

15 September 2006



**DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People**

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to this call for evidence. In keeping with our remit as the sector skills body for the children's workforce in England, we have restricted our responses to workforce issues; specifically those areas where support for training, development, recruitment and retention could have the greatest impact on the lives of children and young people. At the end of each response, we have included recommendations for HM Treasury and DfES to consider.

Our analysis of large-scale surveys, nationally available information and research data, and recently commissioned CWDC work on recruitment and retention, convinces us that the available evidence shows the value of investing in the skills, knowledge and competence of those who work with children and young people. The evidence also demonstrates the importance of promoting inter-professional skills and knowledge, as well as supporting those staff involved in early intervention, care and education.

In preparing our response we have considered issues that may arise from forthcoming government publications including Options for Excellence, the Green Paper on Youth Matters, the Green Paper on Looked After Children, and any follow-up work to the 2006 Children's Workforce Strategy. Each of these documents is likely to have significant workforce implications in terms of improved levels of skill, competence and knowledge.

If you would like further information about any of the evidence or recommendations in Annex A please do not hesitate to contact me, or either of my colleagues, Keith Brumfitt (0113 390 7762 or [keith.brumfitt@cwdcouncil.org.uk](mailto:keith.brumfitt@cwdcouncil.org.uk)) or Gurdeep Singh (0113 390 7759 or [gurdeep.singh@cwdcouncil.org.uk](mailto:gurdeep.singh@cwdcouncil.org.uk)).

Yours sincerely

Jane Haywood  
Chief Executive

## DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

We have organised our responses under the four headings within the call for evidence. As our response focuses on workforce issues, we have not addressed each of the specific questions under each heading – rather we have organised our comments to capture the key issues as we see them affecting the workforce.

The CWDC recognises and values the government's current high levels of investment in and support for the children's workforce. The following comments on the available evidence should be seen within the context of the Children's Workforce Strategy<sup>1</sup>, the value and benefit of multi-agency working where services are better integrated around the needs of children, and the development of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for all who work with children, young people and families.

### Annex B1: Support for parents: the best start for children (prevention strand)

1. The main focus of this review is to consider how services for children and young people and their families can build on the three principles identified in *Support for parents, the best start for children* in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. In particular the review considers rights and responsibilities, progressive universalism and prevention.
2. In this section our response focuses on prevention and considers some of the available evidence which highlights the importance of investing in, and supporting early years workers and those in the children's social care workforce. We see these two workforces, among others, as key groups leading on many aspects of prevention.
3. A key contribution to improving outcomes for young children is the availability of high quality pre-school education and care. The evidence from the UK and Europe points to the gains which can be made by investing in the early years workforce. And across Europe, EU member state governments have established early years support as an important priority.<sup>2</sup> This priority can best be achieved when there is a sufficient number of well-qualified and well-trained staff who are able to support young children's learning and care.
4. At the European Union level education and training are key areas that are central to ensuring the success of the European reform process. These reforms include the need to expand Europe's labour market, improve flexibility for working parents, and remove barriers to employment, particularly for women. To help achieve these goals, the EU is encouraging the expansion of childcare services to meet increasing demand. Targets set out by the Barcelona European Council aim to provide by 2010 childcare services for 90% of children between three and the mandatory school age, and for 33% of children under three.<sup>3</sup> These targets can only be achieved through greater investment in the recruitment, training and support of the 0-5 workforce. The following figures show the levels of participation that have been achieved in

---

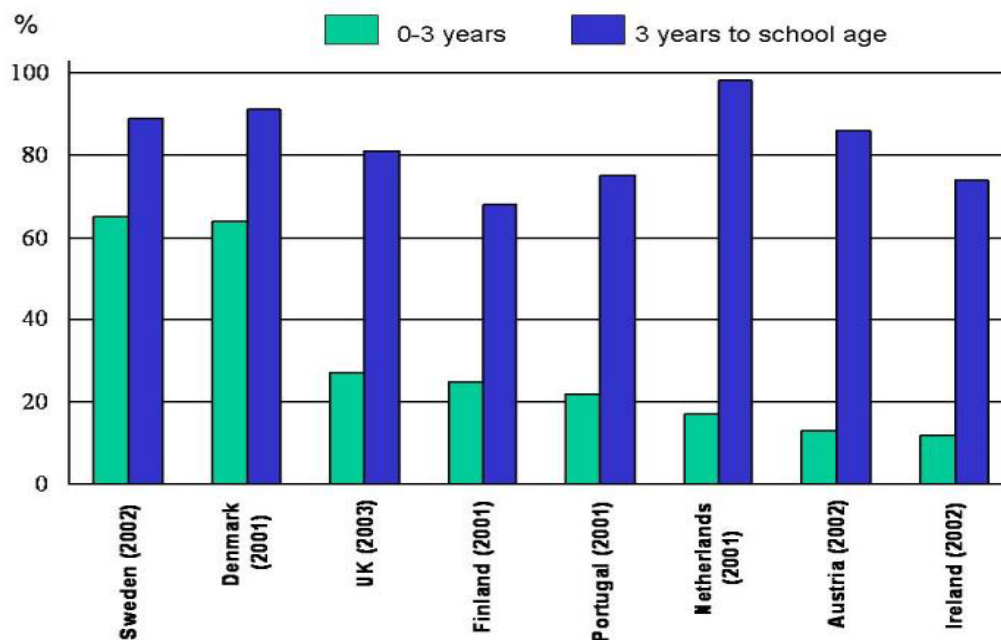
<sup>1</sup> Children's Workforce Strategy, 2003 green paper Every Child Matters, DfES

