

2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy

Department for Children, Schools and Families

A briefing paper from the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)

December 2008

1. Introduction

In December 2008 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) launched *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy*¹. This builds on *Building Brighter Futures: next steps for the children's workforce*² (DCSF, 2008) which took stock of progress so far and established an Expert Group to review the evidence and advise the Government on the development of a long-term strategy for the children and young people's workforce. The 2020 Strategy sets out the Government and the Expert Group's vision that everyone who works with children and young people should be:

- **ambitious** for every child and young person;
- **excellent** in their practice;
- **committed** to partnership and integrated working; and
- **respected** and valued as professionals.

This paper summarises the main points of the Strategy that are relevant to the voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS) and highlights potential issues for the sector. DCSF is also consulting on the Strategy and NCVYS will be submitting a response in early 2009³.

¹ *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy* (DCSF, 2008) is available to download in full via:

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01052-2008>

² *Building Brighter Futures: Next steps for the children's workforce* (DCSF, 2008) is available to download via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/downloads/7482-DCSF-WorkforceMatters.pdf>

³ The deadline for responses to DCSF is 10 March 2009. The NCVYS response to the 2020 Strategy will be available to download in early 2009 via:

<http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=273>

2. Potential issues for the voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS)

The 2020 Strategy is part of an on-going reform of the children and young people's workforce, which is vital if we are to improve outcomes for children and young people. Given the size of the VCYS workforce, which comprises of a large number of volunteers (NCVYS estimates there are a minimum 500,000 volunteers) in addition to a sizeable paid workforce; the children and young people's voluntary and community sector employs over 160,000 people in England, and as many as 1 in 3 of all those employed by voluntary and community children and young people's organisations⁴, it is vital that the VCYS is engaged in the reform process.

The Strategy does not bring any new surprises and summarises work already underway through related strategies e.g. *Aiming High for Young People: a ten year strategy for positive activities*⁵ sets out a £25 million youth workforce reform programme and workforce development support has been outlined for the play workforce within *Building Brighter Futures: Next Steps for the Children's Workforce*⁶.

Alongside this Strategy, the Youth Justice Board is publishing its workforce strategy⁷. NCVYS will be keen to read this to learn of any impact upon the volunteers and paid voluntary workers who work preventatively with young people in the youth justice system. NCVYS also looks forward to hearing the Government's plans as it develops workforce support for the sport sector.

However, there were some interesting developments and issues for the VCYS to take note of, in particular:

Regulation and registration

An on-going concern for the VCYS has been the possibility of the regulation and registration of the children and young people's workforce. NCVYS has already done a considerable amount of lobbying in this area and submitted papers for the review in to the role of regulation and registration carried out by the Children's Workforce Network (CWN). A further review will take place by Government to look at the regulation and registration requirements in the workforce. This is a welcomed approach if all parts of the workforce are fully consulted with and a thorough investigation into the potential risks, e.g. a loss of volunteers and appropriateness of regulation and registration, takes place.

Review – refresh of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge

The Common Core⁸ sets out the basic skills and knowledge deemed to be needed by people whose work brings them into regular contact with children, young people and families. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) will be undertaking a review and consulting on the refresh of the Common Core. NCVYS welcomes this in particular as we have identified some key gaps e.g. youth participation, equality and diversity. It remains an ambition of the Government that all practitioners have access to training in the Common Core. However, funding

⁴ Statistics taken from the *Every Organisation Matters* research. Further details available via: <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?page=636>

⁵ Further information on *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* (DCSF, 2007) is available via: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/aiminghigh/>

⁶ *Building Brighter Futures: Next steps for the children's workforce* (DCSF, 2008) is available to download via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/downloads/7482-DCSF-WorkforceMatters.pdf>

⁷ The *Workforce Development Strategy* (Youth Justice Board, 2008) is available to download via: <http://www.yjb.gov.uk/publications/Scripts/prodView.asp?idproduct=430&eP=>

⁸ Further information on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge is available via: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/commoncore/>

to access the provision of this training and other required training needed by the VCYS remains an issue.

