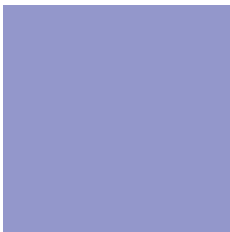
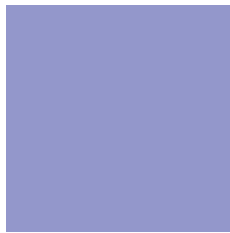


Children's Workforce Strategy

Building a world-class workforce for children,
young people and families

The Government's response to the consultation



Every Child Matters
Change For Children

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Ministerial foreword



The Government is committed to a transformational reform agenda designed to improve life chances for all and reduce inequalities in our society. We have transformed much of the education service, securing higher levels of achievement for children in primary and secondary schools, and opening up opportunities for young people to reach their potential through higher and further education or training. Beyond education we are delivering improvements in health and social care, community development and engagement, and the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour. We are committed to reform in these and other areas because we know they are crucial to the achievement of a fairer, more prosperous and more inclusive society.

If we are genuinely to achieve change we must not only improve outcomes for **all** children and young people but also reduce the current disparities between the most disadvantaged and the rest.

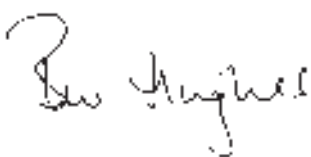
To realise these ambitions, we are transforming children's services across the board through the Every Child Matters agenda, promoting a new approach to services for children and young people. Since the launch of *Every Child Matters*, we have proposed radical reforms for the youngest children, set out in our ten year childcare strategy *Choice for parents, the best start for children*. Through the Childcare Bill currently before Parliament we are proposing new duties on local authorities to improve outcomes for all young children under five, secure sufficient childcare for working parents and improve information for parents. The Bill will also reform and simplify the regulation and inspection of childcare and, in doing so, remove the distinction between early education and childcare for under fives, establishing a new Early Years Foundation Stage. In *Youth Matters* we set a radical agenda to extend and enhance opportunities for teenagers. And we will shortly set out proposals to improve the life chances of looked after children, one of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

Critical to the success of these reforms is increasing the skill, confidence and competence of the workforce. This is a widely shared view. Last year we consulted on the future of the children's workforce. Responses to our proposals are a powerful reminder of the dedication and commitment so many people already bring to improving the lives of children and young people. Their passion reinforces the need to set our sights high and aim to develop a truly world-class workforce to improve outcomes for all our children and young people.

Together we have already achieved a lot. In local areas across the country the workforce has responded to a challenging agenda. Every Child Matters has fundamentally changed the landscape of children's policy. In the 150 local change programmes different people working with children, young people and their families are already coming together to deliver improved services. All around the country I see numerous exciting examples of good practice.

Of course the workforce has a central role in achieving our ambitions. This means quality being the watchword in everything that we do to serve children, young people and families. It means a workforce held in high esteem – one that is confident and filled with people who can build rewarding careers. It means a workforce that is well led and made up of people willing and able to work effectively in an integrated way across agencies. It means a workforce that is itself diverse and able to work effectively with children, young people and families from diverse cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Above all however – and I know this reflects the reasons many people join services for children, young people and families in the first place – it means a workforce that makes as much difference to children's life chances as possible.

This is not a vision that can be achieved overnight. Nor can central Government achieve it alone. That's why in this document we set out the tangible steps which we can take in the coming years, steps that will move us towards achieving our longer term vision. I believe the reforms set out in this document build on the good practice that already exists and provide a platform for moving further forward and achieving improved life chances for children and young people. The actions that we set out will be taken forward by a whole range of organisations and partners, inside and outside Government – because we can only achieve our ambitions for children, young people and families by working together. I am determined to work with you to achieve it. So too are my colleagues across Government.



Beverley Hughes
Minister for Children, Young People and Families

1. Introduction



Our ability to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children, young people and families depends on the hard work, commitment, skill and competence of the people who work with them. That is why on 1 April 2005 the Government's *Children's Workforce Strategy: a strategy to build a world-class workforce for children and young people* was published for consultation. We are enormously grateful for the time and energy people have given to respond.

This document sets out how we intend to take work forward, in light of views expressed in the consultation. We are setting a clear vision with clear ambitions. And we are developing practical steps which take us in the right direction.

In this chapter we confirm a vision of a world-class children's workforce that:

- strives to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people, and reduce inequalities between the most disadvantaged and the rest;
- is competent, confident and safe to work with children and young people;
- people aspire to be part of and want to remain in – where they can develop their skills and build satisfying and rewarding careers; and
- parents, children and young people trust and respect.

We set clear priorities for early action to:

- ensure all those working in services for children and young people take account of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
- develop new roles and new opportunities in the early years;
- improve stability and a high quality of service delivery in social care and foster care;
- build an integrated qualifications framework; and
- develop the infrastructure that will support local Change for Children programmes through the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC).

