Review has stressed that in addition to knowledge and skills, early years workers also need to have appropriate attitudes. Table 6.2.4 below reports on what respondents identify as the key knowledge, skills and attributes required for their role, and how important these are.

Table 6.2.4 Key Knowledge, skills, attributes and importance

Knowledge/Skill/Attributes	Very important	Important	Not important	Most Important
	%	%	%	%
Understanding theories of child development and child care	82	18	<1	53
Understanding basic medical knowledge	35	64	1	
Understanding basic nutrition	36	64	1	
Good reading and writing skills	56	43	1	
Good numerical skills	41	54	5	
Understanding hygiene regulations	68	32	0	
Understanding safety regulations	79	20	<1	
Physical stamina	57	41	2	
Good team-working skills	94	6	0	37
Flexibility/adaptability	86	14	<1	8
Ability to take initiative	83	16	<1	
Good communication skills	92	8	0	10
A fair and consistent approach	90	10	<1	11
Creativity	37	60	3	
An outgoing personality	33	56	11	
Good 'people' skills	76	23	<1	
Empathy/caring nature/patience	92	8	0	58
An interest in children	97	3	0	54
Previous work experience with children	24	58	19	
Experience of other caring roles (eg being a parent)	10	50	40	

The attributes identified as most important were largely ‘soft’ people skills: an interest in children, empathy/caring, teamworking, communications and equity. All of these are areas highlighted by the Early Years Review as important for workers in the sector. Other areas such as knowledge of theories of child development, flexibility and the ability to take initiative are also very prominent. These are also the areas highlighted by respondents in all of the focus groups.

However, we also asked respondents to specify the three most important requirements factors in terms of knowledge, skills or attributes of their job. Looking at the frequency of *first* preferences, the most important role requirements identified are ‘an interest in children’, ‘understanding theories of child development and child care’ and ‘empathy, a caring nature and patience’. These, along with ‘good teamworking skills’, are the skills to the fore when we then combined the three most important preferences specified by respondents

Finally in this section, it is useful to look at the respondents’ perceptions of their role in terms of their job content and key skills (Table 6.2.5). We asked about the extent to which people agreed or disagreed with statements about their role in terms of education and childcare.

Table 6.2.5 Perceptions of role

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither/ Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Number of cases
	%	%	%	%	%	
Educating children is the most important part of my job.	48	24	13	11	3	599
My main job is childcare, not education.	11	12	21	36	21	.604

Most saw education as the most important part of their job (72% and almost half ‘strongly’) and did not see themselves as simply child care workers (57% disagreed with

that statement). These issues were prominent in each of the focus groups. While the participants saw their job as involving child care they were more likely to stress the role they played in children's education and learning. For example:

"... everything I do is about the education of that child ... whether it's about discussing behaviour management, plans, even toilet training, it is all about education ..."

(NN, school, 10 years)

"... we work to a curriculum and look at the whole child not just the minding .."

(NN, School, 15 years)

"...we plan for children's learning all the time because we give them the opportunities to develop their learning.."

(NN, Extended day establishment, 8 years)

They were all strongly critical of what they saw as the prevailing stereotype of their role.

For example:

"... if someone was to think of you as an educator that's quite different from them just thinking of you just as a childminder ... because all they think you do is wipe their nose, wipe their bottom, feed them, read them a story as well and that's it ... we do that, but we also do the education side as well.."

(NN, school, 6 years)

Those in school settings also often contrasted what they saw as their more extensive knowledge and experience with teachers. They often saw little difference between the two groups. For example:

" ...we are the ones who are trained and working with under 5's but its not recognized ... some of the teachers I've worked with I know I do a better job than them ... and if they were to say to me 'well do another year teacher training' well I would.."

(NN, school, 6 years)

" ... the problem is that we have the expertise but work with teachers who have no expertise in early years or in nursery education but they can still be the manager ... informally it can be the nursery nurses who direct the nursery for teachers with no expertise ... "

(NN, School, 35 years)

6.3 Knowledge base and qualifications

The Early Years Review has highlighted the importance of assessing the current qualifications, training and continuing development framework for early years workers. The review has signalled an intention to provide recommendations for employers, the Scottish Executive and others, to assist them in overcoming any barriers to providing appropriate qualifications and training for the early years workforce.

We asked about entry and additional qualifications, and whether respondents were currently working towards a qualification (Table 6.3.1).

Table 6.3.1 Types of qualification completed by stage and number

Qualification	Entry	Since entry
Scottish Group Award in Care (Intermediate 2)	1	0
National Qualification – Higher Early Years Care and Education	<1	0
Professional Development Award (PDA) Certificate for Classroom Assistants	<1	<1
Professional Development Award (PDA) Certificate for Learning Assistants	<1	<1
SVQ 2 Early Years Care and Education (formerly Childcare and Education)	1	<1
SVQ2 Playwork	<1	<1
Scottish Group Award Early Years Care and Education (Higher)	<1	<1
SSNEB	80	4
NC Childcare and Education	5	1
Higher National Certificate (HNC) Childcare and Education	9	5
HNC Supporting Special Learning Needs	0	4
SVQ 3 Early Years Care and Education (formerly Childcare and Education)	<1	1
Higher National Diploma (HND) Supporting Special Learning Needs	0	<1
Professional Development Award (PDA) in Childcare and Education	<1	11
SVQ 4 Early Years Care and Education	0	<1
Degree qualification (eg BA) relating to early years education and childcare	<1	3
Other	6	11
Number of cases	615	615
Currently working towards a qualification?	%	
Yes	17	
No	83	
Number of cases	615	
Number of qualifications to date	%	
None	2	
1	63	
2	29	
3 or more	8	

The figures show that of the sample, while most had common entry qualifications, a significant minority (38%) had additional qualifications since entry. In terms of the overall sample, just over a tenth had gained their Professional Development Award (11%) and 3% had obtained a degree. Nearly a fifth were also currently working an

additional qualification (17%) and just under two fifths held two or more qualifications (37%).

A feature of all studies of the early years workforce in Scotland is the concerns raised about low levels of qualified workers. However, these concerns refer to all early years workers, including those outside of local authority early years education and childcare. The qualifications profile of the respondents in this study is consistent and appropriate to their sector of work³⁹. What is also of note, however, is that 17% are currently undertaking an additional qualification, and ,of these, many are studying towards higher and more specialist types of qualifications such as degrees.

The figures on those working towards additional qualifications were also reflected in the focus groups, where only a minority in each group had undertaken or were currently completing additional qualifications. A key issue, however, which was raised in the groups, is the incentives available to individuals to develop their qualifications profile. A common point made in the groups is that gaining additional qualifications is not likely to result in higher levels of pay (in the same way as is perceived to happen in the teaching profession). This issue is related to their view of nursery nursing as a ‘career’ and we will return to this issue again below.

A feature of the Early Years Review is the emphasis on a degree-led profession for the early years sector. This raises many questions about the standards of candidates not only entering the sector but developing within their current roles, and whether lead practitioners and management at least should be degree-led. It also has implications for pay and delivering a degree-led sector may be costly for local authorities. In the focus groups we asked people’s opinions on the adequacy of existing entry levels and also whether the nursery nursing should be degree-led. Their responses were as follows:

- Only the members of one group fully supported the view that nursery nursing should be a degree-led profession. Support for this view is largely because people

³⁹ Scottish Executive (2002) Interchange 73: Early education and childcare workforce survey.

want increased 'professionalism'; for this to be recognised by other groups that they work alongside; and to deter unsuitable candidates from entering the sector

- Other groups are not necessarily unsupportive of these views but are concerned more about what are seen as the variable standards applied by FE Colleges in assessing students. There is a view that nurseries should have a greater say in the assessment of students on placements and that respondents have experience of new entrants who are not fully able to cope with the administrative demands of the job. This is partly attributed to career guidance stereotypes of nursery nursing as a route for less able young people who then struggle with the demands of the job.
- That nursery nurses should be able to develop degree level qualifications in post.

In terms of training as a vehicle to develop a qualifications profile, almost all indicate that they have been provided with training or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) by their employer in the last three years (90%). However, an appreciable minority indicate that the training provided is insufficient to support them in their job (40%). Also, most report that they have undertaken training and/or continuing professional development in their own time (57%).

In the four urban focus groups, all indicate that they currently undertake training and CPD. However, in these groups they also think that the training is insufficient to support their job. This is because of:

- insufficient access to training because of problems getting cover at the workplace
or
- its timing (after normal working hours, 'twilight')
- appropriateness, relevancy and lack of variety of the training which is also seen to favour the needs of other groups such as teachers.

6.4 Changes in job content and requirements

Following on from the discussion above, we asked about changes in knowledge and skill levels in the job compared to the past (Table 6.4.1)

Table 6.4.1 Perceived changes in skill levels

Perceived skill Change	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither/ Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Number of cases
	%	%	%	%	%	
My job requires higher skills than it did in the past.	47	34	11	7	1	601
My job requires more conceptual or thinking skills than it did in the past.	34	39	18	8	1	604

The figures clearly show that most think that their job requires higher levels of skills (81% agreed) and has more emphasis on cognitive aspects (73% agreed) compared to the past. Again these are issues that are mentioned in all of the focus groups when participants were asked to reflect on how their jobs had changed since the last review in 1988. All participants in the groups cite aspects such as the levels of administration involved; knowledge and skills requirements in relation to information and communication technologies; greater accountability and responsibility; and dealing with increased numbers of children (and families) with behavioural problems and special needs.

