



# **A New Professional: Reflections on the Pilot Phase of the Early Years Professional Status in England**

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# Introduction

- This Paper reports on the initial stage of a longitudinal study critiquing the notion of professional identity through the development of the Early Years Professional
- This is an unprecedented development for those who work with children from birth to five.
- A new multi-disciplinary professional role has been prescribed in legislation by central government to work in parallel with qualified teachers in Early Years.



# Background

Until the late 1990s, early years and childcare in the UK had been characterized by:

- the separation of education and care
- minimal government intervention
- conflicting attitudes to working parents
- provision of variable quality
- staffing largely by low paid and poorly qualified women.





- Labour Government (1997) Sure Start unit established with targets including the creation of 1 million new childcare places.
- 2000 the Foundation Stage for 3-5 year olds had been added to the statutory National Curriculum Framework.
- Guidance issued to all settings in receipt of Nursery Education Grant (QCA, 2000), including day-care settings.





- 2001, National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding (DfES, 2001)
- Ofsted taken over responsibility from Local Authorities for regulation for all early years care and education services.
- National minimum qualification requirement was imposed for managers of all early years' settings.





These changes were impacted upon by:

- The death of Victoria Climbié (2001) and subsequent Laming Inquiry (Laming, 2003).
- Every Child Matters (ECM) (Department of Education and Skills, 2004)







This led to a radical reform agenda for children's services in support of five outcomes for all children:

- » Stay safe
- » Be healthy
- » Enjoy and achieve
- » Economic well-being
- » Contribute to society





The Children Act 2004, provides the legal framework for these outcomes, and underpins the drive to improve services through:

- Multi-agency working
- An integrated approach to provision of care and education services







- Each Local Authority had to appoint a Director of Children's Services responsible for education and social care.
- Children's Workforce Development Council (CWCD) established to overview workforce reform.





The government also confirmed their commitment to support care as well as education by launching 'A Ten Year Strategy for Childcare' as part of the pre-budget report in 2004. (Department of Education and Skills, 2004a)





- Evidence from a large scale study (Sylva *et al.*, 2004) reported that better outcomes for children in early years care and education settings were linked to higher levels of qualification in staff.
- These findings gave further support to the government agenda for change and 2006 saw the Child Care Act finally removing the distinction between education and care for children under five years old.





- The Child Care Act(2006) also paved the way for the introduction of a new statutory Early Years Foundation Stage covering the age range birth to five.
- A new multi-disciplinary professional role in early years in the form of EYPS, which is broadly equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) for work with the 0-5 age range.
- Targets include a professional with EYPS in every full day-care setting by 2015.





The development of the Early Years Professional is central to implementing government policy in raising standards in the early years, particularly in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sectors.



# Research Aims and Objectives Stage I

To ascertain the pilot candidates views on the validation process for Early Years Professional Status





# Methods for Pilot Study Stage 1

Questionnaire survey of all those following EYPS programmes in the East Midlands in 2007-08 at the outset of the course and on being awarded the status.