Focus on qualifications

There continues to be a focus on the need for practitioners to obtain qualifications. NCVYS agrees with the comments made by the Expert Group within the associated evidence base paper⁹ which in paragraph 5.19 states:

Some parts of the workforce, particularly in the voluntary sector have suggested that a focus on qualification and skills levels in the workforce can lead to prescriptive ways of addressing skills gaps, which don't meet the needs of organisations or individuals.

This echoes the findings within the UK Workforce Hub's 2008 report *Third Sector Skills Research 2008: Further evidence and recommendations on skills gaps*¹⁰. Page three of the Executive Summary states:

A recent push towards qualifications was identified and this was not always perceived as a good thing. It was felt that formal training sometimes led to a more prescriptive way of addressing skills gaps that did not always match organisational and individual needs.

NCVYS continues to advocate for higher recognition and value of experiential learning and that there needs to be a mixture of learning options available to individuals in order to meet the varying needs of individuals, particularly volunteers who may not aspire to attain a qualification.

There are individuals who are keen to obtain qualifications, particularly youth work degrees, but lack of accessible funding remains an obstacle for many. NCVYS continues to request for a 'Golden Hello' scheme to be introduced similar to that offered to social work students.

Children's Trusts

The role of Children's Trusts features heavily in the Strategy. Although the VCYS is not explicitly mentioned it is vital that the sector is fully engaged with Children's Trusts and therefore in local workforce reform. NCVYS welcomes Government's commitment to provide more coherent support of the Children's Trusts, but we hope that the excellent Workforce Strategy Partners Programme¹¹ (which supports the engagement of third sector in local workforce development strategies) will continue to be funded and supported by the CWDC.

NCVYS looks forward to hearing the Government's plans for £2.5 million to be allocated to local authorities (LAs) to help them prepare for the youth workforce reform programme.

⁹ *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy: the evidence base* (DCSF, 2008) is available to download via:

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01054-2008>

¹⁰ *Third Sector Skills Research 2008: Further evidence and recommendations on skills gaps* (UK Workforce Hub, 2008) is available via: <http://www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk/DisplayPage.asp?pageid=12689>

¹¹ Further information on the Workforce Strategy Partners Programme is available via: <http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/wspp>

Vetting and Barring Scheme

There is an on-going need for the VCYS to be kept up-to-date with the roll out of the new Independent Safeguarding Board vetting and barring scheme¹² which will begin in October 2009. All those that work with children and young people will need to be part of the scheme.

Next Steps for NCVYS

NCVYS hopes that it will become a member of the new National Partnership for the Children and Young People's Workforce to help the Government implement the strategy nationally. In addition, NCVYS will be responding to the consultation questions highlighted within this Strategy, with the support of its Workforce Development Task Group. NCVYS will be reviewing its *Children's Workforce Strategy Refresh* consultation response submitted to the Government back in the summer of 2007 in order to highlight outstanding workforce development needs and issues. And finally, in early January 2009 NCVYS will be consulting with the sector with a series of questions to help it respond to the consultation on the re-licensing of the Sector Skills Councils.

3. Report summary

3.1 Chapter 1: Introduction (p10-15)

This chapter explains how the Children's Workforce Expert Group has contributed to the development of the Strategy. It describes what DCSF means by the children and young people's workforce and the delivery system which supports it.

Approximately 2.7 million people work with children and young people in England, including volunteers. The term used in the Strategy, 'children and young people's workforce' is meant to reflect the fact that many people in the workforce work wholly or mainly with 13 to 19 year olds and sometimes with older young adults as well.

A diagram (figure 1.2, page 14) illustrates the different roles within the workforce including youth support, crime and justice and health. A wide range of different people and organisations are highlighted as having responsibility for support and development of different parts of the workforce, at a local and national level, including Children's trusts, regulatory and registration bodies and Government.

Several Government departments have responsibilities in relation to the children and young people's workforce. DCSF leads in relation to early years, childcare, schools and 14-19 education, the youth workforce and children and families social care. DCSF works closely with other departments such as the Department of Health, the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills (for Further Education Workforce), the Department for Culture Media and Sport (for sports and culture), the Home Office (for the police) and the Ministry of Justice (which holds joint responsibility for youth justice). The priorities set out in the Strategy have been agreed across Government and will be taken forward jointly.