In terms of job change in the survey we asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements on issues of responsibility, effort and perceived levels of stress (Table 6.4.2)

Table 6.4.2 Views on responsibility, effort and stress

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither/Nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Number of cases
Responsibility	%	%	%	%	%	
I now have less responsibility at work than I used to.	3	4	5	16	71	607
My job requires me to take very little initiative	4	5	11	38	42	602
My line manager allows me to take a lot of responsibility	26	44	18	11	2	591
Effort						
My job requires high levels of concentration	53	39	6	2	<1	605
I work harder than I did in the past.	43	29	16	9	3	599
Stress						
I find my job very stressful	24	38	23	12	3	599

From the figures it is clear that most think they have more responsibility (87%), used their initiative (80%), have to concentrate to a high level (92%) and think that they work harder than before (72%). Not surprisingly, most rate their job as stressful (62%).

While 77% of nursery nurses in rural authorities disagree with the statement ‘I have less responsibility now than in the past’, this is significantly less than the level of disagreement in urban or urban-rural authorities.

Perceptions of stress are significantly related to the degree of urbanisation in terms of the authorities in which the respondents work, with 46% of nursery nurses in rural authorities agreeing that their job is stressful, compared with 57% and 71% respectively of nursery nurses in urban-rural and urban authorities.

One potential factor generating greater responsibility, increased effort and increased stress is greater administration and the increased emphasis on regulation in the sector. In the focus groups participants were generally supportive of regulation and inspection. The data generated on this issue via the survey is presented in Table 6.4.3 below.

Table 6.4.3 - Views on administration & regulation in the sector

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
More regulation and inspection helps me to provide a better quality service.	16	36	27	17	4
More paperwork leaves me less time for direct contact with the children.	51	28	12	8	1
I now spend less time directly interacting with children that I used to	24	32	14	25	6
I now spend much more time than I used to on activities relating to inspection.	22	42	21	13	2
Involvement in paperwork gives me an opportunity to reflect on each child.	16	56	16	10	2
More regulation and inspection has made my work harder.	29	34	23	12	1

Clearly, most are supportive of regulation and inspection (52%) and only around a fifth do not think it helps them provide a better quality service (21%). However, many also feel that increased administration reduces their contact time with children (79%); that they now spent less time directly interacting with children (56%); and that regulation and inspection makes their work harder (63%). Nevertheless, nearly three quarters feel that paperwork/administration gives them a positive opportunity to reflect on each child (71%), highlighting that less direct contact time may not necessarily lead to a reduced quality of service for the children.

There are again some differences between authorities in that nursery nurses in rural authorities are significantly less likely to agree with the statement ‘More paperwork leaves me less time for direct contact with the children’ than their urban or urban-rural counterparts.

6.5 Career, status and pay

There is little issue about wanting to be linked with the sector as all the focus group participants expressed a strong interest in the welfare and development of children. The participants however, think that there is little value attached to their jobs and this is reflected in the career pathways available to workers in the sector. Pathways reflect both movement within and access to the sector. In the four urban focus groups, in relation to the issue of career pathways, there was a perceived lack of:

- Routes available in the same way as are available to other groups working in the early years sector such as teachers and social workers. The participants feel that there is an absence of pathways in which to recognise and develop their expertise and abilities
- Comparisons were made with the career structures in other professions such as teaching where there are defined leadership and management pathways available and where expertise can be recognised in terms of both increased pay and status in the Chartered Teaching Programme
- Adequate pay incentives to undertake additional qualifications and develop along what pathways did exist into senior posts because small increases in pay are out of proportion with the greater responsibilities involved.
- The data presents some interesting findings in terms of the activities and views of senior nursery nurses. Whilst seniors are significantly more involved than basic grade nursery nurses in tasks like supporting vulnerable families; supporting and mentoring students; planning for HMI/Care Commission visits and keeping up to date with early years initiatives, they are no less frequently involved in the other activities than nursery nurses. Seniors, therefore, appear to take on significantly more activities for less significantly enhanced earnings. This may explain some of the more negative perceptions held by senior nursery nurses on aspects of their work and value.

“... we take qualifications for two years and take our jobs seriously but its not a career ... there’s no structure...”

(NN, school, 19 years)

“... when I first started working as a team leader between my job and depute there was three and half thousand (difference in pay) and between the depute and the head there was the same amount. Now there is ten thousand between the team leader and the depute ...”

(NN, school, 18 years)

“... when you see the increase in pay with the increase in responsibility (for senior roles), it’s something like an extra £2.50 a week, 50p a session ... it’s not worth it.”

(NN, extended day establishment, 12 years)

“ ...when we were on strike an MSP in the Scottish Parliament stood up and said that nursery nurses were entitled to a career structure and something to aim for like a learning assistant ... who is unqualifiedand that’s what we’ve got to aspire to ... people with no qualifications and training..”

(NN, school, 6 years)

Clearly, for the participants nursery nursing offers little flexibility and opportunity in terms of pathways. This presents real problems for recruitment and retention in the sector, particularly for the desire to have degree-level leaders and managers, and also retaining those who want to advance but find that they cannot go as far as they may desire. More broadly it leaves the sector open to being used as a stepping stone for those who simply want to move to other related professions. The Early Years Review Recruitment and Retention Working Group has already acknowledged that concerns over pay, conditions, status and a lack of career pathways are a barrier to effective recruitment and retention of early years workers.

In the survey just over three fifths were at the top of their pay scale (61%). As a measure of movement we also asked how long it had taken people to reach the top of the scale (Table 6.5.1)

Table 6.5.1 Time to reach the top of pay scale and time in this position

Time to top of scale	%
Less than five years	16
More than five but less than ten years	59
More than ten but less than fifteen years	19
More than fifteen years	6
Number of cases	377
Time at top of scale	%
Less than five years	24
More than five but less than ten years	21
More than ten but less than fifteen years	15
More than fifteen years	30
Number of cases	376

Most had taken more than five but less than ten years to reach the top of the scale (59%) and a further 19% had taken between 10-15 years. The more worrying figure however, is the almost a third who report that they have been at the top of the scale for more than 15 years: in addition, nearly half of respondents have been at the top of their scale for between 10-15 years (45%).

The Early Years Review has raised concerns over the status of early years working both as a career choice and in terms of the perceptions of workers in the sector as to their value. In part, status issues relate to levels of reward and prospects for career advancement, and both of these are areas where there is considerable disquiet amongst local authority nursery nurses in our study. In addition, however, status relates to perceptions of how work and efforts are valued by relevant parties, such as in this case, employers, line management, parents and the wider society (Table 6.5.2)

Table 6.5.2 Perceptions of how nursery nurses are valued by key stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Highly Valued	Valued	Not valued
	%	%	%
Establishment management/head teacher	40	43	17
Your employer/local authority	4	34	62
Parents	52	43	5
Other agencies involved in child care and education	21	64	16
The public/society	8	49	43

It is clear both from the focus groups and the survey data that in contrast to parents (95% feel valued by this group), other agencies (85%) and line managers (83%), only a minority of nursery nurses feel valued by their employers (38%). Further, only 4% feel highly valued by their employer. In contrast, 57% feel valued by the public, a group that are thought to know very little about their work. The respondents thus feel least valued by their employer/local authority. Comments from the focus groups referred to a raft of issues for this: low pay, poor career opportunities and the better treatment of other workers in local authorities.

We also asked respondents about their morale (Table 6.5.3)

Table 6.5.3 Perceptions of morale among nursery nurses

Morale	Very high 5	4	3	2	Very low 1
	%	%	%	%	%
My own morale is	9	29	33	17	12
The morale of my colleagues at work is	5	19	37	24	14

Few rate their own or the morale of others as high but are more likely to rate the morale of others as low (38%) compared to themselves (29%).

While there is little evidence that there is a significant amount of turnover in the public sector among nursery nurses, most survey respondents have, at some point, seriously considered leaving local authority work (63%). This was also the case in the focus groups, although respondents also stressed their continued interest in working with children as a reason for staying. More likely was the incidence of having second or third jobs to make ends meet and compensate for low levels of pay in the sector.

6.6 Best and worst job aspects

Consistent with previous research⁴⁰, in both the survey and the focus groups nursery nurses are overwhelmingly of the same view that the most satisfying aspects of their job is working with children and seeing them develop and progress over time. Although a number also see administrative demands as the most negative feature of the job, most respondents in both the focus groups and the survey identify low pay and the low value attached to their work by their employers as the worst aspects. In the survey, around 12% of nursery nurses have taken a second job, while around 8% claim state benefits. As we did not ask respondents to identify which benefits they claim, we would treat this figure with caution.

On the issue of pay, we were interested in considering the extent to which the move to local agreements might lead to perceptions amongst nursery nurses of unfairness or inequality in terms of pay. As we have indicated earlier, there is strong evidence from both the survey and focus groups that nursery nurses believe they do the same job, with the same tasks and activities, across Scotland. Table 6.6.1 indicates, however, that a significant minority of nursery nurses feel negatively about how their pay compares with people doing the same job in other authorities.

⁴⁰ Rolfe, op cit.

Table 6.6.1 Perceptions of relative pay

Pay Comparison	%
I am better paid than nursery nurses in other authorities	6
My pay is the same or similar to pay in other authorities	57
I am less well paid than nursery nurses in other authorities	37
Number of cases	468

The relationship between pay rate and perception of value by the employer/local authority whilst statistically significant is not as one might expect – that is, that lower pay rates were interpreted as indicating a low valuation of nursery nurses and vice versa. While 59% of those respondents in authorities included in the ‘low’ banded hourly rate in Section 5 report that they are not valued by their employer, this is not significantly different from the 52% from authorities in the ‘high’ banded hourly rate. However, 71% of respondents from authorities in the ‘middle’ banded hourly rate do not see themselves as valued. This relationship is most likely to be a consequence of the predominance in numbers of Glasgow and Edinburgh nursery nurses in the survey, as these are both the largest employers and pay in the middle band. This does, of course, raise the problem of perceptions of value for the two largest authorities. The small sample size in each authority precludes us from examining the significance of this issue statistically.

