

Why workforce reform?

October 2008

Introduction

This information sheet is aimed at managers and leaders of voluntary and community youth sector organisations to provide information as to why workforce reform has come about, what it is and to help them realise why they should take note of this important work.

First of all, what do we mean by the term 'workforce reform'? The workforce are staff and volunteers who work with children, young people and families and reform is concerned with a change for the better and for improvements.

The background

Workforce reform came about as a result of the government inquiry in to the death of Victoria Climbié, the little girl who died in London after being subject to abuse and neglect.

The inquiry aimed to find out how come so many professionals had contact with the Family and yet this little girl still managed to tragically fall 'through the net'. Lord Laming undertook this inquiry, the result being a government policy response called *Every Child Matters*, followed by *Youth Matters*.

The Government's aim in *Every Child Matters* is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

1. Be healthy
2. Stay safe
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well-being

Every Child Matters lays out expectations of all organisations that are involved in providing services to children and young people to help achieve these five outcomes. It says that they must:

- Team up in new ways to work better together including creating new ways of working across the children's workforce
- Ensure that the child's needs determine the help and support they get, not the needs of organisations
- Share information about the children they are supporting and their services
- Plan for services, delivered jointly at local level to see what works best for children and young people

In summary, it was recognised that a skilled workforce, which works in an integrated way and shared information would be key in meeting the needs of children and young people. Integrated working is where everyone supporting children and young people work together effectively to put the child at the centre, meet their needs and improve their lives. The government recognised that this couldn't happen without support for the development of the workforce and the creation of products and processes for more joined up working. How where they going to do that? – through workforce reform.

Children's Workforce Strategy & the creation of the Children's Workforce Development Council

The way the government went about bringing in workforce reform was via the mechanism of the *Children's Workforce Strategy* published back in 2005, which sets out a number of initiatives. The Children's Workforce Development Council was created to work with the Children's Workforce Network¹ on implementing these initiatives and lead on workforce reform.

What does this mean for people working with children, young people and families?

The third sector has an important role to play in integrated working as it is the largest provider of services to children and young people and often the first port of call for children, young people and families who are the most vulnerable and those disengaged from statutory services.

For years the voluntary sector has been working in a multi-agency way and therefore working with other practitioners is not a new concept. However, there are now new processes and products which help to make this more effective.

In particular those third sector practitioners who work with the most vulnerable children and young people should particularly take note of the systems and processes for sharing information and assessment e.g. ContactPoint (to be available from early 2009) and the Common Assessment Framework. This is because these practitioners help to meet children's complex and additional needs, which specific products & processes are in place to help facilitate.

¹ The Children's Workforce Network was created to act as an alliance and strategic body in order to aid collaboration between the sector skills councils and other key national agencies. It is recognised that collaboration will help them achieve more effective achievement of their individual and joint roles. One of the priorities of the network is to promote an integrated children and young people's workforce.

All practitioners need to know about the integrated working agenda and how to make contact with other practitioners should the child they are working with suddenly have additional needs.

Some people think that by having child protection and safeguarding policies in place that this is just enough – “*I know how to report a concern*”. But the integrated working agenda is not just about working with other practitioners to safeguard and protect children - it is more than that. Practitioners need to know who to contact if they are to bring in services to help the child’s entire needs.

Some voluntary organisations are involved in integrated service delivery. They have been commissioned for their service and staff to work with other practitioners from different professional disciplines. This could be in the form of teams or services in order to jointly work together to meet the needs of children and young people. You may have heard of Integrated Youth Support Services, which was announced in the green paper *Youth Matters* (Published 2005), which followed *Every Child Matters*. Paragraph 36 of the executive summary from *Youth Matters* states:

“Having a single body responsible and accountable for youth policy and the Every Child Matters outcomes in each area will enable integrated planning and commissioning of the full range of services for teenagers from universal activities through to more specialist and targeted support. This will lead to an integrated youth support service, focused on and structured around young people’s needs and involving a wide range of providers, including voluntary and community organisations”

We would expect to see specialist services provided by the voluntary and community sector, in particular those who deliver services to vulnerable children and young people, commissioned to be part of the Integrated Youth Support Service.

CWDC states “*The Third Sector has a responsibility to engage in workforce development and the workforce reform agenda along with other sectors*”. Therefore those who work with children and young people need to find out what initiatives, activities and products there are. They need to find out how they can benefit from them in terms of helping to develop the workforce and improve integrated working.

Most of all this is about the children and young people benefiting.

If we do not up-skill the workforce and work effectively with other practitioners from other services, then we will simply fail children and young people - just like Victoria Climbié.