3.2 Chapter 2: Challenges for the workforce and the Government's response and vision (p16-21)

This chapter summarises the challenges for the children and young people's workforce which were identified by the Expert Group and are explored further in *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy: the evidence base*. It sets out Government's vision for the workforce in 2020 and the strategic approach that Government will take working with partners.

¹² Further information on the Independent Safeguarding Authority and the vetting and barring scheme is available via: <http://www.isa-gov.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=2>

Key front-line challenges for the Strategy are identified:

- high levels of vacancies in some professions and regions;
- the quality of initial training;
- the low status of some professional groups;
- the clarity of purpose of some professions;
- the quality of management and leadership;
- ineffective integrated working between professionals from different backgrounds and services; and
- the effectiveness of the workforce to work with particularly vulnerable children and young people.

The Expert Group also identified a number of issues in the current delivery system that have contributed to the difficulty of addressing these challenges. These include:

- unclear responsibilities at local level in relation to workforce issues;
- different approaches across sectors to the regulation of professions and to qualifications and skills; and
- the complexity of roles and remits within the delivery system itself.

The Expert Group identified some parts of the workforce where quality or capacity problems mean that more needs to be done. These include youth support, social work, social care and early years.

Government's vision for the children and young people's workforce in 2020 is that everyone in the workforce will be:

- ambitious for every child and young person;
- excellent in their practice;
- committed to partnership and integrated working; and
- respected and valued as professionals.

The subsequent chapters look at Government's priorities for the children and young people's workforce. To support the delivery of these priorities, and to facilitate effective partnership with the workforce, the Government will establish a new National Children and Young People's Workforce Partnership. The Partnership will also ensure that policy is informed by the views and practical experience of the workforce and by evidence.

The Partnership will support the Government in reviewing progress in delivery and set out its priorities for the next three years in 2011, and every three years thereafter.

3.3 Chapter 3: Reforms for the whole workforce (p22-39)

This chapter sets out priorities for the whole children's workforce. The key priorities and actions are set out below.

Strengthen leadership and management support

Government will set up a new development programme which will offer structured training and support to every Director of Children's Services.

Government will ask the National College of School Leadership to chair a group of partners to develop proposals for a more coherent offer of support for senior and middle managers throughout the workforce.

The DCSF and key partners will work together to develop a talent management programme for staff from a range of national and local organisations.

Develop coherent recruitment channels

Government will develop recruitment routes which encourage people to join the children and young people's workforce.

Government will explore how best to ensure that the full range of career options in the children and young people's workforce is included on Connexions Direct, and that a wide variety of entry routes are available, including apprenticeships.

Government will ask the Training and Development Agency and the CWDC to develop a strategy for recruitment.

Ensure that everyone is clear about what integrated working means for them

The Strategy emphasises the importance of joined-up working within the children and young people's workforce. A tool is included in Annex B of the full Strategy to help people in different roles think about what integrated working means for them.

Children's Trusts are highlighted as having a crucial role to play in developing integrated working. Children's Trusts should ensure that their children and young people's workforce have support and opportunities to:

- understand what it means to be part of the workforce in their local area;
- acquire a core of skills and knowledge that they share with others in the workforce;
- develop a shared approach to assessment, planning, intervention and review to meet children and young people's needs;
- learn from, and with, people from other professional and occupational backgrounds; and
- access – and be supported to use – resources, tools and guidance that help them to work effectively with others.

This is likely to mean joint commissioning of training and development opportunities to avoid duplication and gaps.

Government and its partners provide a range of guidance and tools to support integrated working, including guidance relating to information sharing, the lead professional role and the Common Assessment Framework.

Shared values and common core of skills and knowledge

Everyone who works with children and young people should demonstrate that they meet the Common Core Skills and Knowledge. The CWDC will work with other sector skills councils to review and consult on a refresh of the Common Core. Work on this will be completed by September 2009.

The Children's Workforce Network (CWN) has developed a vision and principles for induction which will be published in early 2009.