6.7 Summary of survey and focus group findings

In summary, the survey and focus groups raise a number of important issues for consideration:

- *The emphasis on learning and development components in the jobs of nursery nurses and the necessity of having the right ‘soft’ skills to work in the sector.* Nursery nurses see themselves as playing a critical role in the education of children and not simply as engaging in childcare.
- *The consistent and developing qualifications profile associated with nursery nurses.* However, although most have undertaken CPD many think that the training on offer is insufficient to support them in their jobs. Their jobs are seen as involving higher skills, more responsibility, effort and stress than in the past.

- *The positive impact of regulation on helping nursery nurses offer a better service.* Although regulation does mean less contact time with children, nursery nurses feel that they are able to reflect more on each child as a result.
- *Despite all of the above, nursery nurses do not see their job as a career which offers adequate flexibility and opportunities.* There are issues about the perceived lack of pathways supported by adequate pay levels commensurate with higher levels of responsibility. Although most think that their pay levels are the same or similar to those in other local authorities, over a third think that they are less well off despite all delivering a standard national curriculum for children. Not surprisingly, although they are ambivalent about morale, they feel least valued by their own employers.
- *Many of the respondents are concerned about the inequity of differing pay rates for what they believe to be the same job.* This belief is supported by the survey findings across the country. Although the small numbers in the survey make it difficult to establish a statistically significant relationship between perceptions of pay, morale and feelings of being valued, there is ample evidence in the focus group discussions of nursery nurses themselves establishing such a link.

7. Nursery nursing in comparison

Comparing the work and pay of nursery nurses relative to other occupational groups is complex. The most rigorous approach is to undertake individual job analyses as part of a job evaluation exercise or as a component of an action arising under the Equal Pay Act 1970. Limitations in terms of timescale and access/co-operation make such an approach impossible in this report.

However, there are alternative ways to locate nursery nurses' jobs and rewards relative to other occupations. Firstly, we can identify other jobs with similar entry-level qualifications or requirements. Secondly, we can look at similar occupations,

undertaking like work with nursery nurses. Thirdly, where available, we could consider factor scores generated by a job evaluation exercise to consider the relative weight given to different aspects of nursery nurses work relative to other local authority evaluated jobs.

7.1 Relative pay rates in non-degree occupations

The data below (Tables 7.1.1, 7.1.2 and 7.1.3) is drawn from a number of sources: learndirect web site; IDS pay report 921 on salaries within Scottish local government (January 2005), and the first (amended) release of the 2005 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). We have also included some recent job advert data for illustrative purposes. It is worth noting that residential childcare workers are subject to the same regulatory framework as nursery nurses.

Table 7.1.1 Comparisons of salaries for non-degree local authority posts

Job	Median Starting salary £	Median maximum salary £	Data Source:
Nursery nurse	15393	17895	IDS, 2005
Housing officer	17340	19029	IDS, 2005
Administrative officer	17340	21732	IDS, 2005
Finance officer	19632	24396	IDS, 2005
Residential childcare officer	20262	23643	IDS, 2005

Table 7.1.2 Average annual earnings, 2005

Occupational group	Median (£)	Mean (£)	Source
Gross annual full time earnings in 2005 - males	25100		ASHE, 2005
Gross annual full time earnings in 2005 – females	19,400		ASHE 2005
Gross annual full time earnings in 2005 – all	22,900		ASHE 2005
Youth and community workers	17633	16656	ASHE 2005
Housing and welfare officer	18837	18518	ASHE 2005
Environmental health officers	24133	25506	ASHE 2005
Civil service executive officers	22350	22339	ASHE 2005
Traffic wardens	17315	19764	ASHE 2005

Table 7.1.3 Sample job adverts, November/December 2005

Job title	Requirements	Salary	Source
Call centre operators		Starting salary £10-14K Experienced: £15-22K	learndirect
Project worker, Quarriers	no qualifications/ experience only	£15508-21466	Job advert, Dec05
Development worker, Glasgow	no qualifications/ experience only	£20,808-23,034	Job advert, Dec05
Refuge worker, Glasgow		£16116-20169	Job advert, Dec05

The purpose of these tables is to illustrate the relative position of nursery nurses both within local authorities and more broadly in relation to national pay data. Many of these jobs with non-degree entry (e.g Housing Officer) command higher salaries than nursery nurses. The latter earn considerably below annual earnings for both males and females. Some of the above occupational groups are regulated in similar ways to nursery nurses (eg residential childcare workers) and others are subject to other forms of significant regulations (eg environmental health officers). However, the work of the others is subject to considerably less regulation.

7.2 Nursery nurses and 'like work'

The fact that nursery nurses work alongside teachers in nursery schools and classes raises the issue of the degree of overlap in their work and responsibilities, particularly in relation to the increased role of nursery nurses in assessment, evaluation, recording, report-writing and inspection, as detailed above. Both teachers and nursery nurses work to the same set of national regulations, including national curricula, and care standards. Yet teachers in nursery schools have very different pay rates and conditions of service. While it is undoubtedly the case that teaching requires higher entry qualifications (in terms of a degree and a teacher training qualification), teachers are not specifically trained to work with children under 5 years and only do a short endorsement course to work in nurseries: this stands in sharp distinction to nursery nurses who undertake a two year training with children in these age groups. The possession of a qualification itself would not necessarily be a sufficient explanation of the considerable differences in pay

between teachers and nursery nurses under European law⁴¹. Without exception, the nursery nurses from nursery schools and classes who participated in the focus groups reported that there was no significant difference between their work activities and those of teachers. While few argued that they should have equal pay with teachers (with their rationale for some difference being the possession of a degree), they were of one view that the pay differentials between the two groups should not be as large as they are. The salary scales of unpromoted teachers in nursery, special, primary and secondary schools in Scotland range from £19,059 (for probationers) to £30,399. This report, did not, however, involve responses from teachers involved in early years working, and therefore the above views of the nursery nurse respondents must be assessed with this in mind.

7.3 Nursery nurses and 'equal value'

Although the objectives of the research did not include analyses of jobs other than nursery nurses, we have presented material which may be relevant to future assessments of the degree to which nursery nursing is equal in value to other occupations. Any assessment in this regard would require consideration of the demands made on nursery nurses in terms of knowledge and skills, effort, decision-making and responsibility and working conditions. Caring skills are often overlooked in such analyses.⁴²

Below, we highlight a number of general issues of relevance in any job analyses of nursery nursing on the basis of the results of the survey and focus groups.

7.3.1. Nature of knowledge

- Nursery nurses report that their job requires specific occupational knowledge, in particular, understanding of theories of child development and child care. Much of the knowledge that they require is conceptual in nature.

⁴¹ The ECJ has held that training, qualifications and working conditions **may** be factors which are relevant to the question of "same work", either as a factor which objectively justifies the difference in pay, or as criteria for determining whether the same work is being performed. However, the training and qualifications of a jobholder will not always significantly affect the quality or method of their work *Brunnhofner v Bank der Österreichischen Postsparkasse AG* [2001] IRLR 571 and *Angestelltenbetriebsrat der Wiener Gebietskrankenkasse v Wiener Gebietskrankenkasse* [1999] IRLR 804 ECJ.

⁴² Close the Gap (2005) *Different but equal. Equal value: a guide to comparing jobs.* www.closesthegap.org.uk.

- To do their job effectively, many nursery nurses report that they require more relevant training and CPD than is given to them by their employer.
- Nursery nurses indicate that good levels of literacy and numeracy are an important role requirement.
- Nursery nurses are involved in planning and prioritising work within parameters set out by the relevant national regulations/standards. They report that their line managers give them considerable discretion in so doing.
- Nursery nurses are required both to be familiar with, and to operationalise, a complex range of national and authority-specific regulations and standards.
- Nursery nurses often utilise their knowledge in complex contexts, particularly in terms of dealing with vulnerable children and/or families.

7.3.2 Skill requirements

- Nursery nurses report that they require considerable personal, interpersonal and physical skills to carry out their job.
- Nursery nurses require communications skills to deal with specific demands of service users, most notably children, but also parents. The nature of the linguistic skills of their service users means that communication is not a straightforward aspect of their activity.
- Nursery nurses communicate factual information regularly, both in oral and written form. They use influencing skills in relation to children and parents. The nature of the communication they are engaged in will often be complex, personal and sensitive.

7.3.3. Responsibility/accountability

- Nursery nurses carry out both specific and general tasks involving the exercise of judgement within existing guidelines and procedures.
- Nursery nurses provide a service to children a crucial component of which is ascertaining the child's individual needs.
- The actions of nursery nurses are, and should be, highly visible to others. Many nursery nurses work in conditions where the duty of their colleagues to act always

in the interests of children exposes all nursery nurses to informal peer supervision of their colleagues.

- Thus, the actions or inactions of nursery nurses are often highly visible on a day to day basis.
- In addition to this, the work of nursery nurses is subject to regular and significant inspection.
- The impact of possible errors in their work covers a huge range, from the trivial to the catastrophic.
- Few would argue that the nature of the resource for which nursery nurses are responsible is anything other than supremely valuable, both to individual parents and to society as a whole.

7.3.4. Effort

- The job of nursery nurses requires considerable mental effort, including visual concentration, aural concentration and managing emotion.
- Their job involves maintaining concentration on several things at the same time; maintaining concentration while shifting from one task to another, and maintaining concentration in distracting circumstances.
- Nursery nurses require significant physical skills, both in terms of explosive physical effort (e.g. lifting or restraining children) and in terms of stamina.