1.1 There is significant agreement on the importance of the children's workforce and of making tangible progress to build on improvements already made. So the starting point is one of common cause – we need to work together to develop a workforce which contributes to improved life chances for all children and young people, and particularly for those from more deprived families.

The vision

1.2 Responses show overwhelming support for the ambition of building a world-class workforce for children and young people. Furthermore there is a widely held view – one the Government strongly agrees with – that improving the quality of the workforce is not an end in itself. Rather it is a critical and necessary foundation for improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.

1.3 There is clear evidence that quality will lead to improved outcomes. Take childcare: the greater the proportion of workers in a setting trained up to level 3 (equivalent to A level), and the higher the level of skill, knowledge and qualification held by the person leading practice, the better the outcomes for children. Similarly, the evidence tells us that the style and approach of leaders in residential care settings for looked after children makes a crucial difference to outcomes for them.

1.4 Of course, improving levels of skill, knowledge and qualification within the workforce is not the only challenge. We must continue to recruit new people into children's services. And we need to become far more successful in developing and retaining people so that they can work ever more effectively to make a real difference to the life chances of children and young people. We know that the ambition to make a difference is one of the main reasons why people choose to work in services for children and families in the first place; and we know also many often feel constrained by unnecessary bureaucracy and meaningless rules. So, in addition to enhancing skills and qualifications we must refine and simplify processes and ways of working so that people are empowered to shape improvements in the services they deliver.

1.5 While responses welcomed the vision we set out last April, they also told us that some critical aspects were missing. They said we must include:

- ensuring that the workforce is safe to work with children;
- ensuring that it is focused on improving outcomes; and
- ensuring that the strategy addresses the needs of families and carers as well as children and young people themselves.

1.6 We think these comments are important and helpful. That's why this response is called *Children's workforce strategy: building a world-class workforce for children, young people and families*. Our vision now is of a **world-class children's workforce** which:

- strives to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people and reduce inequalities between the most disadvantaged and the rest;
- is competent, confident and safe to work with children and young people;
- people aspire to be part of and want to remain in – where they can develop their skills and build satisfying and rewarding careers; and
- parents, children and young people trust and respect.

The context: the reform of children's services

1.7 Many factors and policy changes will affect the children's workforce. Many of the wider Every Child Matters reforms – including measures to increase earlier identification of need; better planning; smarter commissioning; clearer responsibilities to safeguard and promote children's welfare; and more involvement of children and young people – will help people working with children carry out their roles better. As will implementation of the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*. So too will the introduction of improved information sharing, the Common Assessment Framework, and *Championing Children*, the guidance we have developed for leaders and managers of multi-agency teams. Implementation of the Childcare Bill, once passed, will also be supported by the introduction of the new Early Years Foundation Stage and statutory guidance, including on integrated early years services to improve outcomes for under fives. These are all developments that we have been taking forward with our partners since *Every Child Matters* was published in 2003.

1.8 The successful implementation of the vision and the outcomes set out in *Every Child Matters* depends on a wide range of partners across different agencies and organisations working together to develop more integrated and responsive services for children, young people and families.

1.9 That is why, when we are challenged as to whether this really is about the whole children's workforce, our response is clear: it is about everyone working with children, whatever the sector they are in, whatever age range they are working with, whether employed by a public, private or voluntary organisation. The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge is for everyone who works with children and young people, including those for whom this is just part of their job. New career pathways, built on a more coherent set of qualifications, must be open to all in the workforce. Everyone must share in the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Everyone must share in the duty to improve the well-being of children.

1.10 There can be no doubt that achieving the vision we have set ourselves will mean a continued focus on redesigning services and improving the training and development of the workforce, driven both by the Every Child Matters ambitions and those set in train by wider reforms across public services. New roles and new ways of working within and across sectors will emerge. Delivering increasingly personalised support will require a different mix of skills, different combinations and blends of expertise, with professionals, para-professionals and support staff working together in new teams and in different ways.

1.11 The need to develop new ways of working will be true across all services for children and young people. To deliver integrated solutions within each area's Children and Young People's Plan:

- we must ensure that all those working with or in contact with children and young people recognise their responsibilities to take action to safeguard and promote children's welfare whilst carrying out their normal duties;
- we must continue to transform the early years – with new professional roles to raise the status of the work and the quality of services delivered;
- in both health and social care we need to develop a workforce which finds new approaches to meet the challenges of the *National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*, *Choosing Health*, and the recently published White Paper *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services*;
- in schools, the workforce will need to continue to modernise to meet the challenges of extended provision and a more personalised curriculum for all pupils;
- the integrated youth services proposed in the *Youth Matters* Green Paper will build on the existing skills of the workforce but will require changes to their roles and practices if we are to deliver more effective and co-ordinated services for young people; and
- for looked after children we are considering what wide-ranging reforms are needed in order to improve outcomes.