# Key Findings and Discussion

## Pilot Candidates

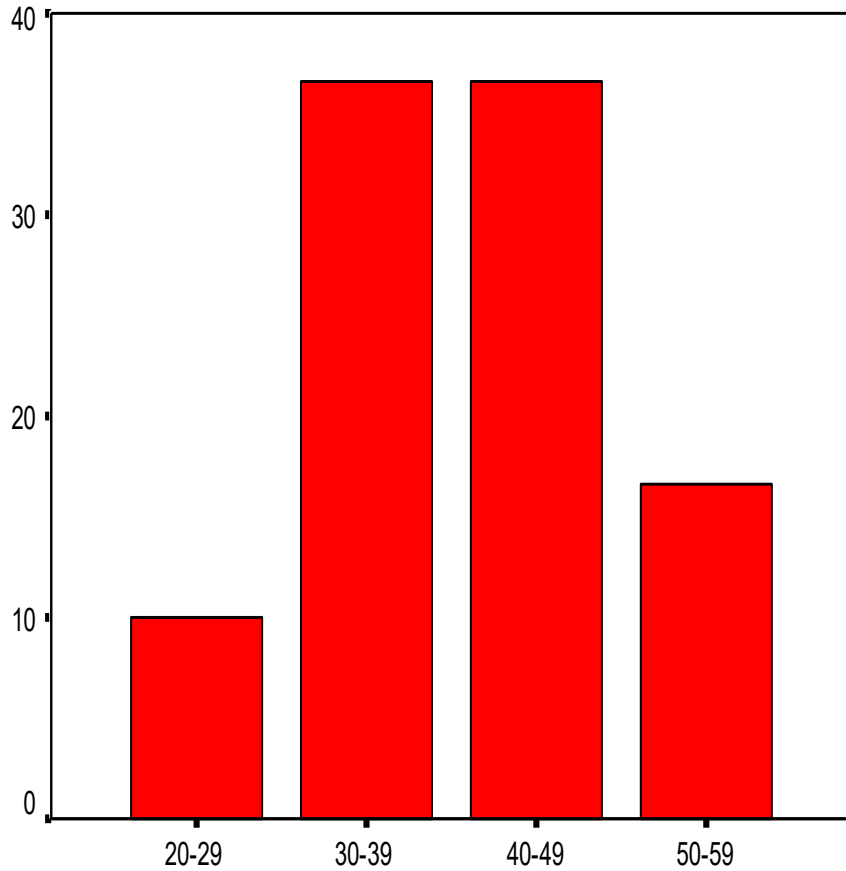
Numbers enrolled on the course = 38

Numbers returning questionnaires = 30





# AGE



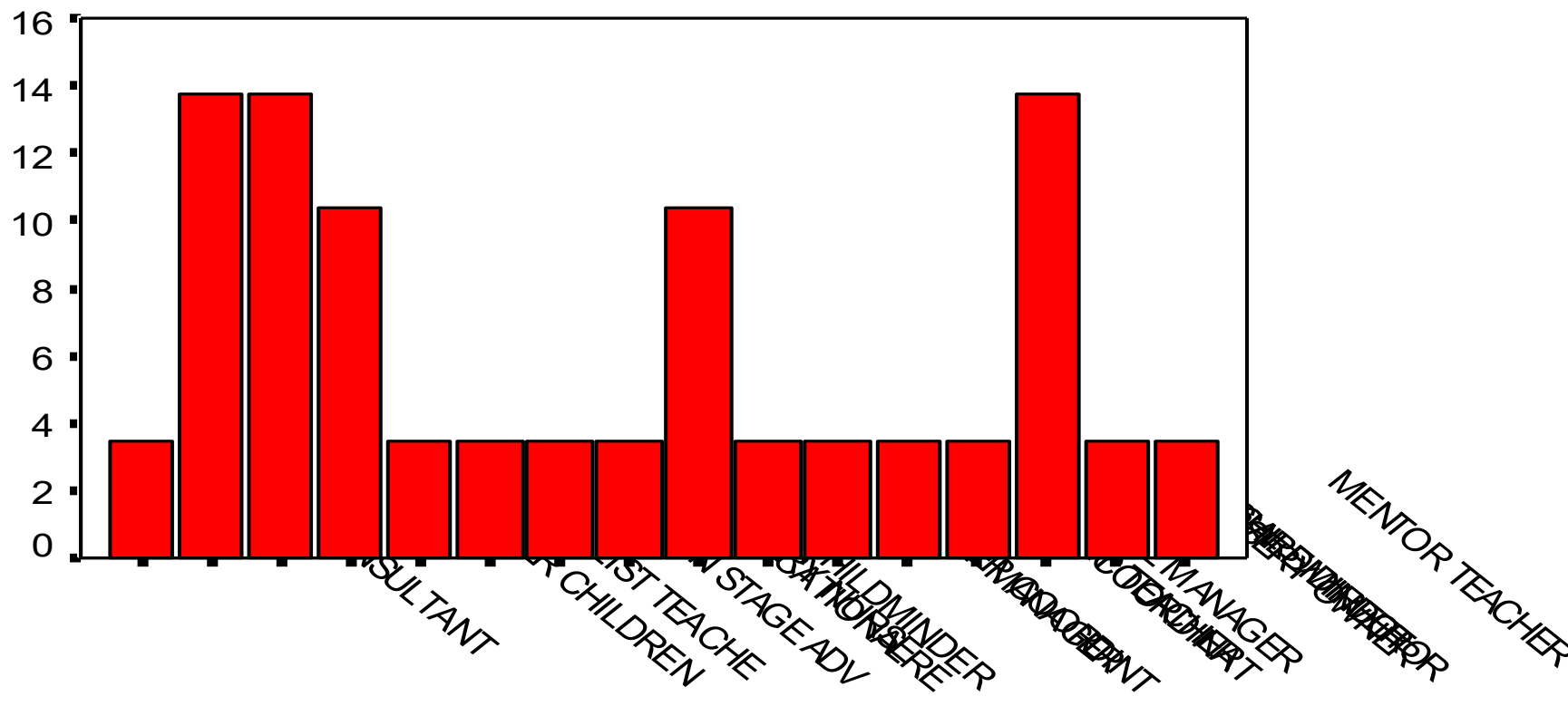
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AGE