7.3.5 Working conditions

- Nursery nurses are at some risk of minor physical injury (e.g. from lifting; minor accidental and/or deliberate injuries from children – such as from biting, hitting, kicking).
- Nursery nurses are exposed to certain unpleasant conditions. The personal care of small children can have minor unpleasant aspects. Nursery establishments may have high levels of noise. Nursery nurses are also regularly exposed to the short term emotional distress of all children, and confront the longer-term emotional, behavioural and social distress of both children and parents in vulnerable families.

For illustration of some of the above points, we include below an excerpt including factor scores for a selection of local authority jobs from one unnamed authority. We have highlighted in bold font all scores that are above those of nursery nurses for each factor weighting.

Table 7.3.1 Factor scores for selected local authority jobs, unnamed Scottish authority

	Max SCP	Working environment	co-ordination	Physical effort	Mental skills	Concentration	Communication skills	Deals with relationships	Responsibility for employees	Responsibility for serving others	Responsibility for financial resources	Responsibility - physical resources	Initiative/independence	Knowledge
Factor Number		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Nursery nurse	26	2	2	2	2	5	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	4
Technical assistant - estates	30	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	4
Project worker	38	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	3	3
Assistant administrative officer	30	1	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	3
Development liaison officer/ environmental protection	34	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	2	3	3	3
Registrar	30	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2
Planning officer	34	1	3	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	3	3	3
Admin officer education	30	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	3	1	2	2	3	3
Stores administrator	30	1	3	1	3	3	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	3
Performance monitoring officer/ environmental protection	30	1	2	2	2	3	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	4
Policy officer/ housing	34	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	1	3	1	2	3	4
Schools technician	34	2	3	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	3
Administrative officer/ revenues	34	1	2	1	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	3	3	3
Outreach worker /social work	30	1	2	1	3	2	3	4	1	3	2	2	3	4
Housing needs officer	34	1	2	1	3	3	4	3	1	3	1	2	3	4
Welfare rights assistant	30	2	2	1	3	3	4	2	1	2	2	2	3	4
Highest possible score		5	4	4	5	5	6	5	6	7	6	5	6	8

Table 7.3.2 Job analysis factor weightings

Factor No.	Description	Weighting %
1	Working environment	5
2	Physical co-ordination	6.5
3	Physical effort	5
4	Mental skills	7.8
5	Concentration	5
6	Communication skills	7.8
7	Dealing with relationships	5
8	Responsibility for employees	7.8
9	Responsibility for service to others	7.8
10	Responsibility for financial resources	7.8
11	Responsibility for physical and information resources	7.8
12	Initiative and independence	10.4
13	Knowledge	16.3

If we consider the key areas in which nursery nurses are rated lower than the selected occupations, all of which have higher maximum spinal column point, these are mental skills, communication, initiative and independence, and responsibility for service to others. Given our previous reflections in sections 7.3.1-7.3.5, we have concerns that the work of nursery nurses may be being under-rated in important aspects. In addition, we note that nursery nurses score highest of the selected jobs in relation to concentration, but that the weighting system incorporated in this job evaluation scheme weighs that relatively lowly.

8. Conclusions

Bearing in mind our objectives, a number of key conclusions arise from the research. Before listing these, we note that this report presents the *only* available current evidence of what nursery nurses in Scotland actually do.

- The pay settlement data offer an interesting picture of the variation in the sector across Scotland. There appears to be no systematic explanation as to why individual authorities have placed themselves on particular positions in the salary range, neither in terms of authority size, the numbers of nursery nurses employed

or degree of urbanisation associated with each authority. Comparable authorities occupy different ends of the salary range.

- In addition, the analysis of job descriptions across authorities fails to reveal any substantive differences in the activities of nursery nurses. Neither is there any evidence of significant differences in the qualifications and skills of nursery nurses across local authorities. This is consistent with the survey and focus group evidence, and taken in combination are a powerful counter to the view that the jobs of nursery nurses are different *enough* to merit differential rates of pay based on local rather than national settlement(s). Much of the job is based around a national set of standards with associated regulation and inspection requirements. In this context, it is difficult to see how an argument for locally based pay can be supported based on the actual requirements of the role as outlined in formal job descriptions and by the experiences of workers in the sector
- This is further supported by the findings that nursery nurses see themselves as playing a critical role in the education of children and not simply as providing childcare. They have a consistent qualifications profile and are in jobs which are seen as involving higher skills, more responsibility, effort and stress than in the past. Their involvement in regulation and inspection activities is associated with these changes. Nevertheless, nursery nurses do not see their job as a career which offers adequate flexibility and opportunities. There are issues about the perceived lack of pathways and adequate pay levels commensurate with higher levels of responsibility. Although most think that their pay levels are the same or similar to their counterparts in other local authorities, over a third think that they are less well off despite all delivering a standard national curriculum for children.
- On the issue of pay, nursery nurses appear less well rewarded than those in other non-degree posts in local authorities, despite appearing to carry out 'like' work

similar to better paid degree-level occupational groups. They also earn considerably less than average earnings.

- We have found convincing evidence that most nursery nurses are actually carrying out the roles and responsibilities outlined in the National Review of Early Years and Childcare Workers. Most are knowledgeable of, and work to, existing procedures, guidelines and regulation. They plan for the individualised needs of children, including those with special needs. They observe, record and report on individual children's progress. They report their activities in working positively with children, families, colleagues and other agencies. They are engaged in updating their own skills and developing their own capacities, sometimes in their own time.
- There is evidence from this research that nursery nurses are engaged in significant reflection on the work, skills and the nature of the contribution they make. There is a strong indication from the range of knowledge, skills and attitudes reported by nursery nurses in this study that many of these workers are already delivering a professional education and care service. On pay, nursery nurses appear less well rewarded than those in other non-degree posts in local authorities, despite appearing to carry out 'like' work similar to better paid degree level occupational groups. They earn considerably less than average national earnings.

We conclude that the skills, knowledge and range of tasks of nursery nurses have not previously been well understood on a national level. This may well have contributed to them being significantly undervalued, both in pay and in status, relative to other occupations. These findings should enable a closer consideration of the contribution of nursery nurses to be undertaken.

Appendix A: Pay Data

Appendix A: Distribution of Settlements arising from 2004 dispute ⁴³							
Local Authority	Title	Weeks (per year) ⁴⁴	Hours per week	Salary (min)	Salary (max)	One-off payment £	Notes
Aberdeenshire ⁴⁵		39	35	14424	15829		<5yrs >5yrs
		39	35	14746	16182		
		52	36.25	- ⁴⁶	19029		
Aberdeen City		39	35	-	16182		Source Unison Summary
		52	36.25		19029		
Angus	EYP ⁴⁷	39	35	13604	15623	900	Does not inc 2004 award
Argyll & Bute	CC&EW ⁴⁸ PSA ⁴⁹		35	15582	16866	300	COL inc added after dispute
				14211	15204		
Clackmannanshire		52		15582	19028		Source IDS
Dumfries & Galloway		39	35		15280		Source IDS + Unison Summary
		52	35	14535	17895		
Dundee				15582	18441		Source IDS
East Ayrshire	EYW ⁵⁰ EYW	39	35	12121	16767	1000 1000 ⁵¹	Qual bar at 2 nd top grade
		52	35	14211	19029		
East Dunbartonshire		39	35		16687		Source Unison Summary
		52	35		19029		
East Lothian	NN1 NN2 NN3 ⁵²	52	35	15582	16005		52 week FTE. Actual hrs = 39
		52	35	16449	18441		
		52	35	19029	19632		

⁴³ Except where otherwise indicated these figures relate to settlements agreed following the 2004 dispute and also, except where indicated, they are based on branch returns.

⁴⁴ Most of the figures for term time workers do not include. Term time workers work 39 weeks but the figures quoted in some cases include holidays.

⁴⁵ Most NNs are at the top of the scale

⁴⁶ Throughout this table a hyphen indicates missing data

⁴⁷ Early Years Practitioner

⁴⁸ Child Care and Education Worker

⁴⁹ Pupil Support Assistant

⁵⁰ Early Years Worker

⁵¹ pro rata

East Renfrewshire	CDO ⁵³	52 ⁵⁴	35	12448	15783		<5yrs
	CDO	52	35	12712	16117		5-10
	CDO	52	35	12904	16360 ⁵⁵		>10
Edinburgh City		39	35		15906		
		52	35		17895		
Falkirk	EYO 5+ ⁵⁶	39	35	13724	15761	600	2005 deal
	EYO	52	35	15582	17895	600	also agreed ⁵⁷
Fife	EYO	52	36		18270		Source Unison Summary
Glasgow		39	35		15683		Source Unison Summary
		52	35		17895		
Highland	EYW	48.14	35	13456	14817		>5yrs
Inverclyde	EYW	39				750	10% inc overall
	EYW	52	35	14535	17895	850	
Midlothian	NN	39	35	13729	16260 ⁵⁸	1300	
Moray	NN	39	35	18381	19545		Scale as at Jan 06
North Ayrshire		39	35		16356		Source Unison Summary
		52	35		18441		
North Lanarkshire	EYW	52	35	14535	18441		Plus overtime
Orkney Islands	EYW	48.2	35			1300	>5yrs
Perth & Kinross	NN	39	37	12454	15352		Actual salary for 39 weeks
Renfrewshire		39	35		15300		Source Unison Summary
		52	37		17895		
Scottish Borders	NN		35		15648	1000	
Shetland Islands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Ayrshire	NN	39	35	11686	13830	600	Title not decided at 2004
		52	35	15582	18441	800	
South Lanarkshire	EYW	52	37	12804	15248	600	3 extra pts

⁵² These grades are equivalent to Assistant NN, NN and Senior NN

⁵³ Child Development Officer

⁵⁴ Figures for 52 week FTE, 39 week scale is proportional

⁵⁵ Scale extended 3 points for degree level and for larger schools

⁵⁶ Early Years Officer

⁵⁷ EYO (52 weeks) 16005-18441. EYO (39 and 5+ service) 14096-16242

⁵⁸ IDS give 15582-19632

							for 'Highly Competent Employees'
Stirling		39 52	35 35		16191 18441		Source Unison Summary
West Dunbartonshire	NN	39 52		12431 14535	16007 17985		Title to be reviewed
West Lothian		52	36		19029	1500	Unison Summary
Western Isles	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Appendix B: Survey Questionnaire

Survey: Nursery Nurses in Scotland 2005

Please complete by ticking the boxes as appropriate and return
by **25 November 2005** in the envelope provided.