Delivering change

1.12 To make the tangible steps towards achieving our long-term objectives, Government must work in partnership, develop effective mechanisms for both support and challenge, and set clear priorities for immediate and longer term action.

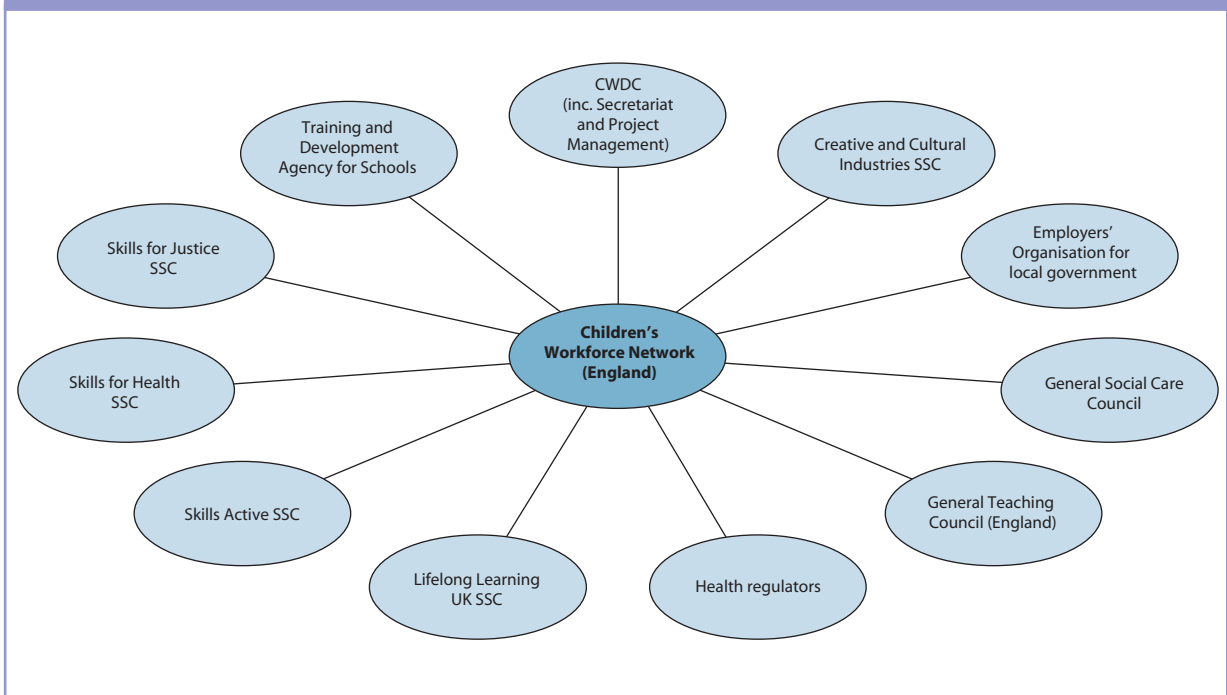
Working in partnership

1.13 Our role in central Government is to set the direction of change and to work with our partners to encourage and enable that change to take place. This means close work with local authorities and the voluntary and private sectors. In most cases change will only be sustainable and meaningful if it is driven by local decisions in response to local needs and

local circumstance. Equally, across Government, departments will need to work together and with our partners to find ways of removing barriers to change that emerge and which cannot be resolved locally. One major focus for action across Government will be to simplify the workforce planning arrangements affecting the development of a more integrated children’s workforce.

1.14 The Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has a crucial and challenging role to play. It is a strategic partner, a delivery arm and a critical friend of Government. The Council is not alone in taking this work forward. It is working with its sister organisation, Skills for Care, on particular reforms in social care, and with all its partners in the Children’s Workforce Network (CWN) on the delivery of joined-up reform across the full children’s workforce.

Figure 1 – The Children’s Workforce Network



Note: the Nursing and Midwifery Council represents the interests of all health regulatory bodies on the Network

Supporting and challenging

1.15 The Government has put in place new systems to support and monitor the delivery of Every Child Matters locally. Where there is independent evidence, for example through a Joint Area Review or Annual Performance Assessment that a local authority is failing to discharge its functions, discussions will take place with Directors for Children and Learners in Government Offices to agree a way forward for the delivery of high quality services.

Directors for Children and Learners will offer help, support and challenge to local authorities and their partners in establishing children's trust arrangements, involving the CWDC and other partners as appropriate.

1.16 Depending on the specific failure identified, the Secretary of State may use powers to direct the local authority as to how the function should be performed. The most extreme forms of intervention, in particular directing the outsourcing of services, will only be used where there is compelling evidence of serious failure and where the authority is unable to tackle the failure within a reasonable timescale. A range of other actions, including offering additional expertise to support improvements, will be employed where appropriate.

