

UCL Centre for
**Educational
Leadership**



Lessons for Early Years Leadership: Policy Development

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Contemporary policy context: England

“Decades of policy neglect followed by intense policy activism, with no pause for thought, no time given to democratic deliberation about options, in order to guide the transition from one state to the other”.

(Cameron and Moss, 2020: 1)



Leadership and professional learning: Early Years

In England the context for professional learning and more specifically the early years sector is complex and the diversity of terminology and qualification with constant change, both confusing and unhelpful.

(Nutbrown, 2021; Bubb and Ince, 2023).

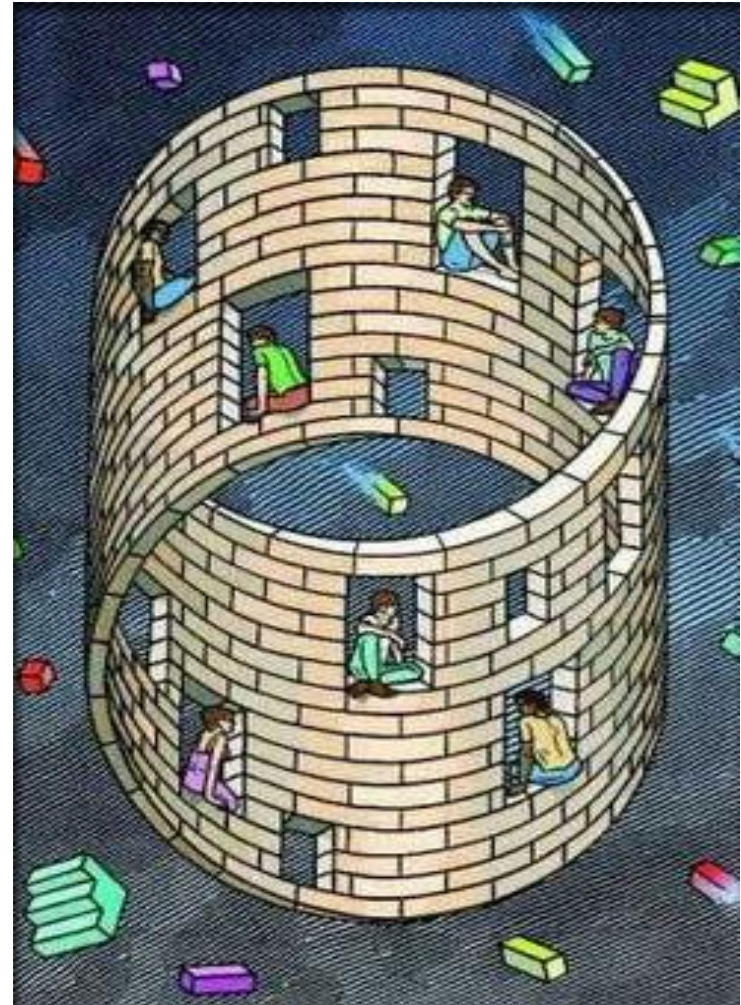
A Paradox

“Education policy focuses on what schools and teachers can and must do to redress social inequality while poverty and the economic inequalities that underpin differences in educational outcomes are increasing and are ignored by policy”.

(Ball, 2021:219)

“an era of performativity”

(Male and Ince, 2024: 360)



England: Policy landscape

“In the run up to a general election in the UK, the political dimensions to the policymaking process – from ideological leanings to the short political cycle and the fight to stay in office – risk obscuring more fundamental issues that badly need redress, and hindering a more profound rethinking of where policy priorities should lie.”

[UCCL, IOE Blog](#) (Moss, 2023)

The Leadership NPQs and NPQEYL:



*“The NPQ for Early Years Leadership complements the current suite of National Professional Qualifications aimed at teachers and school leaders by providing training and support for early years practitioners, teachers and leaders, whether they work in **Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries, or as childminders.** It will support practitioners, teachers and leaders to develop expertise in leading high-quality and care, as well as effective staff and organisational management.” (DfE, 2021: 5)*

[National Professional Qualification \(NPQ\): Early Years Leadership Framework 2021](#)

UCL NPQEYL: Aims


We know that all children need early years professionals who are committed to their care and education and are confident learners themselves. Our programme has been developed with early years experts to:

- Create professionally confident early years teachers, practitioners and leaders.
- Grow the next generation of early years leaders with the skills and knowledge to use the evidence-base for the benefit of their children and families.
- Retain the best early years professionals who are excellent, collaborative role models for their nurseries and communities.
- Inspire early years leaders who can harness the power of rich learning environments for all children no matter the current circumstances.