<sup>2</sup> Childcare services in the EU - what future? European Monitoring Centre on Change, 2006

<sup>3</sup> Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, European Monitoring Centre for Change 31 March 2006.

some European member states, and indicate more could be done to support a universal service for all 0-5 year olds.

Figure 1: Proportion of children aged 0 years to school age entering childcare and education facilities in some EU Member States.



Source: OECD, *Babies and Bosses*, Volumes 1-4, 2002-2005

5. The Government's Transformation Fund is starting to make a valuable contribution to supporting the early years and childcare workforce, and the creation of Early Years Professional Status gives a further opportunity to provide graduate-level professional leadership. These initiatives should continue to be supported as they provide excellent opportunities for preventing poor outcomes for children and contribute to a progressively universal service.
6. It is also worth noting that the provision of affordable, quality childcare is a key issue for the 11.1 million parents in England and Wales. Insufficient high-quality local childcare means that the economy continues to operate below its productive potential and to offset this 180,000 childcare workers will be needed by 2006.<sup>4</sup> The Government has also pledged that affordable, high quality childcare up to the age of 14 should be available for all families who need it.
7. By providing high-quality childcare, with well-trained and qualified staff, more parents are able to take up employment and reap the benefits of career progression and improvements in knowledge and skills<sup>5</sup>. In line with many commentators, the CWDC recognises that families' behaviour and parenting skills are influenced by the affluence of parents. Investing in the quantity and

<sup>4</sup> Early Years, Childcare and Play work Stakeholder Forum- Key Contributors/Raising the Profile Task Group, March 2006, LSC.

<sup>5</sup> Childcare services in the EU - what future? European Monitoring Centre on Change, March 2006

quality of the children's workforce leads to improved outcomes for children as well as providing more opportunities to parents to return to work.

8. There is extensive research and evidence on the importance of early intervention in improving the life chances of young people.<sup>6</sup> The evidence also highlights the benefits of early investment in helping to reduce the number of lower skilled adults in the workforce at a later date. The CWDC believes that early investment is a better use of public resources than adults having to play "catch up" later on in life.
9. As well as the early years education and care workforce, the children's social care workforce also has an important preventative role. The forthcoming Options for Excellence review will highlight the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people and their families and the difficulties in retaining a sufficient number of high-quality, experienced staff across the children's social care workforce.

#### Recommendations:

The DfES/HM Treasury should fund:

- the CWDC to work with local authorities and trade unions to deliver the Options for Excellence recommendations, particularly in relation to improving the recruitment and retention of staff in the children's social care workforce;
- the CWDC to continue its work on the training and assessment of Early Years Professionals;
- the CWDC to organise the expansion of the early years workforce in order to meet increasing demand in this sector;
- fund the provision of additional training to support the acquisition of appropriate qualifications in the early years workforce.

---

<sup>6</sup> A good summary of this evidence is contained in *Too Much, Too Late: Life chances and spending on education and training*. 2005, V. Alakeson Social Market Foundation