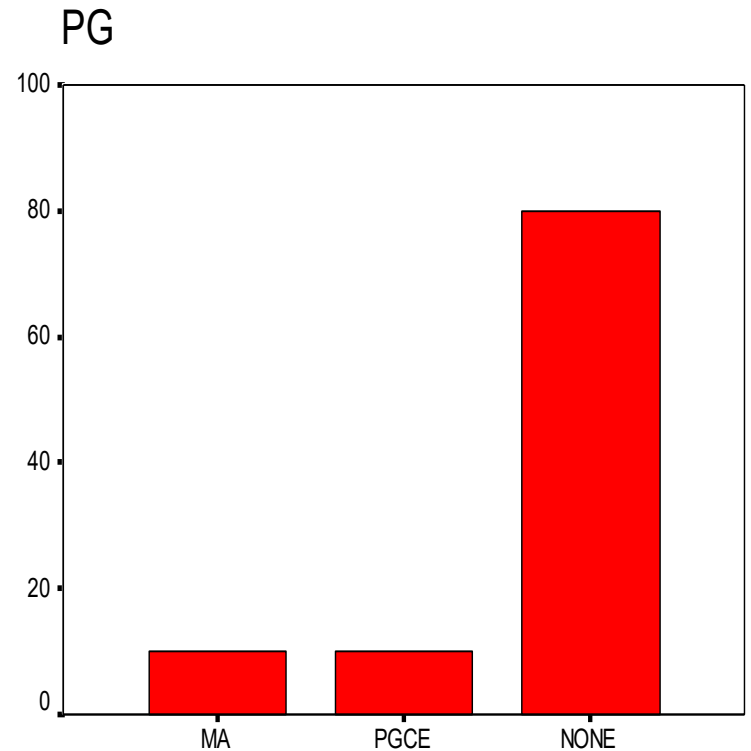
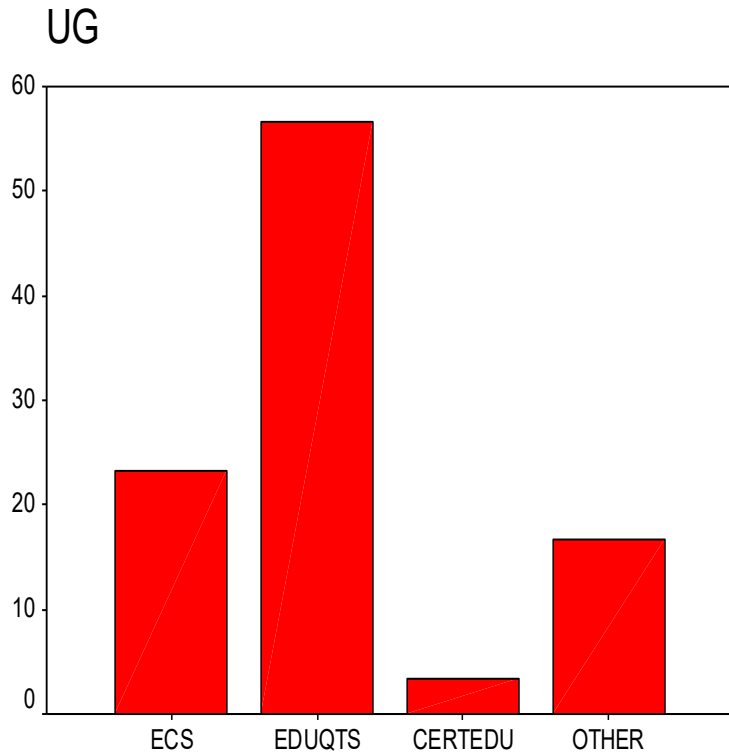
# ROLE



ROLE



# Previous Qualifications



UG

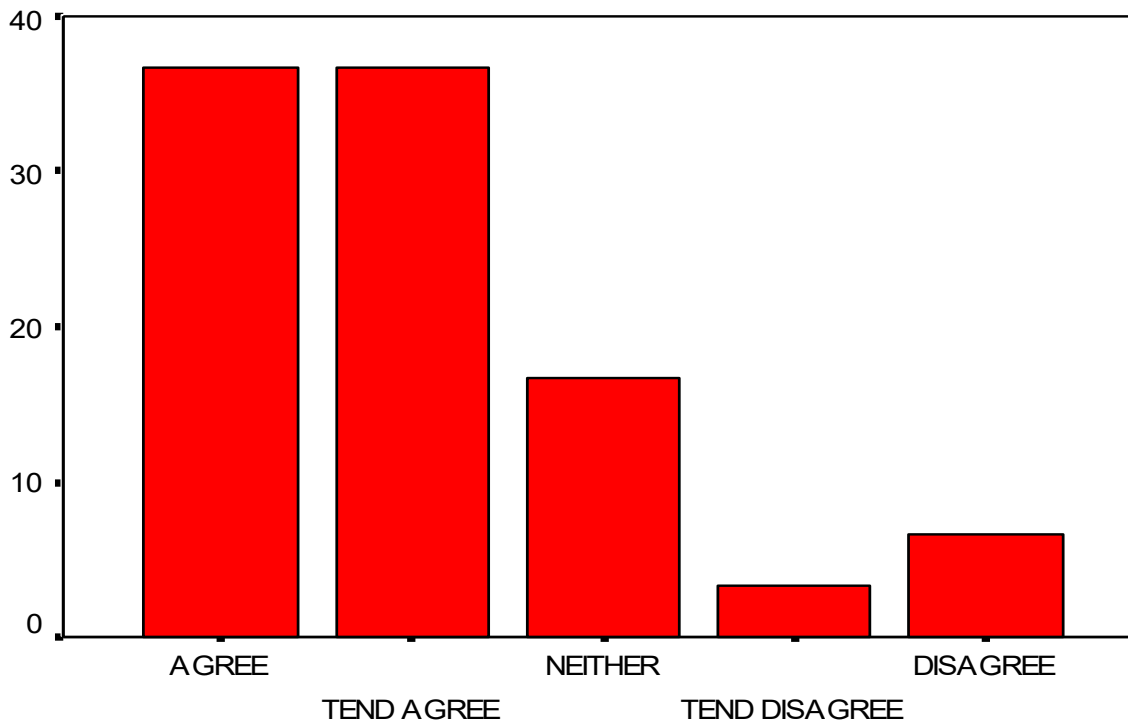
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# EYPS is a Positive Step Forward