Working in partnership with children, young people and their parents or carers, and supporting parents

The review of the Common Core will ensure that it includes clear guidance on this issue. Supported by the DCSF, local authorities (LAs) and their partners are implementing the Think Family¹³ model to ensure better identification, assessment and integration of service delivery to families at risk.

There are currently 65 Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) with an additional 30 in development. The *Youth Crime Action Plan 2008*¹⁴ announced funding for all LAs to help develop FIPs for families with children at risk of offending and other poor outcomes.

Safeguarding

Everyone in the workforce should be safe to work with children and young people and should understand their responsibilities to safeguard children and young people.

Local Safeguarding Children's Boards have a statutory responsibility to ensure that single-agency and inter-agency training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is provided to meet the local needs of staff. Government has commissioned a number of training resources to support inter-agency training.

In November 2008, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families asked Lord Laming to report on the effectiveness of implementation of safeguarding systems and procedures since the publication of his 2003 inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. Lord Laming will report early in 2009.

A new vetting and barring scheme will be introduced by Government, going live in 2009. The Independent Safeguarding Authority will take the decisions on who should be barred from working with children or vulnerable adults.

Qualifications, training and progression

Everyone in the workforce, including those working in the voluntary sector, should have access to the full range of training and qualifications activities.

The Integrated Qualifications Framework¹⁵, due to be implemented by 2010, will be an important tool in helping professionals and their employers identify and access qualifications.

Government will be taking forward a review of regulation and registration requirements in the workforce. This builds on the scoping of regulation and registration within the children's workforce that has been carried out by the CWN in 2008.

Making a difference for all children and young people

The workforce needs to be able to meet the needs of all children and young people, including those who are most vulnerable to poor outcomes.

¹³ Further information on the Think Family approach is available via:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/families_at_risk/reaching_out_summary.aspx

¹⁴ *Youth Crime Action Plan 2008* (HM Government, 2008) is available to download via:

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=CDS-15>

¹⁵ Further information on the Integrated Qualifications Framework is available via: <http://www.iqf.org.uk/>

Roles and responsibilities which need to be performed within the workforce to meet the needs of these groups is published as part of the *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy: the evidence base*.

3.4 Chapter 4: Sector-specific reform and development (p40-56)

This chapter discusses how Government wants to work with partners to ensure that every part of the workforce receives the support it needs to realise the vision for 2020.

Youth support workforce

The Strategy recognises that the youth support workforce is highly diverse, including full-time and part-time workers from the public, private and third sectors and a large number of volunteers. Evidence shows that the youth support workforce requires a distinct set of skills and knowledge, to engage and work with young people. There are also specific and specialised skills that can vary widely, from dealing with young offenders to providing careers advice and a need for greater clarity over roles and responsibilities.

The Strategy also highlights that the youth workforce is being asked to work in new ways as local services change, e.g. a greater focus on young people's empowerment in service design and delivery. This can raise significant cultural challenges and the need to create and sustain a shared set of priorities.

Furthermore the changing nature of young people's experiences places new expectation on the youth workforce to share and own priorities around educational achievement and participation.

DCSF's starting point is to effectively deliver the reforms from *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*. Funding of £25 million is supporting key measures including:

- training for up to 5,000 current and future leaders and managers of integrated youth support services to be delivered by 2011, starting in February 2009, including third sector providers;
- a new drive to support workers in the third sector, particularly helping them to access training and accredit their experience. DCSF will set out further details next year; and
- a set of measures to raise the level of skills and competencies of the workforce across all levels and clarify roles and progression. This will also aim to raise the status of workers in the sector, including the introduction of a youth professional status. Over the coming months DCSF will work closely with partners and consult the workforce on this.

Up to £2.25 million will be available across England to LAs to help them prepare for this programme of reform. CWDC will be contacting LAs by the end of 2008 with details of how they can access this funding and what it can be used for.

DCSF will also look at standards of supervision across the workforce, the organisation of work placements and ensuring that current training and development enables the workforce to support young people in the context of raising the participation age and new 14-19 pathways.

DCSF will be actively consulting, and communicating on progress, as further proposals are developed and existing reforms are implemented.