## Annex B2: Terms of reference for the review of children with disabilities

10. This is a key area where the workforce's greater understanding and improved levels of skill could improve outcomes and life chances of disabled children. The need for more support and training arises partly because of the changing profile of disabilities, which are becoming more complex, and partly because children with learning disabilities are at a higher risk of having mental health problems<sup>7</sup>. In addition within the UK the numbers of disabled children are also increasing as a result of medical advances, which mean fewer early term babies die than previously.<sup>8</sup>
11. The Daycare Trust's "*everyone counts*"<sup>9</sup> project looked at the needs of disabled children and their families. The research was based on focus groups and questionnaires with hundreds of parents and childcare professionals within the workforce across the country. It found that many children with disabilities and special educational needs were unable to access childcare services because of a lack of appropriate and affordable provision. The CWDC believes more needs to be done to support practitioners who work with children with disabilities.
12. Early work by the CWDC on its Sector Skills Agreement has identified support for staff who work with children with disabilities as a key issues which should be addressed across the children's workforce. This early research has also shown that staff who work with children with learning disabilities need support to encourage children to:
  - improve their health in order to enjoy good physical and mental health (including protection from abuse and exploitation);
  - improve their quality of life, including access to leisure, social activities and life-long learning and to universal, public and commercial services. Security at home, access to transport and confidence in safety outside the home;
  - enhance their positive contribution to society including children being involved in policy development and decision-making;
  - exercise greater choice and control through maximum independence and access to information. Being able to choose and control services, and managing risk in their personal life;
  - be free from discrimination or harassment, and not being subject to abuse;
  - understand economic well being through better access to income and resources sufficient for a good diet, accommodation and participation in family and community life. Ability to meet costs arising from specific individual needs;

---

<sup>7</sup> Health News: Learning disabilities - Counties team up on mental health Asha Goveas, 30 August 2006

<sup>8</sup> Understanding learning disabilities, facts and figures, 2006, Mencap.

<sup>9</sup> Supporting the childcare needs of disabled children, children with special educational needs and their families, Day care trust: The national childcare campaign, March 2005

- manage their own personal dignity by keeping clean and comfortable. Enjoying a clean and orderly environment. Availability of appropriate personal care.
13. The CWDC concludes that training for staff should encourage workers to see the child first and the disability (either physical or leaning) second. In line with recent research<sup>10</sup> those working with families who have children with disabilities should be trained to focus parental support more on the “parenting” than on the “caring”.
  14. These workforce issues are recognised by primary care trusts, children's trusts and child and adolescent mental health services, e.g. commissioners from Kent, Sussex and Surrey are joining forces to increase their knowledge of the three aspects that make up a comprehensive child and adolescent mental health service - learning disability services, services for 16 to 18 year olds and 24 hour cover.<sup>11</sup> Further support would help more counties to provide this type of support for local workforces.
  15. The example above highlights the benefits from cross-agency working where different services work in an integrated way to provide high quality services. One of the barriers to such working relates to individuals' ability and opportunity to move between occupational areas. The CWDC's early work on recruitment, retention and rewards<sup>12</sup> across the children's workforce highlights that training and qualifications, particularly above Level 3, creates the main barrier to occupational mobility. The lack of opportunity for workforce mobility is likely to affect children with disabilities, those at risk and those who are more vulnerable to a much greater extent than it affects other children.

### Recommendations:

The DfES/HM Treasury should:

- build on CWDC's early work to provide additional support for staff who work with children with disabilities, both in terms of understanding how best to respond to individuals and in terms of specific learning and physical disabilities;
- ask CWDC to review the current arrangements for supporting staff who work with children with complex needs;
- encourage and support initiatives which help staff to put the child be at the centre of the service and see the disability as secondary;
- support the CWDC's work on identifying and eliminating or reducing barriers to mobility within the children's workforce.

---

<sup>10</sup> What works in services for families with disabled children? Beresford, Sloper, Baldwin, Newman, 1996.

<sup>11</sup> Health News: Learning disabilities - Counties team up on mental health Asha Goveas, 30 August 2006

<sup>12</sup> Recruitment, retention and rewards across the children's workforce, September 2006, CWDC

### Annex B3: Terms of reference for the strategy for youth services

16. The *Youth Matters*<sup>13</sup> Green Paper is an important policy driver in the development of youth services. Undoubtedly, alongside *Every Child Matters*<sup>14</sup> and the *Children's Workforce Strategy: building a world-class workforce for children, young people and families*, it has and will continue to have an impact on the training and development of the children's workforce.
17. In considering the evidence for this section, we would wish to highlight two specific areas: the extent to which youth services are an integrated service, and the importance of training staff to promote and value young peoples' participatory role.
18. On the first of these issues, it would be helpful if staff in the youth services received further support and training to develop an integrated service. At the moment, the evidence from individual qualifications is that they do not provide sufficient support for an integrated workforce. This could be addressed through support for Connexions staff and others who provide advice and guidance to young people. The *Every Child Matters* agenda needs to be understood by all those who work with children and young people, and this can be supported by a coordinated approach to joining-up the services offered by youth workers, Connexions staff and play workers.
19. On the second of these issues, it would be helpful for staff to receive training and development around the area of young people's participation in decisions about policies and services. This should not just be for services which affect them as young people, but also to services which are not specific to them as individuals. The National Youth Agency (NYA) and the British Youth Council's (BYC) research and survey work on participation between November 2003 and January 2004 supports this.<sup>15</sup> Researchers<sup>16</sup> have also argued that involving young people results in long-term gains to society, e.g. improved economic performance as a result of developing more highly skilled adults.
20. Support and training for staff to involve children, to listen to young people and to take action on what they said is important. Research<sup>17</sup> points to this being most likely to succeed where organisations work to sustain and embed their participation activity. Organisations need to help and support their staff to create appropriate environments in which children and young people can be involved in meaningful ways, so that their views are listened to and acted upon. This can be achieved through continued investment in the youth services' workforce over the coming years.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Youth Matters, 4 November 2005, DfES.