Setting clear priorities

1.17 We need to ensure we use all the resources available to maximum effect. All the reforms that we prioritise in this document can be met from existing resources. Indeed, we would envisage that local authorities will realise some efficiency savings by making improvements to the workforce. For example, improved recruitment and retention, and better pay-bill management will lead to savings. We certainly would not expect local authorities to seek any increases in Council Tax as a result of the actions set out here.

1.18 The majority of responses to the consultation called for a clear set of priorities – now. We believe that, in order to create a genuine step change in outcomes, we must first prioritise reform in:

- ensuring that all staff take account of **safeguarding and promoting children's welfare** when carrying out their normal duties with children, young people and their families;
- the **early years**, where we know we need to improve quality; and
- in **social care and foster care**, where we know we need to improve stability, in particular in services for looked after children and young people, and those with additional needs.

1.19 Working with the CWDC and CWN, we must press ahead with addressing the key challenges that the consultation has endorsed:

- recruitment into the workforce;
- retention and development of the workforce;
- strengthening integrated working; and
- improving leadership, management and supervision.

1.20 We will do this in part by focusing on and sharing the good practice that already exists. We also need to make immediate progress on specific issues, whilst laying foundations for changes we expect to see over time.

1.21 Specifically, we intend to:

- work with the Department of Health (DH) and Skills for Care to present an analysis of present and future social worker supply and recommendations for action;
- ask CWDC to explore with the CWN the potential for extending current data collection to establish a baseline assessment of ethnicity, gender, age and disability at all levels of the children's workforce;
- put in place the infrastructure that will support and challenge local change programmes, continuing to invest in and build the capacity of the CWDC and CWN;
- build an integrated qualifications framework, based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, that will make a reality of improved career pathways within and across the workforce. Simplified, streamlined, more transparent qualifications and development frameworks will also increase the confidence that employers, employees, students and children, young people and families have in the workforce;
- develop new roles and new opportunities, at graduate level, in the early years' workforce. At the same time we have to increase the opportunities for the existing workforce to progress, to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities; and
- use the Options for Excellence¹ review to agree the challenges and propose ways forward for social work and social care.

1.22 We accept the need to look closely at the contention – made in a number of responses – that recruitment and retention difficulties are linked to questions of pay, rewards and other terms and conditions issues. We have asked the CWDC to produce a report for Government on this, by September 2006, involving Trades' Unions and all relevant employers' organisations in the process. We want this report to consider and compare the impact on recruitment and retention of the total reward packages offered in different services, not just pay. A total reward package will include all remuneration and leave, as well as flexible working arrangements, training and development opportunities and more intangible benefits offered to enhance a work-life balance. In completing their report and recommendation we are asking CWDC to consider the future impact to be expected from the introduction of an integrated qualifications framework to support career progression.

Next steps

1.23 In the rest of this document we set out:

- a summary of responses to the consultation (chapter 2);
- what we are committed to doing now to meet the key challenges and priorities (chapter 3); and

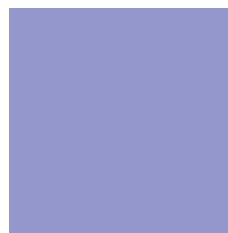
¹ See page 31 below. Options for Excellence is a joint DH/DfES review of the social care workforce, launched in July 2005. More details can be found at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare

- our action plan (chapter 4).

1.24 If we are to achieve the step change in the quality of the workforce and the improvement in the life chances of children then we must keep our priorities for action under constant review. As we go forward, we must not only reflect wider policy changes – for example taking account of the impact of the recently published Department of Health White Paper *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services* – but we must also continue to learn from experience on the ground. Early in 2007 and each year thereafter we will publish an update of the strategy which will:

- assess progress towards our long-term objectives; and
- update as necessary the particular priorities we identify.

2. A summary of responses to the consultation



We received 695 written responses to the consultation. A detailed breakdown of respondents, a list of consultation questions, and detailed summaries and statistical analysis of the answers provided is available at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. In addition, over 1,000 delegates attended and contributed to a series of seven regional consultation events on the strategy. We also commissioned a specific consultation with children and young people. This chapter analyses and summarises what people said in their responses; in chapter 3 we set out what we are doing to tackle the key challenges and priorities.

The headline messages

2.1 The responses:

- showed overwhelming support for the vision and ambition of the strategy, coupled with a strong desire to see it translated into delivery; and
- set an expectation that Government should agree priorities and develop a clear action plan.

Our approach, our vision and the strategic challenges

2.2 The vast majority of responses:

- welcomed and agreed with the vision;
- supported the approach of mutually reinforcing national and local actions;
- endorsed the key challenges and priorities identified; and
- looked for on-going leadership from Government, particularly to join up approaches across health and local government.

2.3 A number of responses suggested strengthening **the vision** through:

- a more explicit reference to the workforce needing to be child and outcome-focused, alongside calls to extend the scope of the strategy to cover families and communities and other sectors more prominently (principally, residential care, youth justice and play); and
- a stronger emphasis on safeguarding.