Section 1: Background details

- 1.1 **Are you a:**
- Nursery nurse/child development worker or officer/ early years worker or similar
- Senior nursery nurse/team leader or similar
- Depute or head of centre

1.2 **What is your actual job title?** _____

***The questions will now use the term **nursery nurse** to include all of the job titles in questions 1 and 2.*

1.3 **How long have you been a qualified nursery nurse?** years

- 1.4 **Do you work in a:**
- Nursery school or nursery class
- Extended day nursery
- Other (please specify) _____

1.5 **What age of children do you currently work with, and what other age groups do you have previous experience of working with?** (Please tick one box in the first column and all that apply in the second column?)

	Current age group (s)	Previous age group(s)
0 – 1 year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 – 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 – 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.6 **How many hours are you contracted to work each week?** hours

1.7 **On average, how many of these hours do you spend each week in:**

Direct contact with children?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> hours
Preparing for sessions with the children? (without the children present)	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> hours
Administration/paperwork?	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> hours
Scheduled reflection time	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> hours
Other (please specify) _____	<input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/> hours

1.8 **On average, how many hours each month do you spend doing paperwork in your own time? (i.e. outside of working hours)** hours

- 1.9 **How many weeks (including holidays) are you contracted to work every year?**
- 39
- 52
- Other (please specify) _____

- 1.10 **Is your current employment:**
 Full time or part time? Full time Part time
 Temporary or permanent? Temporary Permanent
- 1.11 **Please indicate your sex.** Female Male
- 1.12 **Do you have a disability or impairment?** Yes No
- 1.13 **What age are you?** years
- 1.14 **Please indicate the ethnic group to which you belong**
- White
 - Mixed
 - Asian or Asian British
 - Black or Black British
 - Chinese
 - Other ethnic group

Section 2: Qualifications

- 2.1 **Please indicate below your qualifications on entry into nursery nursing and any other qualifications you have obtained since then. (Please tick all that apply)**

	Qualifications completed	
	on entry	since entry
Scottish Group Award in Care (Intermediate 2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Qualification – Higher Early Years Care and Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Development Award (PDA) Certificate for Classroom Assistants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Development Award (PDA) Certificate for Support for Learning Assistants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SVQ 2 Early Years Care and Education (formerly Childcare and Education)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SVQ2 Playwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scottish Group Award Early Years Care and Education (Higher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SNNEB	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National Certificate (NC) Childcare and Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher National Certificate (HNC) Childcare and Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HNC Supporting Special Learning Needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SVQ 3 Early Years Care and Education (formerly Childcare and Education)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Higher National Diploma (HND) Supporting Special Learning Needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Development Award (PDA) in Childcare and Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SVQ 4 Early Years Care and Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Degree qualification (eg BA) relating to early years education and childcare	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)		

2.2	Are you currently working towards a qualification?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If yes, <i>please specify</i>		

Section 3: Key skills

3.1	What are the key skills or attributes required to be a nursery nurse, and how important are each of these?	Very important	Important	Not important
1	Understanding theories of child development and child care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Understanding basic medical knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Understanding basic nutrition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Good reading and writing skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Good numerical skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Understanding hygiene regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Understanding safety regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Physical stamina	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Good team-working skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Flexibility/adaptability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Ability to take initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Good communication skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	A fair and consistent approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	An outgoing personality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Good 'people' skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Empathy/caring nature/patience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	An interest in children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	Previous work experience with children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21	Experience of other caring roles (eg being a parent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	Other (<i>please specify</i>)			

3.2 Please indicate the 3 most important skills or attributes by giving the appropriate number from the list above.
 First most important _____ Second most important _____ Third most important _____

Section 4: Job content

4.1 This section relates to your key roles and responsibilities. Please indicate what you currently do and how often you undertake each activity.

	Never	Sometimes	Frequently	All of the time
Plan a curriculum programme for each child to HMIE and/or Care Commission standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Implement a curriculum programme for each child to HMIE and/or Care Commission standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Observe, record and report on children's progress/development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be involved in Individualised Educational Programmes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set up challenging and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning situations to motivate learning and to help children develop a variety of skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage children's development through listening, talking and responding to children in a range of learning contexts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage children's language development and be aware of ways to stimulate language through play, books, stories and by personal interaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make positive contributions to strategic and operational planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage children's literacy and numeracy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage children's awareness of equalities issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adhere to the Scottish Social Services Council code of practice for carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Liaise with tutors of nursery nurse students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep up to date with early years initiatives/developments and participate in Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communicate with and involve parents in decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Liaise with other agencies (social workers, speech therapists, police, other establishments/schools)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare and present reports for parents/carers and other agencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support, mentor or develop students, temporary or new staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist in planning/follow-up to HMIE and Care Commission visits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support vulnerable families and encourage to access other agencies (i.e. health, social work)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitate transition of children to school settings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (<i>Please specify</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.2 **Have you ever been involved in**

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Team leading duties | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Admission panels | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Case conferences | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A standards monitoring group | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A task group dealing with HMIE/Care Commission recommendations | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section 5: Changes in job content *The work of nursery nurses has not been reviewed since 1988. Please give your opinion on any changes since that time (or since you began working as a nursery nurse if you did so after 1988) by ticking the appropriate boxes below.*

5.1 **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work?**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I now have less responsibility at work than I used to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Educating children is the most important part of my job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job requires high levels of concentration.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More regulation and inspection helps me to provide a better quality service.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More paperwork leaves me less time for direct contact with the children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I find my job very stressful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My line manager allows me to take a lot of responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I now spend less time directly interacting with children than I used to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I now spend much more time than I used to on activities relating to inspection.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job requires higher skills than it did in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement in paperwork gives me an opportunity to reflect on each child.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More regulation and inspection has made my work harder.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job requires me to take very little initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I work harder than I did in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My main job is child care, not education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My job requires more conceptual or thinking skills than it did in the past.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.2 **What is the best part of your job?**

5.3 **What is the worst part of your job?**

Section 6: Training, career development and career prospects

6.1 **Have you taken part in any training or continuing professional development provided by, or paid for by your employer in the last 3 years?** Yes No

If YES, please give details below.

6.2 **Do you consider this to be enough to support you in your job?** Yes No

If NO, what additional training/development would help you carry out your duties?

6.3 **Have you undertaken any training/professional development in your own time?** Yes No

If YES, please give details below about type and frequency

Section 7: Perceptions of nursery nurse work

7.1 **Please indicate below how you believe your work is valued by each of the following:**

	Highly Valued	Valued	Not valued
Establishment management/head teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your employer/local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other agencies involved in child care and education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The public/society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7.2 **Please give below an indication of your own morale and of staff morale within your establishment (by circling one of the numbers from 1 to 5).**

	Very high 5	4	3	2	Very low 1
My own morale is					
The morale of my colleagues at work is					

Section 8: Pay

8.1 **What is your current gross annual salary?** £

8.2 **What spinal column point are you paid on?**

8.3 How does your pay compare with that of nursery nurses in other authorities?

I am better paid than nursery nurses in other authorities

My pay is the same or similar to pay in other authorities

I am less well paid than nursery nurses in other authorities

8.4 If you are on the top of your scale, how long did it take you to get there?

	years
--	-------

8.5 How long have you been at the top of the scale?

	years
--	-------

8.6 Do you have a second job?

Yes

No

8.7 Do you claim any state benefits?

Yes

No

8.8 If yes, please state which.

Section 9: Future intentions

9.1 Have you ever seriously considered leaving nursery nursing?

Yes

No

If YES, please give reasons below?

--

9.2 Why, in your opinion, do people stay in nursery nursing? (give all reasons that apply)

--

9.3 Why, in your opinion, do people leave nursery nursing? (give all reasons that apply)

--

**Thank you for your time and assistance.
Please return the questionnaire in the reply-paid envelope provided.**

Appendix C: Focus group topic guide

Appendix C: UNISON Focus Groups:

NB Aware title of your job is different between authorities – will use nursery nurse for convenience.

Introduction – The aim of the research is to provide UNISON with evidence to support their bargaining position with local authorities. There will be focus groups in a number of authorities as well as Glasgow and there will be a Scotland-wide survey. The aim of this focus group is to look at detail of actual work of NNs and their perceptions and experiences of working in this sector.

Confidentiality

Ask name/ how long working in the sector/ area of city

What are the key skills and attributes required to be a nursery nurse?

- Conceptual/intellectual aspects – theories of child development and child care basic medical knowledge; basic nutrition
- Basic skills – numeracy /literacy
- Some physical skills
- Attributes/personal characteristics: flexibility/adaptability, direction/initiative, empathy, communication
- Experience/ interest in children/ caring roles
- Related work experience

What do nursery nurses do? (Does everyone do everything on the job description? Do people do more than is on the job description? Does everyone do these elements to the same degree/frequency?)