<sup>14</sup> Supporting families, Every Child Matters, 2003, DfES

<sup>15</sup> Mapping Children and Young People's Participation in England, 28 October 2004, DfES

<sup>16</sup> Expanding and Sustaining Involvement: A Snapshot of Participation Infrastructure for Young People living in England, 2003, David Cutler and Alice Taylor

<sup>17</sup> Building a culture of participation, 10 June 2005, DfES

<sup>18</sup> Supporting young people today and tomorrow, 2006, Nestle Trust and 4Children.

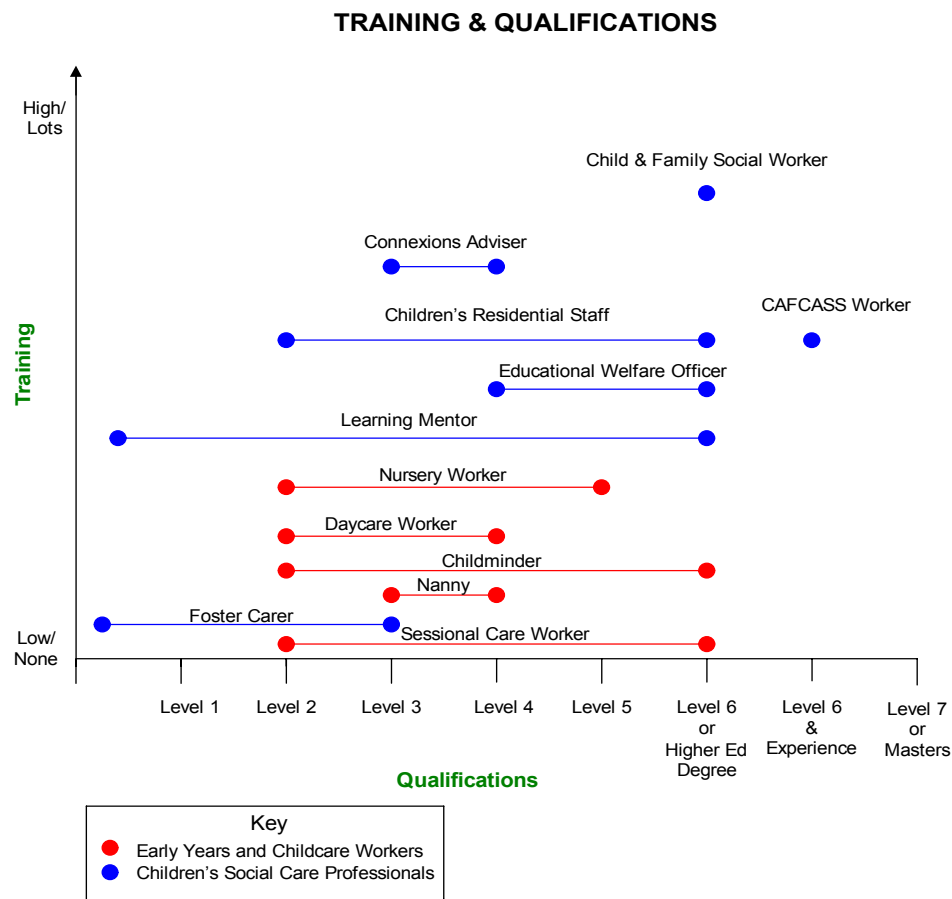
## Recommendations:

The DfES/HM Treasury should:

- continue to fund the CWDC and Lifelong Learning UK in relation to the workforce implications arising from Youth Matters;
- ask the CWDC to work with relevant CWN members to look at developing integrated solutions for all those who contribute to youth services, including connexions staff, play workers and youth workers;
- fund the CWDC and partners to develop qualifications for the youth service workforce which have a common basis and recognise individual specialisms;
- ask the CWDC to work with CWN members on developing materials which promote, encourage and support the importance of young peoples' participation.