The approach: mutually reinforcing national and local actions

2.4 The propositions set out for consultation were agreed, with many helpful suggestions for improvement offered. Responses:

- recognised and supported the principle and potential of a **'single qualifications framework'** built upon the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, although it was suggested that it would be more helpful to describe this as an **'integrated qualifications framework'**. There were a number of calls for the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge to be mandatory. Responses sought greater clarity, in particular about the relationship between a qualifications framework, improved career pathways and any relationship that could be drawn out with pay and terms and conditions;
- welcomed the appropriateness of seeking **local solutions to local issues**, but noted that *local* does not necessarily equate with *local authority*. Responses suggested the need to develop more activity at a sub-regional and regional level, with a key role identified for the CWDC. There was demand for further guidance, especially in relation to developing local workforce strategies. A number of respondents looked for more than guidance, suggesting a need for regulation and/or targets. There was a virtually unanimous plea for more work on identifying and sharing good practice; and
- supported more **inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working**, were positive about both the lead professional role and the need for increased multi-agency working, and endorsed the need for a continuing focus on **leadership, management and supervision**.

The early years

2.5 Respondents confirmed the place of early years as one of our immediate workforce priorities. The proposal to introduce an Early Years' Professional role was widely endorsed. The skills and attributes associated with pedagogy were seen as important, although the point was made that the early years' workforce might better be thought of as a mix of different professionals. Many respondents felt that teachers with Qualified Teacher Status, including early years' teachers, would need little additional training and development to fulfil the role of an Early Years Professional working with children under three. They did however feel that knowledge of early childhood development was crucial for the role.

There was also widespread support for graduate-level leadership of settings. And whilst the strategy sets out our wish to 'see a greater proportion of the early years' workforce qualified to at least level 2', respondents generally supported a more ambitious approach to developing the non-graduate workforce alongside graduate leaders.

2.6 Respondents underlined the importance of on-going investment by Government if we are to improve the quality of early years provision and at the same time deliver better pay and conditions for staff without compromising affordability to parents. The Transformation Fund will provide additional resources to address these aims, and in particular will both to support the development of training routes for graduates to attain the new Early Years Professional status, to increase the proportion of the non-graduate workforce qualified to level 3, and to increase training available for those working with disabled children, or children with special educational needs.

Social care and foster care

2.7 Respondents confirmed the importance of improving the supply, quality and stability of **children's social workers**. Many respondents highlighted:

- the acute problems social workers face, and the excellent work that they do; and
- the negative impact of the current shortages of social workers on outcomes for particularly vulnerable children and young people.

2.8 Respondents welcomed the development of more work-based and fast-track routes for people wanting to qualify and practise as social workers and supported the idea of recognised standards for consultant-level or 'advanced skill' social workers to improve retention. The scope for wider re-modelling of the social care workforce was also noted with a suggestion that we learn the lessons from the re-modelling of the school workforce. There was significant emphasis on the need to ensure employers, managers and supervisors provide appropriate support for front-line social workers.

2.9 The idea of exploring a 'social pedagogue' role attracted relatively few responses. Generally, those who did respond welcomed the principles underpinning the role, but felt that the skills that such a role would need are in fact the same as those needed by a good social worker. There was also some resistance to, and scepticism about, the wisdom of creating a new profession. Rather, it was suggested, that more flexible entry routes into social work and the on-going improvement of post-qualifying development will create a broader social work professional better able to meet fully the needs of children, young people and families.

2.10 Respondents underlined the crucial contribution that **foster carers** make. Many responses focused specifically on the variable quality and availability of support for foster carers, especially in terms of training, allowances, fees, and advice and guidance.

Schools, health services, youth services, and the voluntary and community sector

2.11 Responses acknowledged the importance of engaging **schools** fully in the wider Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme and welcomed the development of extended schools. In this context, and building on the existing commitment to offer support for parents in all schools by 2010, the Government recently announced (in the 2005 Pre-Budget Report) £20 million to support the piloting of a new school-based outreach role – Parent School Advisers – in over 600 primary and secondary schools in the most deprived areas.

2.12 Responses underlined the vital contribution that **health services** can make. General Practitioners, health visitors, school nurses and midwives have a particularly key role in ensuring good outcomes for children and young people, and supporting parents and carers. Responses also highlighted issues like capacity and incentives that impact on health services' ability to integrate delivery with other services such as education and social care.

2.13 Analysis of the responses to the *Youth Matters* consultation, which was launched just before the consultation on the children's workforce strategy closed, suggests widespread support for new ways of integrated working to deliver improved opportunities for young people's personal development and support. The Government will shortly publish its response to the *Youth Matters* consultation including next steps.

2.14 Several responses underlined the crucial contribution of **the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)** to supporting children and young people, and the need for their involvement in local workforce strategies to be explicit. Some respondents address the extent to which the VCS is able to participate in children's trusts, with some suggesting that children's trust arrangements presently are not as open as they should be to voluntary sector involvement.