Workforce reform initiatives

So what are the different initiatives, activities or products? There is a huge raft of them from Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to the Integrated Qualifications Framework.

Information on these initiatives is available from CWDC's web site at: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk or the Every Child Matters website (ECM) www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. The ECM website provides some brief factsheets regarding integrated working at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/search/IG00018/. In addition the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) has developed some integrated working briefings specifically aimed at the voluntary and community sector found at: www.navca.org.uk/stratwork/children/cwdc/briefings/.

There are also links to sources of information from the workforce web pages on the NCVYS web site www.ncvys.org.uk.

To follow are some examples of initiatives:

Developing the workforce – examples of initiatives or products:

- Induction standards to help support new staff and volunteers
- New qualifications e.g. vulnerable young people worker award
- Funding (via the Workforce Strategy Partners Programme) to engage the third sector at a local level in workforce development activity e.g. training bursaries, mentoring schemes, training courses and surveys

Integrated working processes – examples of initiatives or products:

- **Common Assessment Framework** is a standardised approach & tool to conduct an assessment of a child's additional needs
- **Lead professionals** work with children and young people who have additional (including complex) needs who require an integrated package of support from more than one practitioner. They take the lead to co-ordinate provision and act as a single point of contact for a child and their family when a range of services are involved and an integrated response is required
- **Information Sharing – ContactPoint** will be the quick way for a practitioner to find out who else is working with the same child or young person, making it easier to deliver more co-ordinated support. It will be a basic online directory, available to authorised staff who need it to do their jobs e.g. voluntary sector organisations that deliver statutory services and those commissioned to deliver services as part of an Integrated Youth Support Service in a locality. It is expected to be in place January 2009.

Youth workforce reform

In addition to the workforce reform which affects the whole of the children, young people and families' workforce, in 2007 the government announced a youth workforce reform programme within *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*. This is good news - a dedicated ten year programme of reform. Funding of £25 million over the first three years has been allocated to support the youth workforce to raise standards and upskill. A period of feasibility work, testing and design is underway. Examples of strands of work include a training and development scheme for leaders and managers; a generic youth apprenticeship and the third sector capacity building strand. The latter includes the provision of training and the feasibility of the volunteer accreditation scheme (idea proposed by NCVYS). Information about the programme can be found at www.ncvys.org.uk >> workforce reform.

Investment in the play workforce

Within *Building Brighter Futures: Next steps for the children's workforce* (DCSF, 2008) an investment of £7.5m in the play workforce was announced, which includes giving 4,000 playworkers access to level 3 qualifications. In addition, there will be a new management and leadership programme for senior front line staff and a development programme for professionally qualified graduate leaders. The process to apply for places for the NVQ 3 in playwork and more information is available at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/areas/playwork. Employers have to move quickly to get their applications in to CWDC as they are considering applications at the end of 2008 for the 2009 in-take of the NVQ 3 in playwork course.

Summary

There is significant government investment provided to develop the workforce and it is about employers tapping in to this investment to help develop their staff and volunteers and improve outcomes for children and young people. NCVYS aims to keep the voluntary youth sector up to date with developments via the provision of information on its web site, bulletins and events.

What next?

You may wish to nominate a member of staff to: take the lead for workforce development in your organisation; send staff along to a NCVYS information session on workforce reform; take a look at the websites referred to throughout this information sheet; download the brief information sheets from NAVCA and sign up to various e-bulletins to be kept up to date with workforce development news:

www.childrensworkforce.org.uk (sign to be a national reference group member and receive a bulletin)

www.integratedworking.com (sign up to an integrated working e-bulletin)

www.ncvys.org.uk >> workforce (e-bulletin – workforce development snippets) or sign up by e-mailing nichola@ncvys.org.uk

Training on integrated working is available to those organisations that operate at a local level and so also available to the networks of national voluntary youth organisations. For more information contact the

Workforce Strategy Partners Programme (WSPP) contract holders within the voluntary and community sector. These details can be found at the WSPP InfoBank: www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/wspp/infobank

Further training on integrated working is expected to be delivered to the voluntary and community sector as a result of the third sector capacity building work of the youth workforce reform programme – so watch this space!

Further information

If you require any advice or further information about workforce reform then contact the NCVYS workforce development officer Nichola Brown at nichola@ncvys.org.uk or ring 07792 875635. Please let Nichola know if you think there are any services or products which should be developed to help improve your organisation's knowledge and implementation of workforce reform.

This information sheet has been written by Nichola Brown, Workforce Development Officer at the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services. A small amount of text has been lifted with kind permission from *Putting workforce development on the agenda factsheet*, written by Peg Alexander from CWDC and published by NAVCA.



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