



Minutes

Early Learning Regulatory Review Sector Advisory Group meeting

Date	Thursday 27 January 2022, 10.00am-12:00pm
Venue	Teams meeting
Chair	Paul Scholey, ECE Senior Policy Manager, Education System Policy (ESP)
Attendees (Ministry)	Tiantian Zhang, Policy Analyst, ECE Policy, ESP Francisca Knarston, Assistant Policy Analyst, ECE Policy, ESP Nafanua Pili, Policy Analyst, ECE Policy, ESP Megan Hutchison, Lead Advisor, ECE Operation Policy & Design, SE&S Siobhan Murray, ECE Senior Policy Manager, ESP
(Members)	Pauline Winter, General Manager, CEO Auckland Kindergarten Association Heather Taylor, General Manager, Barnardos Fiona Hughes, Deputy CEO, BestStart Educare Sarah Alexander, CEO, ChildForum Simon Laube, CEO, Early Childhood Council Edmund Mah, General Manager, Evolve Education Group Cathy Wilson, Executive Officer, Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand Allanah Clark, NZEI Te Riu Roa Andrew Philipps, CEO, Provincial Education Catherine Bell, Senior Policy and Engagement Advisor, Te Rito Maioha Jill Bond, CEO, New Zealand Kindergartens Raewyn Overton-Stuart, Manager Director, PAUA Calmar Ulberg, CEO, Counties Manukau Kindergarten Association Cherie Marks, Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust
(Secretariat)	Charlotte Ryan, Project Coordinator, Office of Deputy Secretary, ESP
Apologies	Arapera Royal Tangaere, Te Kōhanga Reo National Trust; Susan Bailey, General Manager, Playcentre Aotearoa; Emma Norrie, Area Manager, Evolve Education Group.

Note: These notes capture the themes of the discussion and key points made. They do not necessarily represent a shared view of the group and there may be differing perspectives on some points. They are not intended as comprehensive minutes of the meeting.

Welcome and introductions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ECE Senior Policy Manager Paul Scholey introduced himself to the group and welcomed new group members.
Regulating for 80% qualified teachers
<p>Paul and Siobhan presented feedback from the consultation in September/October 2021 on options to regulate for 80% qualified teachers and the proposals to strengthen the person responsible requirement</p> <p><i>Discussion on who counts as qualified</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One member questioned whether the issue of counting student teachers as qualified has been grappled with in a wider context, while still valuing the status of qualified teachers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry advised that the Teach First programme have students teaching classes in secondary schools as if they are already fully qualified. Workforce strategy is not our area, but it is being considered more broadly. Some members stated the need to protect the efficacy of the teaching qualification, recognise the value of the qualification and what qualified teachers offer. They didn't want to get to a point where there were more student teachers than qualified and certificated teachers. Some members agreed there is a certain point when student teachers can be recognised as qualified, perhaps in their third year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One member stated that there are a lot of variables within this (e.g., what does this look like across the country, how do we continue to support those teachers and also grow their practice?) - they agree in principle, but there is more careful thinking required around this. Another member commented that we cannot disregard all primary teachers, as some courses they may have completed do cover early childhood education, such as Kaupapa Māori and Kōhanga reo training. Another member stressed that further thinking is needed about how to regulate with more flexibility around regulations or funding, to not damage the notion of what it means to be ECE qualified. They noted the importance of proper incentives and that the regulatory system needs to be designed as an incentive, rather than a penalty. <p><i>Discussion on quality and key barriers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tight teacher supply is the largest issue that operators are currently facing. Most members agree that services should strive to get higher quality teachers, but the current COVID-19 situation and closed borders has had a huge impact and made everything difficult. It may take a few years for new teachers to train and to recover from this. Some group members stated a key barrier was teachers leaving the sector due to difficult work conditions and often pay is not the biggest factor for staff turnover. New teachers are being trained but there are not enough experienced teachers to work alongside them. Other members emphasised that, in the current situation, employers are doing the best they can. <p><i>Discussion on whether and when we should regulate for 80% qualified teachers in all services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked about regulating for 80% in all services, one member advised that there should be consistency in regulating for 80% qualified teachers, i.e., you cannot regulate for one service and not regulate another. Another member said asking the sector when we should regulate for 80% is a political call. The sector may not really know what the unintended negative consequences of this would be.

- Members stressed that we need a roadmap or timeline towards regulating for 80%. It is a matter of doing it at a pace that the sector can cope with and not one sweeping change that happens overnight and will damage the sector. Therefore, asking when to regulate for this change is a difficult question and needs more thought.
- The ECE sector has also seen a loss of teachers due to the vaccination mandate. One member suggested seeing how the COVID situation plays out. For example, if the Omicron variant spreads more teachers will be calling in sick, and this could affect the percentage of qualified teachers in the centre.

Strengthening the person responsible requirement

- One member identified that there are times when provisionally qualified teachers may need to step into this role. This happens especially in the current situation with COVID-19 and the teacher shortage. There needs to be some consideration of how the regulatory change fits in with the COVID response and teacher shortage.
- The Ministry asked whether it is the right time for this change. One member stated that the time is right, but the Ministry should consider shifting some of the requirements in the short term and be a bit more flexible to help enable services to continue operating at this time.
- Another member asked for clarification on the language used to describe the person responsible role. From their perspective, the person responsible was often either a headteacher or centre manager and they don't need to be site specific. There was some concern that services could not find a person responsible based on the language used to define the person responsible role.
 - The Ministry confirmed some services would require more than one person responsible as one person responsible is required per 50 children.

Next steps and consultation

Tranche 2 consultation discussion

- The Ministry is completing consultation in February and holding two online fono with Pacific services in Auckland. Following this, the Ministry will finalise the analysis and report back to Minister Hipkins.
- The Ministry will be announcing the publication of the consultation summary report via the Early Learning Bulletin, due for release in the next quarter of 2022. This will be published on the Kōrero Mātauranga and Early Learning Regulatory Review webpages. The network management consultation report has already been released.
- The Ministry is trying to be as transparent and open with the sector as they can and asked whether there were any questions regarding the communications and engagement of the Regulatory Review.
 - Some members questioned if consultation findings would focus on the statistics of feedback. The Ministry confirmed they will be trying to reflect all the feedback when reporting back to Minister Hipkins, including other engagements with puna reo and the Pacific fono, for example.
 - One member highlighted that this would be a positive step forward for Kōhanga Reo, Kaupapa Māori and those in Puna Reo, as a focus on statistics would not represent the importance of what needs to be heard during consultation for these smaller groups.