Resources and priorities

2.15 A recurring theme throughout responses was the need to identify and match resources to particular actions. And although not directly asked about pay or rewards in the consultation, a number of responses expressed a concern that the strategy did not adequately confront issues to do with low rates of pay in certain areas of the workforce, issues to do with competing and/or different terms and conditions, or the need for additional training to be made available. We will examine these issues in light of the Children's Workforce Development Council's report this summer (cf paragraph 1.22).

Regional consultation events

2.16 Views from the 1,000 stakeholders who attended regional consultation events echoed those expressed in written responses, but in addition delegates stressed the importance of:

- identifying ways of bringing people from different services and sectors together to share good ideas and emerging practice as a way of tackling the problems they have in common; and
- involving children and young people, and asking them what they think are the essential characteristics needed in someone who works with them.

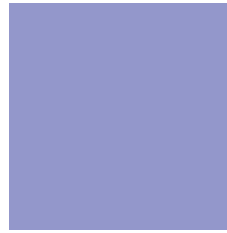
The views of children and young people

2.17 As part of our consultation process, we commissioned 4Children to identify, and report on, the views of a range of children and young people, aged 3–19, from different backgrounds and different areas of England. 277 children and young people from rural and urban areas of England completed a structured questionnaire, containing both closed and open questions. The report is available at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

2.18 The key findings were:

- Children and young people from 5–19 valued being respected above all other qualities (78%)
- Children and young people value adults who listen to them (70%)
- Teachers were remembered by 43% of young people as having had a major impact on their lives
- There was a direct relationship between age and the value accorded to caring – with children under five valuing caring qualities above all others
- In every age group, a majority of children and young people were interested in working with children

3. What we will do now



This chapter sets out what we will do, with our partners, to:

- support the development of local workforce strategies;
- strengthen safeguarding and improve outcomes for looked after children;
- tackle the key strategic challenges. To do this we set out action to:
 - improve recruitment, retention and the quality of practice;
 - bring services together around the needs of children, young people and families; and
 - strengthen leadership, management and supervision;
- make early progress against the immediate sectoral priorities. To do this we set out action to:
 - establish a more professional workforce in the early years; and
 - tackle the problems facing the social care workforce, through Options for Excellence.

Supporting the development of local workforce strategies

The Children's Workforce Strategy underlined the importance of **local workforce strategies** to help local partners develop a clear analysis of the workforce numbers and skills, service re-design and workforce reform required to meet the needs of children and young people in their areas. These strategies will play a vital part in the development of Children and Young People's Plans.

The strategy set out the issues that local workforce strategies would need to address. Respondents recognised the value of such strategies but asked for practical advice and support to help to develop them. This section sets out what has been done in response and summarises plans for greater co-ordination at national level to agree more streamlined workforce planning arrangements in future.

3.1 In preparing Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs), local partnerships need to consider the workforce implications arising from their needs analysis and service delivery plans. Responses to the consultation indicated that:

- those responsible for employing people directly and/or commissioning services wanted more support in thinking through the workforce issues arising; and
- local partnerships would welcome more joining up at the centre, relating in particular to the alignment of targets and the more effective co-ordination of different planning requirements on local areas.

Supporting local workforce strategies

3.2 The Children's Workforce Development Council has worked alongside the Employers' Organisation for local government (EOlg) to provide immediate support for local partnerships as they think about the workforce issues relating to the CYPP.

3.3 Advice on the development and content of a local workforce strategy was published on the internet in December 2005 and is available on the CWDC website (at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk). It includes signposts to specific aspects of support (e.g. good practice examples), provides links to other resources, including those of other CWN members, and holds a check-list of steps to take to develop an effective local strategy.

3.4 Associated consultancy support for this and a range of related subjects is now available via a CWDC-managed network of key regional contacts, who will lead on marketing and embedding good practice in workforce re-modelling. Initial support will be free, with a scale of charges for more intensive or extended support.

3.5 The recent Department of Health publication *A National Framework to Support Local Workforce Strategy Development*² offers additional advice to the NHS and those delivering social care services.

3.6 CWDC, working in partnership with Lifelong Learning UK, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), and others, will update its advice on local workforce strategies later this year to support the further reform and integration of services for teenagers, in light of the response to *Youth Matters*.

3.7 CWDC will support Government Office Directors for Children and Learners in their networking with Directors of Children's Services (DCSs) so that workforce issues are fully addressed. From April 2006 CWDC will promote workshops and networking events, supporting DCSs and other local partners as they clarify planning priorities and think about implementing workforce reform and re-modelling locally.

Streamlining planning arrangements

3.8 The Government understands and supports the call for more alignment at the centre to reduce and streamline demands on local partners. DfES will work with the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, DH, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Department for Trade and Industry (as the sponsor Department for Regional Development Agencies), and the Department for Work and Pensions (as the sponsor of Jobcentre Plus), to agree a simplified, streamlined set of arrangements for strategies covering workforce planning and workforce development across health, social care and children's services. We will undertake a detailed analysis of the current position – by focusing on one specific region – and based on this study will aim to have new arrangements in place by April 2008, supported by a more co-ordinated and streamlined set of field-forces, so that all our partners have greater clarity about both the expectations of Government and the support that is available.