Annex B4: Terms of reference for the Review of High Cost, High Harm Families

21. The CWDC strongly believes that improvements in services and greater prevention for families from getting caught in the cycle of low attainment, high cost and high harm can be achieved through early intervention. This is supported by a range of research including the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) project<sup>19</sup> which investigated the effects of pre-school education and care on the development of children aged 3-7. However it is not sufficient to focus on the needs of staff who work with young children, those who work with young adults also need support and training (see Annex B3).
22. This support includes the need for further opportunities for training to gain higher-level qualifications. Figure 2 highlights the **current** expectations about training and qualification levels for the children’s workforce.<sup>20</sup>



23. This is the current situation; it shouldn't be the future. Many organisations are looking to raise their expectations of the level of qualifications held by staff in their workforce e.g. many organisations expect higher levels of training and qualifications for childminders and CAFCASS, who currently employs social workers with three years post qualification experience, will very soon change their entry criteria to include a post qualification award recognised by the

<sup>19</sup> EPPE project, Sylva, K, Melhuish, M, Sammons P, Siraj-Blatchford, I, Taggart, B, 2004, DfES.

<sup>20</sup> Recruitment, retention and rewards in the children’s workforce, 2006, CWDC.

social work profession. Researchers have also highlighted the importance and value of increasing expectations about the level of qualifications in the children’s workforce e.g. the SMF publication “A 2020 vision for early years: extending choice, improving life chances and spending on education and training<sup>21</sup>” highlights the desirability of having 60 per cent of the early years workforce qualified to graduate level by 2020 and paid in line with the teaching profession.

24. The CWDC’s work on recruitment, retention and rewards in the children’s workforce details the gains that can be made when staff have high levels of skill and relevant qualifications. However, the research also identified that many workers in this sector face barriers to accessing training e.g.

Table 1: Barriers to training

Percentage of groups identifying barrier	
Lack of time	51%
Distance/location of provision	43%
Financial difficulties	35%
Lack of suitable courses available	27%

Source: 2005 Group membership questionnaire, barriers to training. Pre-School Learning Alliance.

25. Evidence from the front line would suggest that people recognise the importance of preventative work but cannot find a way of moving resources around.
26. Among the groups of children who live with high levels of poverty it is worth noting that children from black and other minority ethnic families are more likely to be living in poverty and experiencing disadvantage than white children in Britain. Good quality early years services can support them in overcoming disadvantage yet they are less likely to have access to such services.<sup>22</sup>
27. There are also issues relating to the representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups within the children’s workforce in England<sup>23</sup> which could and should be addressed. The Pre-School Learning Alliance’s project on including BME groups into the childcare workforce highlighted solutions for childcare as a career option could be promoted to parents from BME groups who are interested in returning to/gaining work.<sup>24</sup>
28. A second issue worth noting is the prevalence of poverty in the lives of many disabled children, young people and their families. Barnardo’s<sup>25</sup> research

<sup>21</sup> A 2020 vision for early years: extending choice, improving life chances, V.Alakeson, 2004, Social Market Foundation

<sup>22</sup> Ensuring Equality: black and minority ethnic families views on childcare, June 2006, National Centre for Social Research.

<sup>23</sup> Analysis of ethnicity in the 2001 census summary report, February 2004, Office of the Chief Statistician.

<sup>24</sup> Including BME Groups into the Childcare Workforce, 2006, Pre-school Learning Alliance,

<sup>25</sup> Still missing out? Ending poverty and social exclusion: message to government from families with disabled children, N.Sharma 2002, Barnardo’s.

highlighted that there were many barriers within society that prevented disabled children from leading ordinary lives in their communities. The research highlights that most poor families do not have a disabled child; but many families with a disabled child do live in poverty, resulting in low attainment and high costs for the family.

29. The above comments are set within the context of the government's target of eradicating child poverty by 2020, which is welcomed. And it is worth noting the changes since 1997 when the UK had the highest child poverty rate in Europe. Since then 800,000 children have been lifted out of poverty and the UK has reduced child poverty faster than anywhere on the continent<sup>26</sup>. This target can be further supported through investment in training and qualifications for those who work with children at risk.

#### Recommendations:

The DfES/HM Treasury should:

- fund an "invest to save" programme which invests in preventative work, particularly for looked-after children so that, in time, there is a major shift of resources.

---

<sup>26</sup> Teenagers help Ministers end child poverty, 2006, Participation works