- Planning and implanting a curriculum programme for each child
- observing, recording and reporting on children's progress/ development
- providing support for observing, recording and reporting (SNN)
- work as an effective team member
- to keep up to date with early years initiatives/ developments and to participate in CPD
- communicating with/ involving parents in decisions.
- to liaise with agencies – social workers, speech therapists, police, other establishments/schools
- to prepare and present reports
- to support/ mentor/ develop students/ temporary/ new staff
- liaison with tutors of nursery nurse students (SNN)
- to assist in planning/ follow up to HMIE and Care Commission visits
- to undertake team leading duties/ participate in admission panels (SNN)
- participation in case conferences
- to encourage vulnerable families to access other agencies (eg health, social work)
- facilitate transition of children to school settings

Both Classes and schools (difference/similarities between NNs and teachers in terms of job tasks). In EDP which teachers do in nursery schools and classes? (i.e. plan and develop curriculum; compile records/do child assessment)

Changes in job content (since last review 1988). Prompt:

- Workload/staff ratios
- Regulation (HMI/Care Commission)
- Bureaucracy/administration
- Levels of responsibility
- Any other significant issues?

Qualifications/training/CPD

- What level of qualification did you have when you started as a nursery nurse (e.g. SVQ3/ HNC)?
- What qualifications do you have now and employer support?
- Are these qualifications enough?/ Should entry level qualifications be higher?
- How much training do you get (type and frequency) and is this enough?
- What additional training do you need?
- Do you take part in CPD? How often/of what type?

What are the **best and worst** aspects of your jobs (ask each individually)?

Working in a **profession**? Having a **career**?

Is your job **valued** (by Local management/head teacher, Local Authority, Parents, Society)?

Future intentions – Have you considered leaving LA childcare and why? Why do some leave and why do they stay?

Pay What are your outstanding pay grievances following the local settlements after the dispute?

Appendix D: Focus group summaries

Appendix D: Focus group summaries

Group 1: Urban A

The group comprised seven participants who mainly worked in school-based nursery settings from different parts of the city, including areas of multiple deprivation. Only one participant worked in extended day care. The participants were all female and the length of time they had worked in the sector ranged from between 9-29 years.

The main points arising in the group were:

Key Skills & Attributes

These were identified as:

- Interest in children and their development
- Knowledge of the curriculum
- Knowledge of child development and an awareness of changing issues in this area
- Being able to help with the development of individual children with different needs
- Patience with children
- Ability to cope with paperwork and administrative workload
- Being able to work with children of different abilities and needs (including special needs)
- Good communication skills – for children
- Good communication skills with parents, teachers and other agency staff
- Teamworking with other NNs and teachers
- Able to use initiative/creativity in activities for children
- Flexibility in tasking
- Planning and implementing activities for children based on the early years curriculum.

Tasks & Problems

- Planning and implementing the early years curriculum was seen as a key task but the input of NNs to the process was described as variable. There was a recognition that nursery teachers take the overall managerial responsibility for planning but the input of NNs to these plans was dependant on individual teachers and whether they were willing to have NN input: some NNs had appreciable input others not
- Good teachers valued the input of NNs and worked as part of the team, others however, just simply wrote up plans or signed them off and didn't acknowledge the input of NNs and treated them as lower status employees
- NNs took the primary responsibility for observing, recording and profiling children
- Key problem areas concerned the variable practice across the authority, inexperienced teaching staff supervising more experienced NNs and teaching staff who displayed little value for the opinions of NN.
- A wider problem was the perception (by teachers, local authorities, parents) of NNs as just childminders despite their training and knowledge of early years

development. Yet all saw themselves as educators in the sense that they have a critical role in the education of children. NNs were no longer just taught (i.e. in FE colleges as part of their training) the practical side of childcare (e.g. changing nappies) but were involved in more managerial and administrative tasks such as curriculum development, planning, the observation and recording of behaviour, working with teachers and social workers and other agencies

- However, while they saw themselves as having an educational role, the job still involved caring for children and providing them with appropriate practical and emotional support

Job Change

There was more emphasis now on:

- Paperwork/ administration and meeting the requirements of Council quality assurance systems
- Accountability and levels of responsibility
- Transparency about the types of people who are working with children
- Regulation and inspection and work associated with HMI visits
- Knowledge and working of IT

Qualifications & Training

- All complete 5 in-service days per year covering 35 hours CPD
- Four of the group had obtained additional qualifications (Implementers Course for PEPs, PDA, PPMM). These additional qualifications were not linked to pay levels
- Existing entry level qualifications such as the HNC Childcare Education were seen as adequate and 'substantial' for the work that NNs do
- There was a recognition that lots of NNs undertake additional qualifications but these were not linked to pay in the way because of the absence of any career pathways linked to the role. There was a comparison made with teachers and Chartered Teachers and while teachers had a career route that recognised excellence no such route existed for NNs. This was a source of frustration for many NNs
- There was a desire to ensure that existing standards of qualification were being met by current students not to raise entry level standards. The problem was identified as FE Colleges who accepted lower quality students, who do not rigorously assess students as they should, or who fast-track students when they should not
- All mentioned instances of students who failed first year exams being accepted in their second year.

Sense of Career, Value & Pay

- None saw the job of a NN as a career because of the absence of any pathways or structures

- There was a comparison made with teachers who had three year degrees and one year teacher training being provided with a pathway while none existed for NNs
- While there was no career structure beyond the Senior NN post, they all saw themselves as ‘professionals’. Senior posts were seen as difficult to get and not attractive in terms of pay for the level of responsibility involved
- Four thought their role was valued by their local managers and mainly by parents but none by the local authority.

The **best** aspects of their job were:

- Working with children who are happy and involved (n=3)
- Variety in tasks (n=1)
- Helping with progression and development in children (n=4)

The **worst** aspects of their job were:

- perception of not being valued by their employer (n=5)
- low levels of pay (n=3)
- noise (n=1)
- poor local management-staff relations (n=2)

Pay & Future Intentions

- all had considered leaving mainly for reasons of the poor levels of pay and a perceived lack of value attached to their roles by their employer
- instances of NNs having second and third jobs were not uncommon just to make ends meet because of low pay
- all stressed the variation in their contracts and while all were paid an annual salary and were permanent members of staff, their salaries were based on a 52 week year but they may only be paid for 39 weeks (the school year) if they were new entrants and then spend the period from the end of June till mid-August ‘unemployed’. They were not paid over the school holidays and holiday pay had been a concession in the recent strike. However, entitlement to holiday pay was based on experience in the job but “what happens to those weeks when I’m not being paid, where do they go”.

Group 2: Urban A

The group comprised nine participants who mainly all worked in school-based nursery settings from different parts of the city, including areas of multiple deprivation. Only one participant worked in extended day care. The participants were all female and the length of time they had worked in the sector ranged from between 3-36 years.

The main points arising in the group were:

Key Skills & Attributes

These were identified as:

- Interest in children and their development
- Knowledge of the curriculum
- Knowledge of child development
- Being able to help with the development of individual children with different needs
- Ability to cope with paperwork and administrative workload
- Patience and caring attitudes with children
- Being able to work with children of different abilities and needs (including special needs)
- Good communication skills with parents, teachers and other agency staff
- Teamworking with other NNs and teachers
- Able to use initiative/creativity in activities for children
- Flexibility in tasking and a sense of humour
- Planning and implementing activities for children based on the early years curriculum.

Tasks & Problems

- Planning and implementing the early years curriculum was a key task but the input of NNs to the process was described as variable. There was a recognition that teachers take the overall managerial responsibility for planning (some solely in terms of writing this down) but the input of NNs to these plans was dependant on individual teachers and whether they were willing to have NN input: some had appreciable input others not
- Good teachers valued the input of NNs and worked as part of the team, others however, just simply wrote up plans or signed them off and didn't acknowledge the input of NNs and treated them as lower status employees
- NNs took prime responsibility for observing, recording and profiling children
- All had experience of supervisory tasks within their team and with students on placements and at college
- Key problem areas concerned variable practice across the authority, inexperienced teaching staff supervising more experienced NNs and teaching staff who displayed little value for the opinions of NN
- A wider problem was the perception (by teachers, local authorities, parents) of NNs as just childminders despite their training and knowledge of early years development. Yet all in the group saw themselves as educators in the sense that they have a critical role in the education of children. NNs were just as

involved in child development as others and involved in more managerial and administrative tasks such as curriculum development, planning, the observation and recording of behaviour, working with teachers and social workers and other agencies

- However, while they saw themselves as having an educational role, the job still involved caring for children and providing them with appropriate practical and emotional support
- They didn't see themselves like learning assistants because the latter were unqualified and the only difference between themselves and teachers was the degree and the pay that comes with the latter role, and the point that unlike teachers who only did a 6 week endorsement course, NNs were trained to work with the under 5's.

Job Change

There was more emphasis now on:

- Workload and extra responsibilities
- Paperwork/ administration and meeting Council quality assurance systems
- Accountability and levels of responsibility
- Transparency about the types of people who are working with children
- Regulation and inspection and work associated with HMI visits

Qualifications & Training

- All complete 5 in-service days per year covering 35 hours CPD
- They felt they get no recognition in terms of pay for what they do, e.g. taking part in a Council gardens course and coming back to nursery and implementing it there but with no additional benefit for pay only the children who get a better environment
- Three of the group had obtained additional qualifications (PEPs, PDA, PPNN). These additional qualifications were not linked to pay levels and were thought to make no difference to career progression. There was a real sense of disillusionment about undertaking additional qualifications and the lack of any recognition of these by their employer despite the tasks and responsibilities associated with the role being increased
- There was not enough CPD relevant courses provided for NNs and although this had been mentioned to HMI nothing had changed. There were problems getting cover to attend courses and this meant restricted access. There was feeling that while teachers and learning assistants get good access to relevant courses, NNs do not. There was a worry that in the future unqualified learning assistants were going to be used by the Council as a cheaper replacement for NNs
- One other participant held a degree in and achieved this in the past year (Child Psychology) but when she tried to obtain employer part funding for this it wasn't held to be relevant to her job. A comparison was made with teachers whose degree is in subjects like Biology who then manage nurseries
- Existing entry level qualifications such as the HNC Childcare Education were seen as adequate and 'substantial' for the work that NNs do

- There was a recognition that lots of NNs undertake additional qualifications but these were not linked to pay in the way because of the absence of any career pathways or structures in the role
- There was a desire to ensure that existing standards of qualification were being met by current students not to raise entry levels. The problem was identified as FE Colleges who accept lower quality students, who do not rigorously assess students as they should, or who fast-track students when they should not. There was also an issue about students who were simply not able to cope with the demands of the job.