3.9 Annual Performance Assessments and Joint Area Reviews will enable both Government and CWDC to provide more targeted support to areas experiencing significant workforce difficulties. The Priorities Meetings held in November and December 2005 provided an opportunity for local authorities and their partners to discuss local workforce priorities with strategic advisors and Government Office colleagues in the context of delivering national outcomes. From April 2006 Directors for Children and Learners and Children's Services Advisers will provide support and challenge on workforce and other Every Child Matters issues for each local authority in their region. This support will be sensitive to local variation and take account of the specific circumstances, opportunities and difficulties facing each local authority.

² Published on 15 December 2005. Available to download at www.dh.gov.uk.

Strengthening safeguarding and improving outcomes for looked after children

This section sets out action to:

- introduce new legislation to ensure those working with children and young people are safe to do so;
- issue revised *Working Together to Safeguard Children* guidance and provide further support through Allegation Management Advisors;
- increase effectiveness of the workforce in securing better outcomes for looked after children; and
- support foster carers.

3.10 The Government recognises the need to do as much as we can to ensure proper safeguards are in place to protect children and young people from unsuitable adults, whilst accepting that, regrettably, there can be no fail-safe mechanism. It is important that employers play their part in ensuring through appropriate checks that they only employ individuals who are suitable to work with children, in relevant positions.

3.11 In light of Sir Michael Bichard's report, we are legislating to establish a new vetting and barring scheme for those working with children and vulnerable adults. This will complement the next steps on registering the social care workforce being taken forward by the General Social Care Council (GSCC). A number of other measures to further tighten existing safeguards were announced by the Secretary of State on 19 January 2006, and are being taken forward alongside the new legislation.

3.12 *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All*, the recent schools White Paper, re-emphasises that schools have a statutory duty to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This means schools working with other children's services agencies and the new Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to identify concerns, and to take action to safeguard and promote their welfare. Schools need to ensure that their staff have the awareness and training they need to do this.

3.13 We will set out in spring 2006 revised guidance for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across the children's workforce in a new version of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, informed by the recent public consultation exercise. And we are putting in place – from April 2006 – a network of regional Allegations Management Advisors, to help local areas establish effective procedures for handling allegations of abuse against staff.

3.14 LSCBs will have the function of developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including in relation to training of those who work with children or in services affecting the safety and welfare of children. It will be the

responsibility of the LSCB to ensure that training on safeguarding and promoting welfare is provided in order to meet local needs. This covers both the training provided by single agencies to their own staff, and inter-agency training where staff from more than one agency train together. We are now looking at the scope for national bodies, such as CWDC, to support this process by setting standards for inter-agency training, disseminating good practice and commissioning the development of training materials.

3.15 *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* also promises a consultation 'early in 2006 on a more wide-ranging set of proposals for transforming outcomes for looked after children.' As part of its remit the consultation will consider the impact of workforce issues on outcomes for looked after children, and look at whether more might be done to strengthen the role of professionals and carers in improving the life chances of this vulnerable group.

3.16 We know that achieving a step change in life chances for this group will require continued improvements in fostering and residential care. We are currently reviewing both the existing suite of national minimum standards and the variability of support offered to foster carers.

3.17 We are also working with key stakeholders – including local authorities – to develop proposals for a national minimum allowance for foster carers and following the recently published consultation aim to issue a target rate or rates, and associated guidance, in July 2006.

3.18 In addition, CWDC has identified as a priority the need to ensure better support for foster carers. Their business plan will be published in March and key areas of activity will be:

- extending existing national occupational standards and qualifications so that they fully reflect the needs of foster carers;
- developing standards for training pre- and post-approval which will include support to develop specialisms and a very clear emphasis on continuing professional development; and
- contributing to the review of national minimum standards for foster care.

Improving recruitment, retention and the quality of practice

Two key strategic challenges are to improve recruitment into the children's workforce, and to improve retention and the quality of practice. This section sets out action to:

- develop an integrated qualifications framework;
- consider the future link between that framework and employee rewards; and
- disseminate best practice in working with parents and carers through a new national parenting academy.

3.19 The consultation underlined the need for further steps to both recruit and retain people in the children's workforce and also to ensure that people in the workforce are adequately and properly trained. The CWDC and the CWN will have a leading role to play here and will together be responsible for identifying and then promoting good practice in terms of recruitment and retention, multi-agency working, and delivering integrated and effective intervention and support to improve outcomes.

3.20 Whilst respondents felt that recruitment was largely a local issue, for which local solutions need to be found, they welcomed the specific proposal for an integrated framework of qualifications, founded on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge – in effect introducing it into the training and development for the whole children's workforce. Responses recognised the potential for such a framework to help with recruitment, retention and re-modelling of the workforce, by supporting **improved career pathways across and better progression opportunities** within the children's workforce.