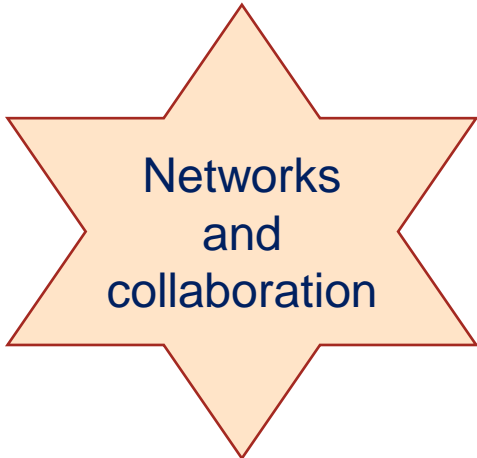
[UCL Centre for Educational Leadership: NPQEYL webpage, Spring 23](#)

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Inclusivity

A light green, six-pointed star with a red outline, containing the text "Micro-level impact / quality for children".

Micro-level
impact / quality
for children

An orange, six-pointed star with a red outline, containing the text "Networks and collaboration".

Networks
and
collaboration

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Implementation
project

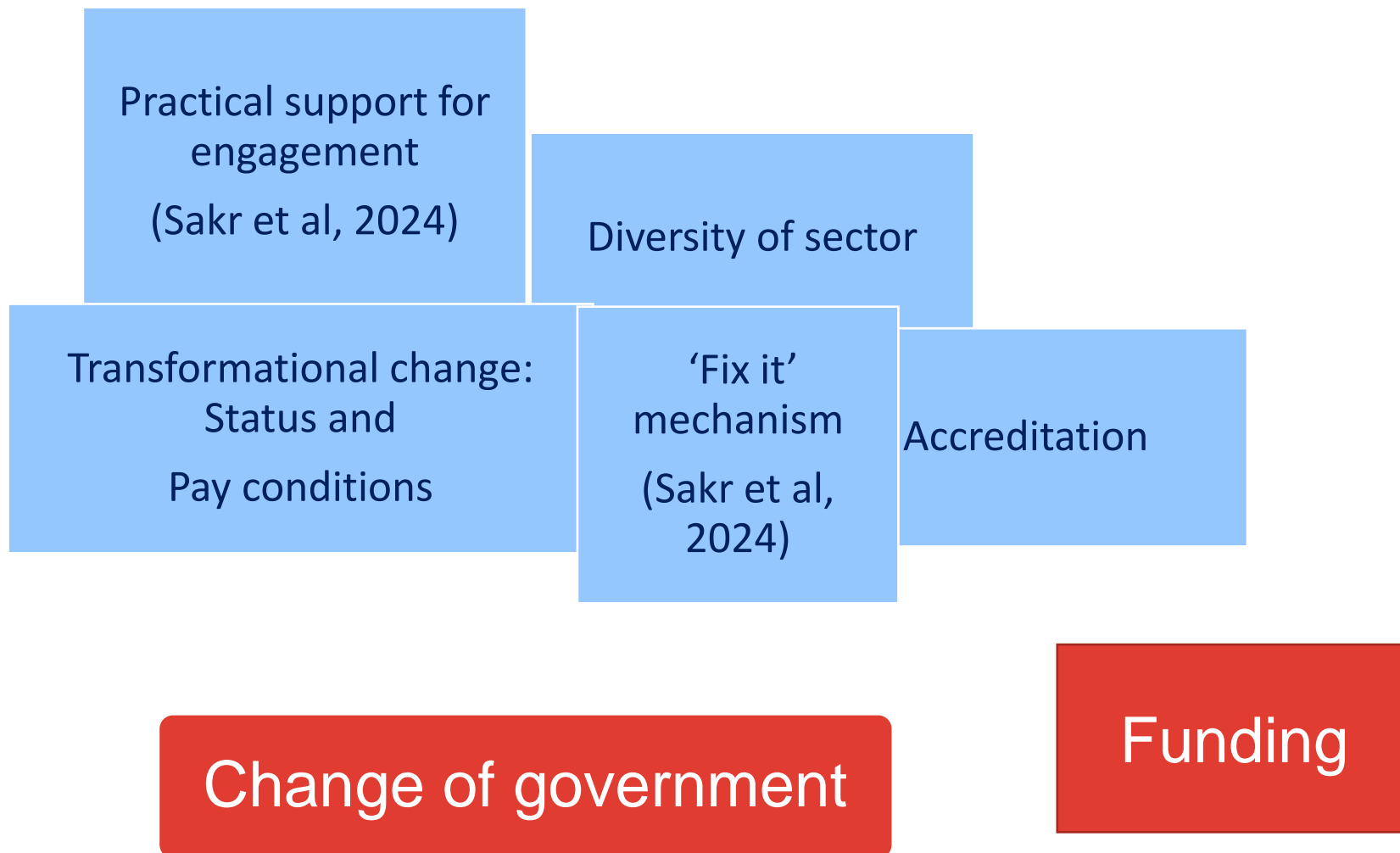
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Professionalization

A light blue, six-pointed star with a red outline, containing the text "Funding".

Funding

NPQEYL: Future implications



Lessons for leadership

- Leadership autonomy, professional confidence and enactment
- Genuine consultation with educational leaders
- local contextualization
- Social and democratic professionalization



An alternative paradigm!

(Moss, 2010)

References

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