Sense of Career, Value & Pay

- None saw the job of a NN as a career because of the absence of any pathways or structures
- There was a comparison made with teachers who had three year degrees and one year teacher training being provided with a pathway where they could further their own careers by working for a short time in a nursery environment. No structure existed for NNs that recognised their expertise and development
- While there was no career structure beyond the Senior NN post, they all saw themselves as ‘professionals’ because they educated children and saw themselves as having a vocational interest in working with children, and having a responsibility for the development of children and preparing them for school. This was a common view among NNs
- Five saw themselves and their role as valued by their local managers and mainly by parents but none by the local authority

The **best** aspects of their job were:

- Working with children who are happy and involved (n=5)
- Variety in tasks (n=1)
- Helping with progression and development in children (n=4)

The **worst** aspects of their job were:

- perception of not being valued by their employer (n=6)
- absence of a career structure (n=4)
- low levels of pay (n=6)
- poor local management-staff relations (n=2)

Pay & Future Intentions

- All had considered leaving mainly for reasons of the poor levels of pay and a perceived lack of value attached to their roles by their employer
- There was a strong desire for better levels of pay, consistent national pay rates, access to relevant training and a recognised career structure
- Instances of NNs having second and third jobs were not uncommon just to make ends meet
- All stressed the variation in their contracts and while all were paid an annual salary and were permanent members of staff, their salaries were based on a 52

week year but they may only be paid for 39 weeks (the school year) if they were new entrants and then spend the period from the end of June till mid-August in other second jobs and struggling to make ends meet. They were not paid over the school holidays and holiday pay had been a concession in the recent strike.

Group 3: Urban B

The group comprised six participants who mainly all worked in school-based nursery settings from different parts of the city, including areas of multiple deprivation. The participants were all female and the length of time they had worked in the sector ranged from between 17-28 years.

The main points arising in the group were:

Key Skills & Attributes

These were identified as:

- Interest in children and their development
- Knowledge of the curriculum
- Knowledge of child development
- Being able to help with the development of individual children with different needs
- Patience and caring attitudes with children
- Ability to cope with paperwork and administrative workload
- Being able to work with children of different abilities and needs (including special needs)
- Good communication skills with parents, teachers and other agency staff, especially the ability to gain trust and work with children and parents in deprived areas with special needs and requirements
- Teamworking with other NNs and teachers
- Able to use initiative/creativity in activities for children
- Flexibility in tasking
- Planning and implementing activities for children based on the early years curriculum.

Tasks & Problems

- Planning and implementing the early years curriculum was a key task but the input of NNs to the process was described as variable. There was a recognition that teachers take the overall managerial responsibility for planning (some solely in terms of writing this down) but the input of NNs to these plans was dependant on individual teachers and whether they were willing to have NN input: some had appreciable input others not
- Teachers however, can have very little input to the actual planning process as much of the actual work is undertaken and completed by NNs
- Some also took the prime responsibility for aspects such as purchasing for the nursery in the absence of secretarial supports
- Good teachers valued the input of NNs and worked as part of the team, others however just simply wrote up plans or signed them off, didn't acknowledge the input of NNs to the process and treated them as lower status employees
- NNs took prime responsibility for observing, recording and profiling children
- All had experience of supervisory tasks within their team and with students on placements and at college
- Facilitating transitions to primary and providing teachers with information on the needs of particular children

- Supporting inexperienced teachers managing nurseries
- Doing IAPs and individual learning plans for children
- Involvement in child protection issues
- Key problem areas concerned variable practice across the authority, inexperienced teaching staff supervising more experienced NNs and teaching staff who displayed little value for the opinions of NN
- A wider problem was the perception (by teachers, local authorities, parents) of NNs as just childminders despite their training and knowledge of early years development. Yet all saw themselves as educators in the sense that they have a critical role in the education of children. NNs were just as involved in child development as others and involved in more managerial and administrative tasks such as curriculum development, planning, the observation and recording of behaviour, working with teachers and social workers and other agencies
- However, while they saw themselves as having an education role, the job still involved caring for children and providing them with appropriate practical and emotional support

Job Change

There was more emphasis now on:

- Workload and extra responsibilities
- Working with children with special educational needs
- Having to deal with more children from problem social backgrounds
- Paperwork/ administration and quality assurance systems
- Accountability and levels of responsibility
- Regulation and inspection and work associated with HMI visits and they also worked with the Care Commission

Qualifications & Training

- All complete 5 in-service days per year covering 35 hours CPD
- They felt they get no recognition in terms of pay for anything additional that they do and there was little incentive to undertake additional qualifications
- Two of the group had obtained additional qualifications (SVQ4, NNAB) and some mentioned that they knew NNs with undergraduate degrees. These additional qualifications were not linked to pay levels and were thought to make no difference to progression. There was a real sense of disillusionment about participation in additional qualifications and the lack of any recognition of this by their employer despite the tasks and responsibilities associated with the role being increased. There were also issues of getting employer support for additional qualifications although this situation was seen as changing for the better since the recent industrial dispute
- There was not enough CPD relevant courses provided for NNs. There were also problems getting cover to let NNs attend courses. NNs do not get enough access, some do but many others do not
- Existing entry level qualifications seen as inadequate because higher qualifications would lead to more respect for the profession and make it less

attractive to those who only did it because Careers Services thought they were able to do nothing else. This would lead to higher qualified, better able entrants and NN should have degrees

- There was a recognition that lots of NNs undertake additional qualifications but these were not linked to pay in the way because of the absence of any career pathways or structures in the role
- There was also a desire to ensure that existing standards of qualification were being met by current students and to raise entry levels. The problem was identified as FE Colleges who accept lower quality students (and have differential basic entry levels), who do not rigorously assess students as they should, or who fast-track students when they should not. There was also an issue about students who were simply not able to cope with the demands of the job.

Sense of Career, Value & Pay

- None saw the job of a NN as a career because of the absence of any pathways or structures
- There was a comparison made with teachers who had three year degrees and one year teacher training being provided with a pathway where they could further their own careers by working for a short time in a nursery environment. No structure existed for NNs that recognised their expertise and development
- While there was no career structure beyond the Senior NN post, they all saw themselves as ‘professionals’ because they educated children and saw themselves as having a vocational interest in working with children and having a responsibility for the development of children and preparing them for school. This was a widespread with among NNs
- All saw themselves and their role as valued by their local managers and mainly by parents but none by the local authority.

The **best** aspects of their job were:

- Working with children who are happy and involved (n=6)
- Working with parents (n=1)
- Helping with progression and development in children (n=4)

The **worst** aspects of their job were:

- Increased regulation (n=1)
- Paperwork (n=4)

Pay & Future Intentions

- higher payments in other local authorities to NNs doing the same job was a key issue
- there was a strong desire for better levels of pay, consistent national pay rates, access to relevant training and a recognised career structure.

Group 4: Urban B

The group comprised six participants who mainly all worked in extended day care settings from different parts of the city, including areas of multiple deprivation. Only one worked in a nursery school. The participants were all female and the length of time they had worked in the sector ranged from between 3-22 years.

The main points arising in the group were:

Key Skills & Attributes

These were identified as:

- Interest in children and their development
- Knowledge of the curriculum
- Knowledge of child development
- Ability to cope with paperwork and administrative workload
- Being able to help with the development of individual children with different needs
- Patience and caring attitudes with children
- Literacy
- Basic nutrition and health
- IT skills and literacy
- Being able to work with children of different abilities and needs (including special needs)
- Good communication skills with parents, social workers, health visitors and other agency staff, especially the ability to gain trust and work with children and parents in deprived areas with special needs and requirements
- Teamworking with other NNs
- Able to use initiative/creativity in activities for children
- Supervision of students
- Flexibility in tasking
- Planning and implementing activities for children based on the early years curriculum.