Youth justice

Alongside this strategy the Youth Justice Board has published its *Workforce Development Strategy*.

Playworkers

Playworkers are also recognised. DCSF highlight the plans it announced in *The Children's Plan*¹⁶ and *Building Brighter Futures*, including measure to enable 4,000 playworkers to achieve an NVQ level 3 qualification by 2011. The DCSF also published its *Play Strategy*¹⁷ in December 2008.

Other areas

Other workforce areas covered are:

- children and families social work;
- children and families social care;
- people providing support with parenting skills;
- early years and childcare workforce;
- the schools workforce;
- the further education workforce;
- people working in health; and
- people working in sport and culture.

3.5 Chapter 5: Delivery of this strategy (p57-63)

This chapter sets out how Government will respond to the challenges for the delivery system. It explains the measures that Government will take to ensure that, at local and national level, workforce development is taken forward in partnership, and based on evidence.

Government will establish a new National Children and Young People's Workforce Partnership to support the development and delivery of the Government's priorities for whole workforce reform. The Partnership will include people from the workforce, their representatives and others with expertise, e.g. Sector Skills Councils, the Association for Directors of Children's Services and organisations supporting workforce development and reform. It will sit alongside existing sector partnerships.

Government will review progress and consult on its priorities across the whole children and young people's workforce every three years in the run up to 2020.

Strengthening the evidence base and data collection

Government will establish a knowledge bank for the children and young people's workforce. The new Centre for Excellence and Outcomes¹⁸ in children and young people's services will contribute evidence.

Government will work with national partners from across the workforce to develop a joint knowledge and research strategy which ensures that resources are focused on addressing gaps as a priority.

The DCSF will develop and consult on plans to collect more accurate data about parts of the workforce for which there is not a current dataset, taking account of the burdens these would place on data providers.

The Government and delivery partners will work to develop an integrated communication strategy.

Local leadership

A strategy for deployment and development of the local workforce should be included in the Children and Young People's Plan. This will give responsibility for the development, delivery and

¹⁶ Further information on *The Children's Plan* is available via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/>

¹⁷ Further information on the *Play Strategy* is available via: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/play/>

¹⁸ Further information on the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes is available via: <http://www.c4eo.org.uk>

review of a strategic approach to local workforce reform jointly and clearly with the partners who make up the Children's Trust Board.

As major employers of the children and young people's, LAs and Primary Care Trusts will want to demonstrate excellent practice in terms of their corporate workforce strategy.

Children's Trusts Boards will need support from national partners in the delivery system. Over the past year, national, regional and local partners, led by the CWDC, have developed an overarching framework for workforce reform in response to requests from Children's Trusts. The framework sets out seven key areas that Children's Trusts needs to develop:

- shared identity, purpose and vision;
- common values and language;
- behaviours focused on positive outcomes for children and young people;
- integrated working practices;
- high quality, appropriately trained workforce;
- complementary roles focused around children and young people; and
- capacity to deliver and keep children safe.

Effective commissioning can be an important lever for raising workforce quality and driving forward reform. In addition to commissioning services, Children's Trusts and the partners that form them, may be commissioners of training for their local workforce. This needs to support integrated working and avoid duplication across the workforce. The Government has launched a Commissioning Support Programme for Children's Trusts¹⁹.

Government will strengthen the local support activities of the CWDC, National College of School Leadership and Training and Development Agency for Schools, to develop a joint offer of support to Children's Trusts.

Organisations supporting the workforce

The Government expects that the new National Children's Workforce Partnership will improve coherence in delivery.

Re-licensing of the Sector Skills Councils which have responsibility for parts of the children and young people's workforce will take place in early 2009. Government will work with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills to ensure that the interests of the whole children and young people's workforce will be taken into account during the re-licensing process and the options for remit rationalisation are fully explored.

DCSF will undertake a review of the roles and responsibilities of the workforce support organisations it sponsors, including CWDC.

For more information on any element of this paper, please contact NCVYS's Policy Officer, Hannah Dobbin, email hannah@ncvys.org.uk or on 020 7278 1041.

¹⁹ Further information on the Commissioning Support Programme for Children's Trusts is available via: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/commissioningsupport/>