EYPS IS A POSITIVE STEP



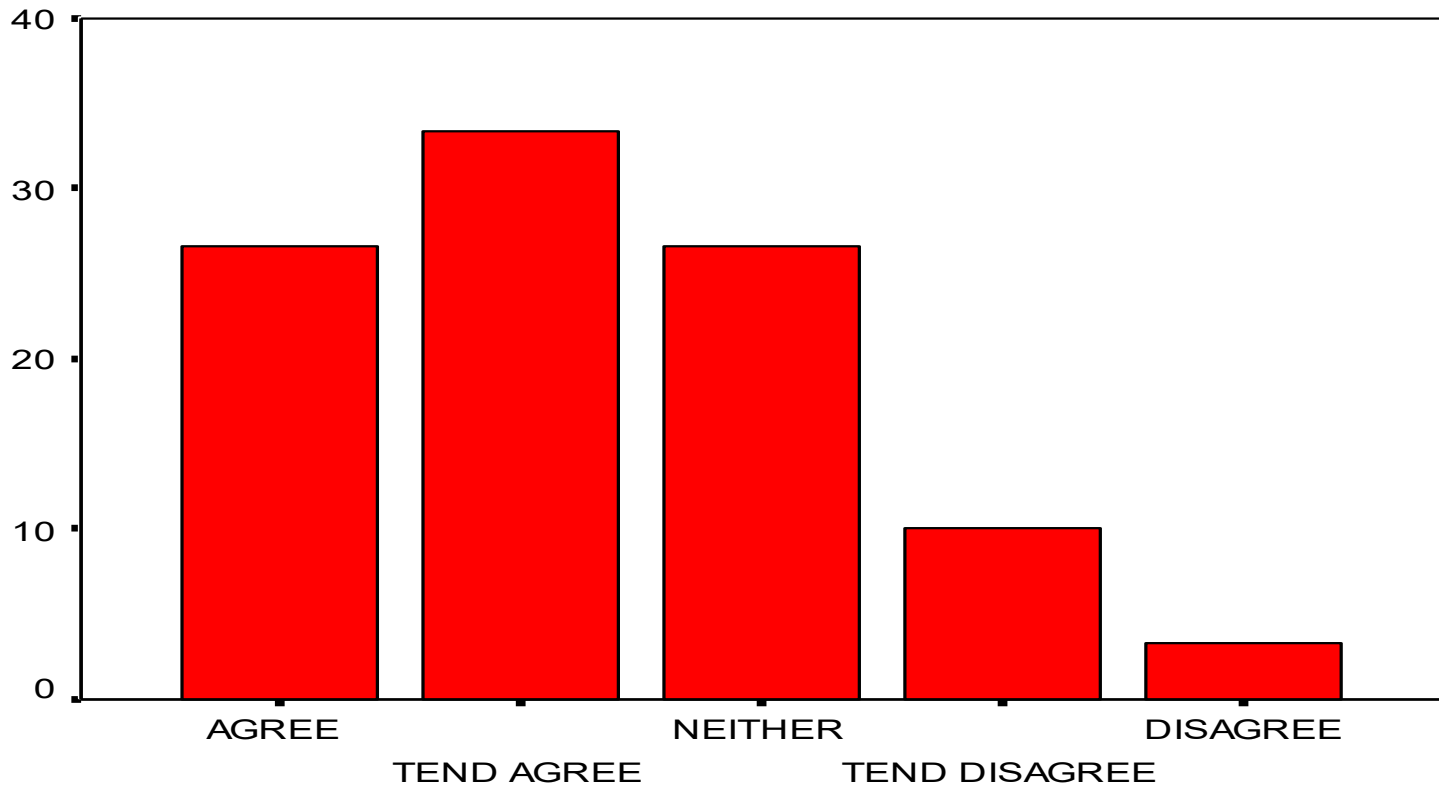
ROLE OF THE EYP IS A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD







# Assessment Process



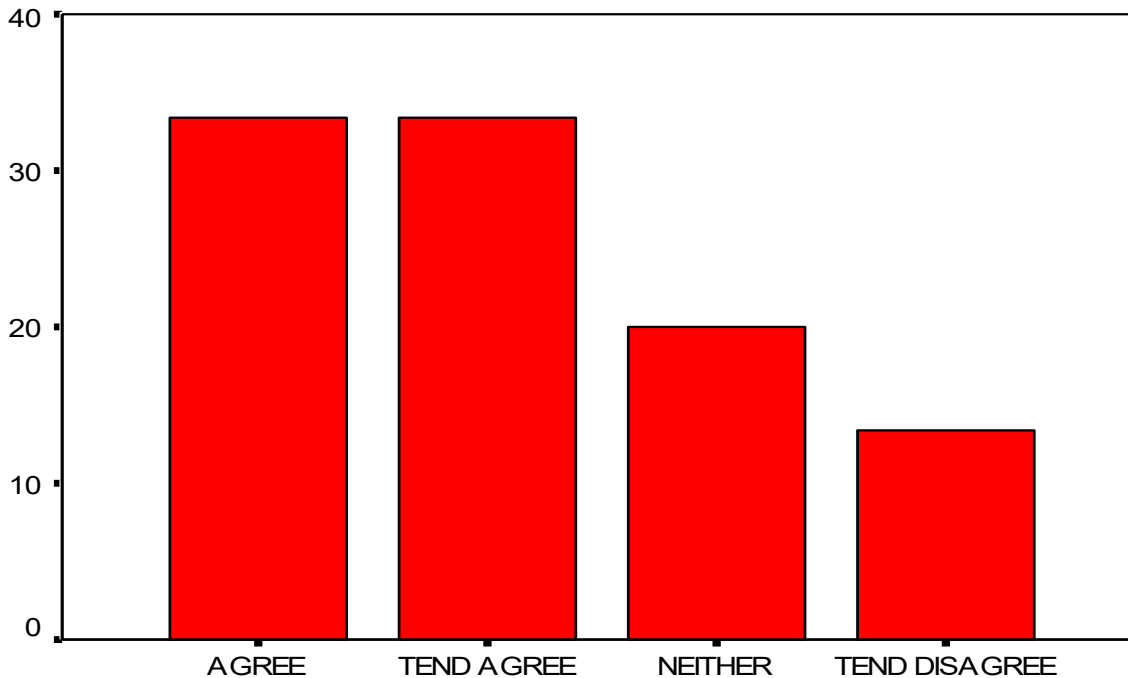
THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS WAS TOO PRESCRIBED