Tasks & Problems

- Planning and implementing the early years curriculum was a key task
- Responsibility for observing, recording and profiling children
- All had experience of supervisory tasks within their team and with students on placements and at college
- Involvement in child protection issues
- Key problem areas concerned staff ratios for tasks (e.g. observing and recording and supervising children) and the additional issues that they had to deal with in relation to children with special needs such as Autism and in relation to children in deprived areas with social problem backgrounds. Additional problems concerned the lack of contact time with children due to the administrative load on staff
- Facilitating transitions to schools
- A wider problem was the perception (by local authorities, parents) of NNs as just childminders despite their training and knowledge of early years

development. Yet all saw themselves as educators in the sense that they have a critical role in the education of children. NNs were just as involved in child development as others and involved in more managerial and administrative tasks such as curriculum development, planning, the observation and recording of behaviour, working with teachers and social workers and other agencies

- However, while they saw themselves as having an education role, the job still involved caring for children and providing them with appropriate practical and emotional support

Job Change

There was more emphasis now on:

- Workload and extra responsibilities
- Working with children with special educational needs
- Having to deal with more children from problem social backgrounds and those with challenging behaviour
- Child protection issues
- Paperwork/ administration and quality assurance systems
- Accountability and levels of responsibility
- Regulation and inspection and work associated with HMI and Care Commission visits

Qualifications & Training

- All complete 5 in-service days per year covering 35 hours CPD
- They felt they get no recognition in terms of pay for anything that they do additionally
- One of the group had obtained additional qualifications (SVQ4). These additional qualifications were not linked to pay levels and were thought to make no difference to progression. There was a sense of disillusionment about participation in additional qualifications and the lack of any recognition of this by their employer despite the tasks and responsibilities associated with the role being increased. There were also issues of getting employer support for additional qualifications although this situation was seen as changing for the better since the recent industrial dispute
- There was not enough CPD relevant courses provided for NNs. There were also problems with getting cover and having to go on 'twilight' courses. NN's generally do not get enough access, some do and many others do not
- Existing entry level qualifications seen as adequate
- There was a recognition that lots of NNs undertake additional qualifications but these were not linked to pay in the way because of the absence of any career pathways or structures in the role
- There was a desire to ensure that existing standards of qualification were being met by current students not to raise entry levels. The problem was identified as FE Colleges who accept lower quality students (and have differential basic entry levels), who do not rigorously assess students as they should, or who fast-track students when they should not. There was also an issue about

students who were simply not able to cope with the administrative and emotional demands of the job

Sense of Career, Value & Pay

- None saw the job of a NN as a career because of the absence of any pathways or structures. The introduction of team leaders had given some more of a feeling that a structure was there but others commented that they had no access to this and the practice was not consistent across the authority for NNs in different sectors
- There was a comparison made with teachers who had three year degrees and one year teacher training being provided with a pathway where they could further their own careers by working for a short time in a nursery environment. No structure existed for NNs that recognised their expertise and development
- While there was no career structure beyond the SNN post, they all saw themselves as 'professionals' because they educated children and saw themselves as having a vocational interest in working with children and having a responsibility for the development of children and preparing them for school. This was a widespread feeling among NNs
- All saw themselves and their role as valued by their local managers and mainly by parents but none by the local authority.

Pay & Future Intentions

- Higher payments in other local authorities to NNs doing the same job was a key issue
- Team leaders salaries have not been addressed as have the position of staff in community nurseries
- There was a perceived discrepancy in status between nursery school NNs and those in community nurseries. Day care were often treated as the poor relations
- There was a strong desire for better levels of pay, consistent national pay rates and a recognised career structure.

Group 5: Rural A

The group comprised five participants who mainly all worked in school-based nursery settings from different parts of the area, including areas of multiple deprivation. The participants were all female and the length of time they had worked in the sector ranged from between 15-19 years.

The main points arising in the group were:

Key Skills & Attributes

Key Skills & Attributes

These were identified as:

- Interest in children
- Knowledge of the curriculum
- Knowledge of child development and planning for their individual development, including those with special needs and disabilities
- Caring for children
- Caring for children with special needs and those with disabilities
- Literacy
- Observation skills and interpretation of learning
- Good communication and interpersonal skills with parents and social workers
- Teamworking with other NNs, staff
- Able to use initiative/creativity in activities for children
- Flexibility in tasking and being able to plan your working day
- Planning and implementing activities for children based on the early years curriculum.

Tasks & Problems

- Planning and implementing the early years curriculum was a key task and the input of NNs was described as comparable to teachers. There was a recognition that teachers take the overall managerial responsibility for planning (or the write up of overall planning) but the input of NNs was substantial to these plans. There was a recognition however, that there was variable practice across the authority: some NNs had appreciable input others not
- Teachers can have very little input to the actual planning process especially if they were inexperienced. Teachers only undertook a 6 week endorsement course and were not trained for working with the under-5's and many struggled with the learning culture in a nursery which focused more on exploration and discovery than formal rote learning
- The group saw no differences between themselves and nursery teachers in terms of their day to day tasks with the exception that the latter were higher paid
- NNs took prime responsibility for observing, recording and profiling children all of which was fed into planning
- All had experience of supervisory tasks within their team and with students on placements and at college

- Facilitating transitions to primary and providing teachers with information on the needs of particular children
- Doing IAPs and individual learning plans for children
- Involvement in child protection issues
- A wider problem was the perception (by some teachers, local authorities, parents) of NNs as just childminders despite their training and knowledge of early years development. Yet all saw themselves as educators in the sense that they have a critical role in the education of children. NNs were just as involved in child development as others and involved in more managerial and administrative tasks such as curriculum development, planning, the observation and recording of behaviour, working with teachers and social workers and other agencies.

Job Change

There was more emphasis now on:

- Paperwork/ administration and meeting Council quality assurance systems
- Accountability and levels of responsibility
- Regulation and inspection and work associated with HMI visits and they also worked with the Care Commission

Qualifications & Training

- All complete in-service days per year covering CPD and have access to Council training courses
- They felt access to courses was adequate as was the quality of training provision
- Two of the group had obtained additional qualifications (additional modules for Curriculum HNC, PPNN). These additional qualifications however, were not linked to existing pay levels but were thought to make some difference to progression to senior roles
- Existing entry level qualifications were generally seen as adequate and the group thought that these should not be higher and not at the level of a degree. However, there was a view in the group that NN should be able to upgrade their qualifications to degree level post-qualification. Nevertheless, the critical issue was whether additional qualifications would be linked to pay and the view was that this should be the case. This would lead to higher qualified, better able workforce
- There was also a desire to ensure that existing standards of qualification were being met by current students and not simply to look at entry levels. The problem was identified as FE Colleges who accepted lower quality students or who do not rigorously assess students as they should. there was a desire that nurseries should have a bigger say in whether students pass/fail and more liaison between nurseries and colleges to ensure that students fully appreciate the demands of the job. This was linked to the issue of students who were simply not able to cope with the demands of the job.

Sense of Career, Value & Pay

- Although some thought that NNs had a career others were unsure and there was an issue about qualifications counting for more than experience. In other words, the Council placed too much emphasis on qualifications in promotions and not actual work experience. Nevertheless, all thought of nursery nursing as a profession
- There was a comparison made with teachers in terms of pay and while the group recognised that teachers should be paid more because of their qualifications, they also thought that the pay gap was too wide and that NN were not recognised for their efforts in existing pay levels
- All saw themselves and their role as valued by their local managers and mainly by parents and the local authority.

The **best** aspects of their job were:

- Helping with progression and development of children (n=4)
- Working with parents (n=1)

The **worst** aspects of their job were:

- Poor levels of pay (n=3)
- Too much administration and paperwork (n=3)
- Relationship with management (n=1)
- Lack of input of some NN staff (n=1)

Pay & Future Intentions

- There was a strong desire for better levels of pay and a recognition that many NNs take second jobs to compensate for existing low levels.

Group 6: Rural B

The group comprised five participants who mainly worked in extended day care settings from different parts of the area. The participants were all female and the length of time they had worked in the sector ranged from between 7-28 years.

The main points arising in the group were:

Key Skills & Attributes

These were identified as:

- Interest in children and their development
- Knowledge of the curriculum
- Knowledge of child development
- Being able to help with the development of individual children with different needs
- Patience and caring attitudes with children
- Being able to work with children of different abilities and needs (including special needs)
- Good communication skills with parents, teachers and other agency staff, especially the ability to gain trust and work with children and parents in deprived areas with special needs and requirements
- Teamworking with other NNs and teachers
- Able to use initiative/creativity in activities for children
- Flexibility in tasking
- Planning and implementing activities for children based on the early years curriculum.

Key Tasks

- Planning and implementing the early years curriculum was a key task and the input of NNs was substantial. A contrast was made with those in school settings where teachers were responsible for planning
- There was considerable debate in the group over their educational role in the development of children. Although most saw themselves as playing a critical role in the early learning and development of children, others were keen to distance themselves from any view of NNs as teachers
- NNs took prime responsibility for observing, recording and profiling children
- Facilitating transitions to primary and providing teachers with information on the needs of particular children
- Doing individual learning plans for children
- Involvement in child protection issues
- Key problem areas concerned not having enough contact time with children because of the volume of paperwork.

Job Change

There was more emphasis now on:

- Use of new technology and updating skills

- Paperwork/ administration and meeting Council quality assurance systems
- Accountability and levels of responsibility
- Regulation and inspection and work associated with HMI visits and they also worked with the Care Commission
- Dealing with parents/families with dependency (drug and alcohol) problems.

Qualifications & Training

- All complete in-service days per year covering CPD and have access to Council training courses
- They felt access to courses was adequate as was the quality of training provision
- Three of the group had obtained additional qualifications. These additional qualifications however, were not linked to existing pay levels but were thought to make some difference to progression to senior roles
- Existing entry level qualifications were generally seen as adequate and the group thought that these should not be higher and not at the level of a degree. There was a view that not too much emphasis should be placed on qualifications but that experience should also be given equivalent weight in promotions.

Sense of Career, Value & Pay

- All saw nursery nursing as a career and were happy with the pathways available to senior roles
- They all felt valued by managers, parents and by their local authority. However, there was a view that those who worked with the Under-3s were less valued than those who worked with the 3-5s. there was also a view that NNs in extended day care were seen as of lower status than their counterparts in school settings
- All saw themselves and their role as valued by their local managers and mainly by parents and the local authority.

The **best** aspects of their job were:

- Working with children and seeing them develop (n=3)
- Seeing families progress and parents solve dependency issues out (n=1)

The **worst** aspects of their job were:

- Too much paperwork and administration (n=2)
- Dealing with child protection issues (n=2)

Future Intentions

- There were no outstanding pay issues for this group and they were happy with their existing levels of pay
- The only issue that arose was the same payments made to supply staff without them having to complete the same paperwork

None had ever considered leaving for any job-related reasons but they did mention instances of NNs having two jobs to supplement low levels of pay. However, second jobs were thought to be more common before the last pay settlement made by the local authority.