

Graduate Leadership Fund

The Graduate Leadership Fund (GLF) **focuses specifically on securing graduate early years professionals** in full daycare settings, in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector. Funding is available until March 2011 with government commitment in principle to continue until 2015, to address the concerns around sustainability. The Government does not normally commit funding that far in advance so this commitment clearly underlines the importance of this fund and the drive for graduate leadership.

The **£305 million** Graduate Leader Fund is the Government's main investment in improving the quality of the early years workforce. It is central to raising standards and will help embed the culture of continuous quality improvement necessary to meet the Childcare Act duty to improve outcomes for all young children and reduce inequalities between them. It is also key to the Government's drive for a world class early years system as set out in the Children's Plan.

The GLF represents an **unprecedented long-term commitment** from the Government to provide public funding to introduce more graduate leadership of early years settings in the PVI sector.

As outlined in the Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare – Building on the 10-Year Strategy, The Government has set a clear ambition that, by 2015, every full daycare setting should be led by a graduate, with two graduates in settings in the 30% most disadvantaged areas.

The GLF focuses on the PVI sector because that's where the need is greatest. Over 80% of early years providers are PVI but the percentage of staff at graduate level in this sector is small compared with early years staff in maintained primary schools.

To demonstrate the importance they attach to attracting, developing and retaining a high quality workforce, they will also:

- Ensure everyone working in the early learning and childcare, from nursery nurses to childminders, have a full and relevant qualification of at least level three (equivalent to A-level) and consider making this a requirement by 2015;
- Consider making it a legal requirement that every full daycare setting has a graduate from 2015;
- Pilot a programme to attract top graduates into the workforce.

You can download the 'Next Steps for Early Learning and Childcare Building on the 10-Year Strategy' online at <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk>. Search using ref: DCSF-00173-2009 or for the summary search using ref: DCSF-00174-2009. Alternatively you can order a hardcopy for free online or by calling the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on 0845 60 222 60.

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is developing more graduates with Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and supporting this with:

- the provision, through its nationwide training and assessment providers, course fees and student support packages and increased pathways to gaining EYPS to suit differing experience and qualification levels; and
- a campaign to promote professional leadership in the early years sector – similar to the Training and Development Agency's (TDA) campaign for school teachers.