# Nature of the Assessment

RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT



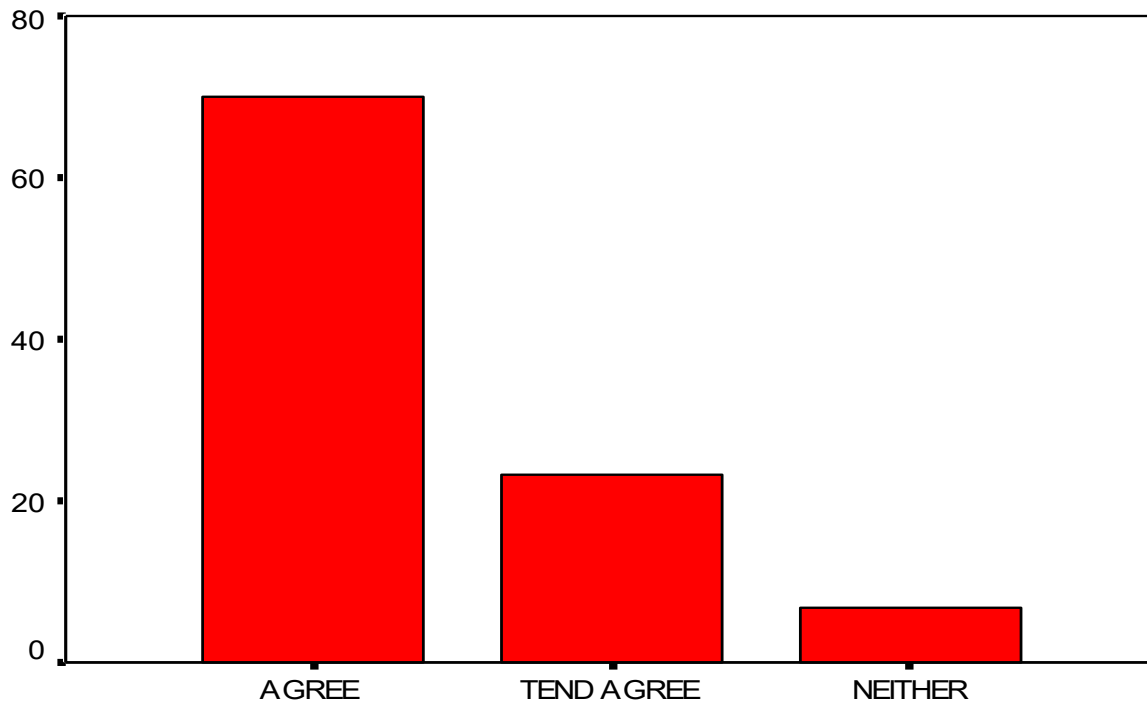
RIGOROUS ASSESSMENT





# USE OF WITNESSES

## POSITIVE USE OF WITNESSES



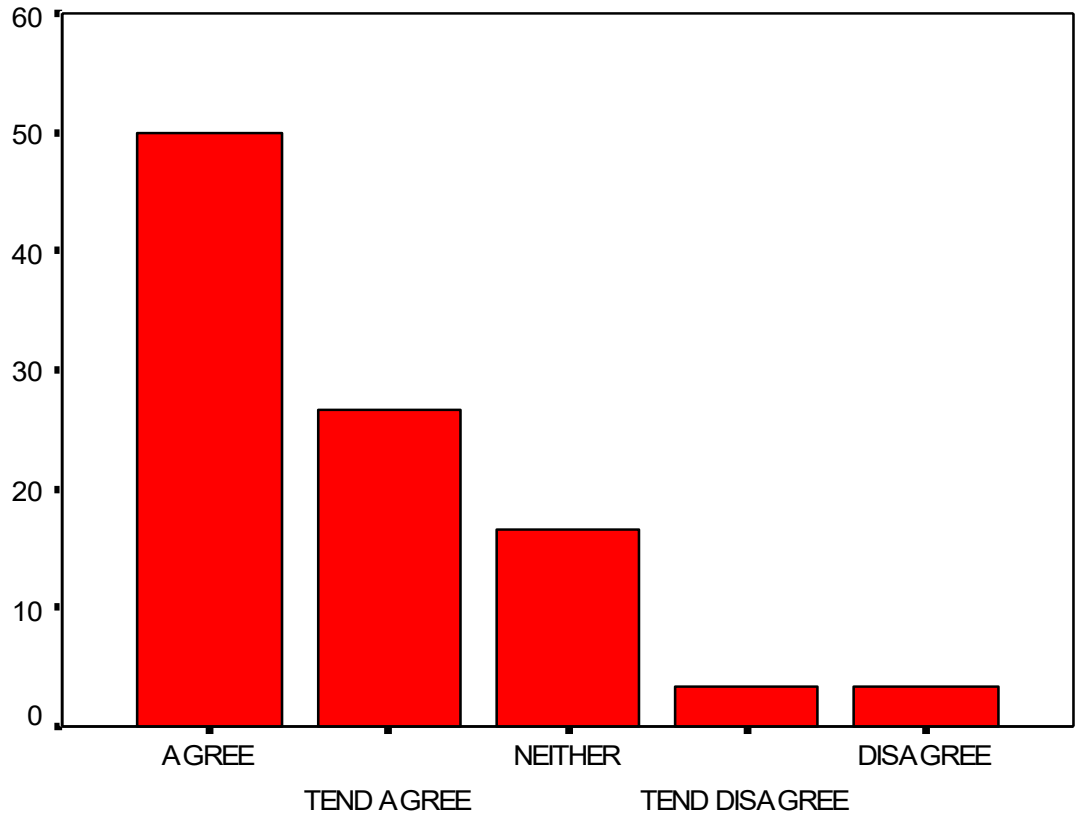
I WELCOMED THE USE OF WITNESSES





# Need for a Professional Dialogue

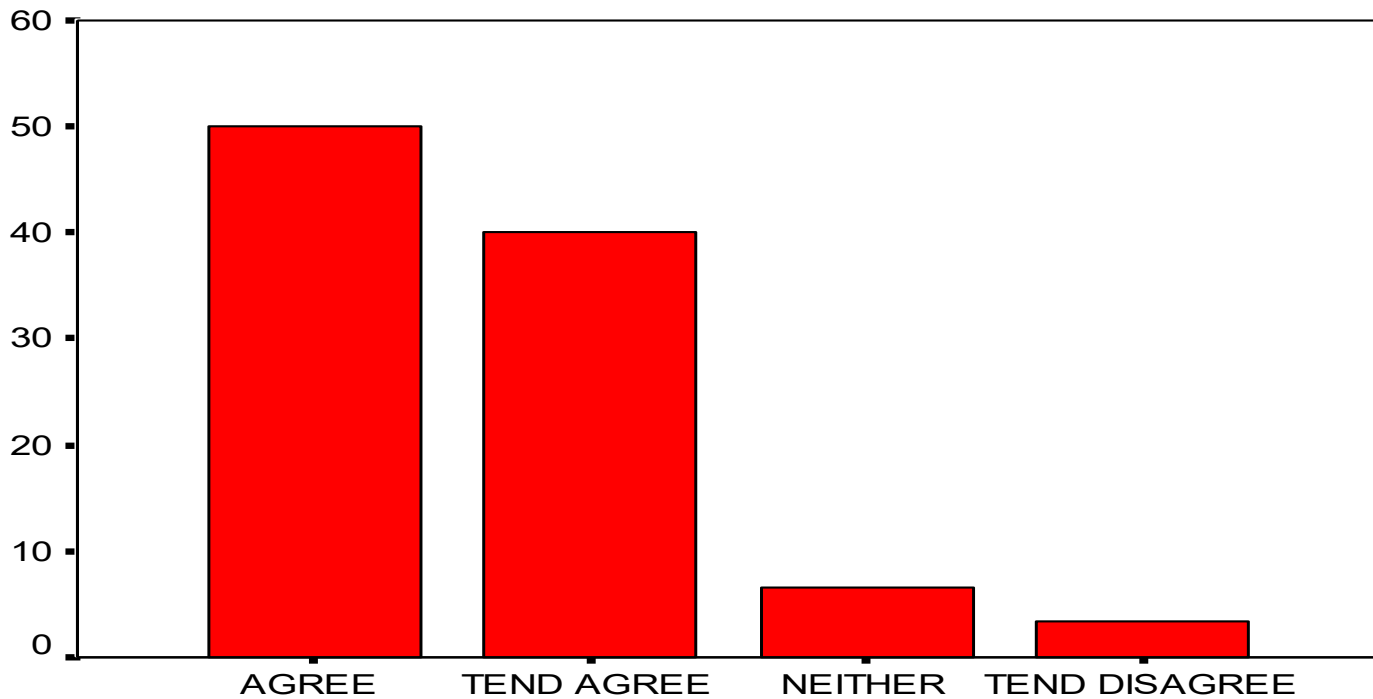
PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE





# Standards

## STANDARDS ARE APPROPRIATE

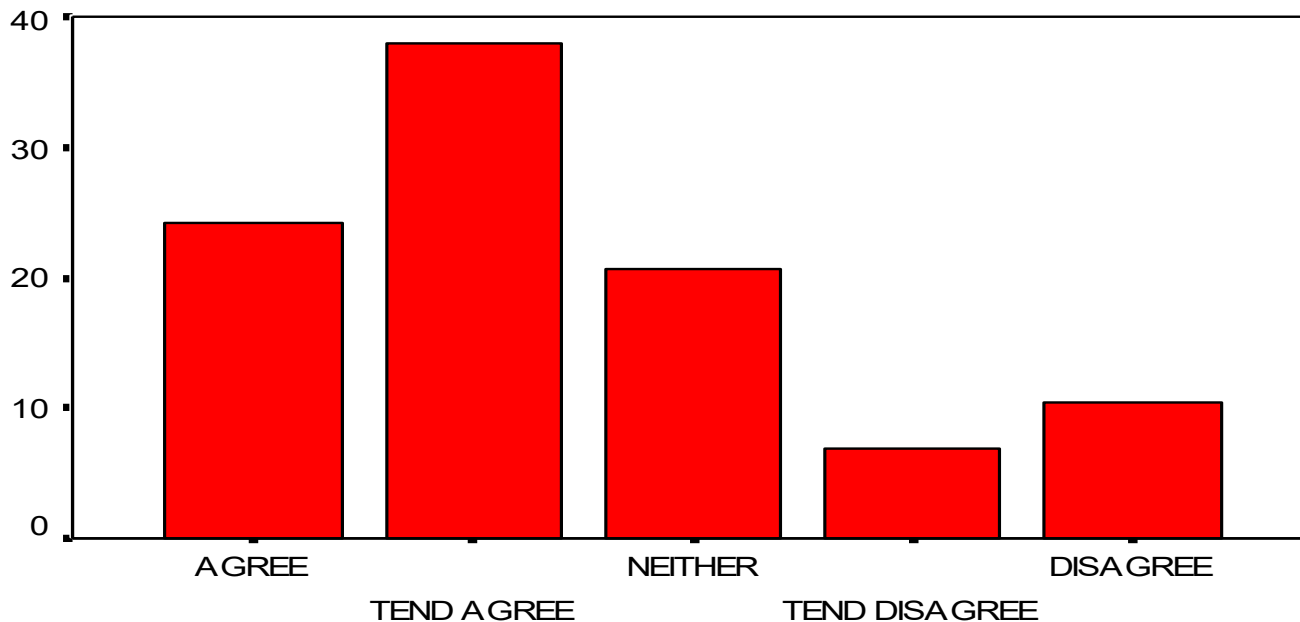


STANDARDS ARE APPROPRIATE



# Improved Services for Children

EYPS WILL IMPROVE STANDARDS  
FOR CHILDREN



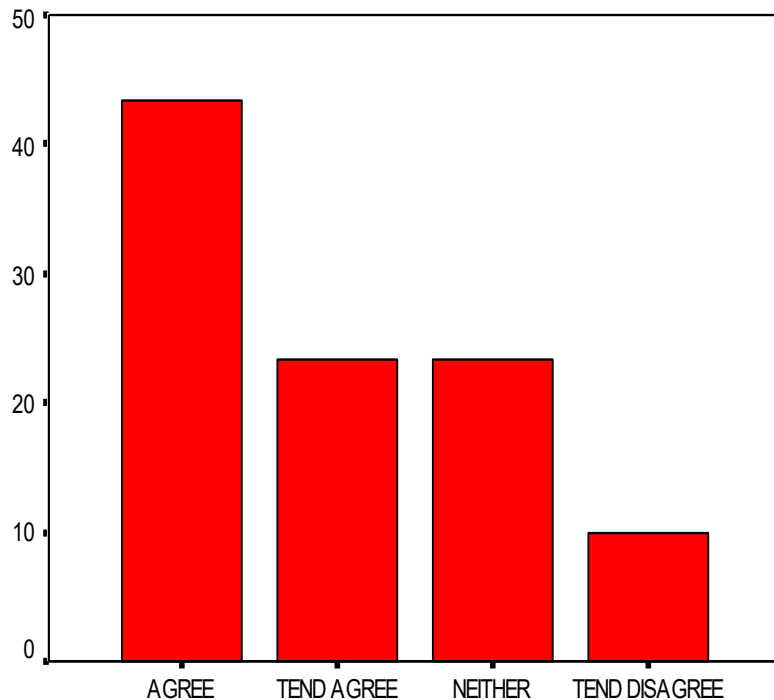
IMPROVED SERVICES FOR CHILDREN





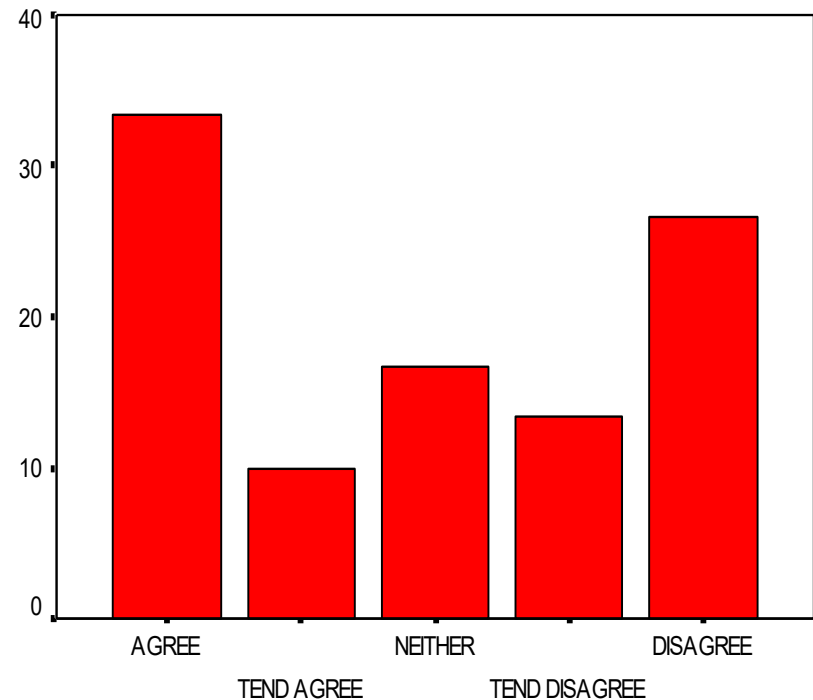
# Relationship with Teaching

EYPS NEVER EQUAL TO TEACHER



EYPS AND TEACHING QUALIFICATION NOT EQUAL

EYPS SHOULD EARN THE SAME AS QTS



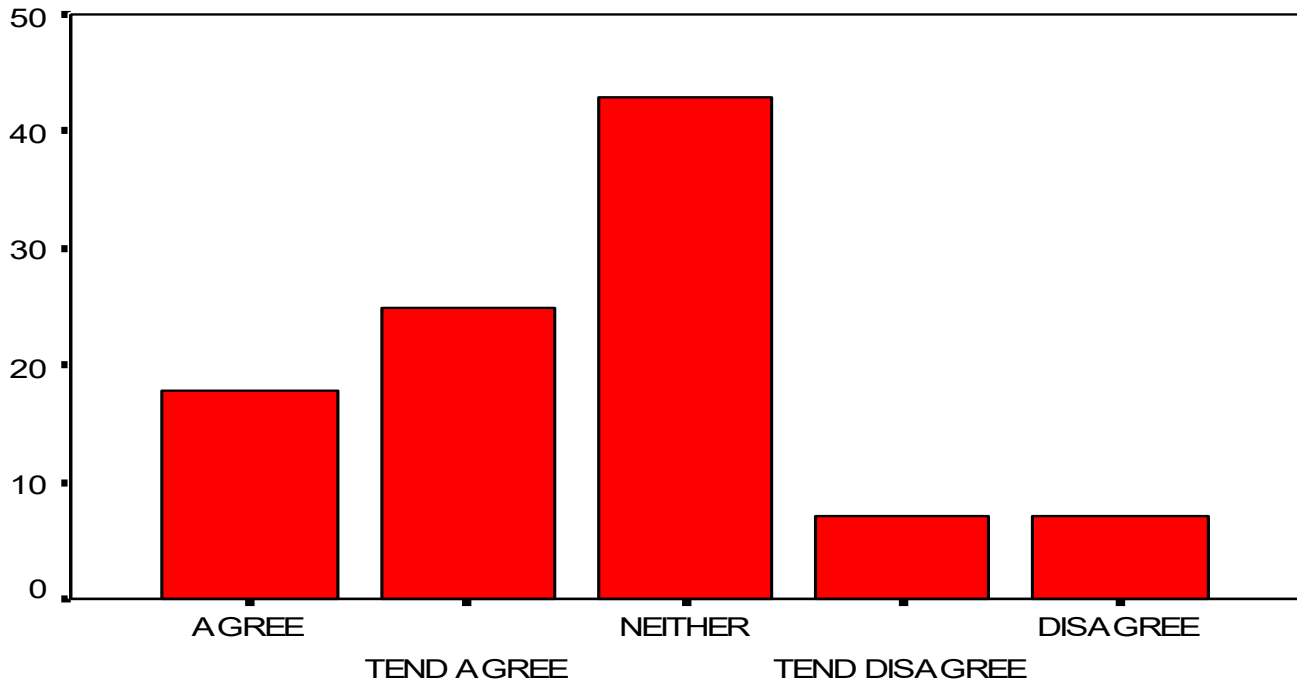
EYPS SHOULD EARN THE SAME AS QTS





# A Move to Social Pedagogy

MISSED OPPORTUNITY IN DEVELOPING  
AN INTEGRATED PROFESSIONAL





# Conclusion

- Candidates welcome development EYPS
- Standards are seen as appropriate
- Assessment process seen as appropriately rigorous
- Overall candidates found the paperwork was manageable





- Use of witnesses seen as positive
- Need for a professional dialogue
- EYPS will improve the status of early years
- EYPS allowed candidates to reflective positively on their practice





- There are issues in relation to pay and the relationship with teaching
- Interestingly that the majority of the candidates had not pursued higher academic qualifications
- Overall candidates were positive about the process, the standards and the support received



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