3.21 Responses called for a clearer recognition of the need for qualifications to be built on accreditation of both core and specialist skills and knowledge. They also called for the accreditation of prior skills and knowledge to be central to the design of a framework that would support greater mobility and progression.

3.22 Responses also suggested that we should consider carefully the future relationship between an integrated qualifications framework supporting improved career progression and total reward packages. It is of course for employers to make judgments about the rewards they need to offer to recruit and retain people with the required skill, knowledge and flexibility needed for any particular role. Qualifications are only one of the assurances an employer might accept as evidence of a person's suitability. However, we accept the need to consider the future impact of an integrated qualifications framework on the judgements employers will make when devising and revising reward packages and will therefore consider carefully the evidence and recommendations in the CWDC report.

3.23 Our goal is to have in place by 2010 an integrated qualifications framework, which will support more integrated working and make the wide range of occupations in the children's workforce more accessible and easier to progress within and across.

3.24 We recognise the need to ensure that the framework maps across to the DH Knowledge and Skills Framework for the NHS, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) education and training strategic framework, and to the QCA Framework for Achievement. We recognise too the importance of ensuring that the new arrangements work sensibly across the UK.

3.25 The CWN has committed itself to this work. The CWDC will play a leading role in the development of the integrated framework, developing the necessary partnerships with its sister sector skills councils, awarding bodies, professional associations, Trades' Unions, colleges of higher and further education, and training providers.

3.26 A key design principle for the framework will be that qualifications for the workforce must support work-based routes into higher level jobs, including graduate level roles. We want all future qualifications to simplify the recruitment process for employers and open up genuine career opportunities for people to move up, across and between service areas and across sectors – statutory, private or voluntary, from the early years to youth services, across education, social care and health.

3.27 Alongside this document, DfES is publishing a short pamphlet on the design principles and process for creating an integrated qualifications framework. This can be found at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. Later in the spring, CWDC, on behalf of CWN, will publish a detailed implementation plan.

3.28 To improve the **quality of front-line practice**, to encourage a sharper focus on outcomes rather than processes, and to answer the many responses that mentioned the need for better training, we are keen to explore how to make more systematic use of proven, evidence-based interventions, especially in supporting parents and carers.

3.29 We know, for example, that there are fathers, mothers, and carers, who can benefit from **structured, evidence-based and effectively delivered parenting support**. Such programmes have been shown to impact positively on the quality of parent-child relationships, and on children's attainment. They have also shown benefits in tackling challenging behaviour across the spectrum from inattentiveness and hyperactivity through to aggression, violence and destructiveness. There is clear evidence that the level of skill of the individual(s) delivering parenting support programmes has a demonstrable and direct relationship with the outcomes achieved.

3.30 To enable existing professionals to access rigorously evaluated and evidence-based training in specific techniques for supporting parents and carers, delivered by properly qualified trainers, we are exploring ways of developing a **national parenting academy**, which could deliver training in modern evidence-based programmes on working well with parents and carers. Such an approach would have at its heart encouraging professionals to shift from a focus on process 'this is what I do' to outcome 'this is what I am aiming to achieve with the child/parent/family/carer'.

Bringing services together around the needs of children, young people and families

This section sets out action to improve multi-agency working so that services are better integrated around the needs of children, young people and families. This includes:

- implementing the Childcare Bill duties for providers to work together to offer integrated early childhood services which will improve outcomes for young people;
- maximising the opportunities of extended schools;
- developing a workforce with a common core of skills and knowledge;
- progress on trialling a Common Assessment Framework;
- further developments in the lead professional role, including testing a new budget-holding role;
- progress on the cross-Government guidance on *Sharing Information on Children and Young People*; and
- plans to implement an information sharing index.

3.31 Responses to the consultation confirmed the importance of people working together to provide services focused around the needs of children, young people and families. That means inter-agency, interdisciplinary and, where appropriate, co-located services, building on the model offered by both children’s centres and extended schools. It also means reducing the numbers of different assessments undertaken and ensuring that relevant information is shared appropriately and quickly.

3.32 Recent guidance on the new duty to co-operate to promote the well-being of children, on the role of Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members for Children’s Services, and on Children and Young People’s Plans, has set out clear expectations that in every area local authorities and their partners will lead service integration and multi-agency working. Under the Childcare Bill, this will be given a particular focus for the youngest children, as statutory guidance is issued on improving their outcomes by local authorities working with their partners in the NHS, Jobcentre Plus, the private and voluntary sectors and with parents.

3.33 *Higher Standards, Better Schools for All* underlines the need for schools to be part of these new arrangements. It notes that ‘more and more schools are choosing to share their premises with professionals from other agencies, meaning on-site support is available quickly when a problem is identified’.

3.34 Increasingly, workforce development will need to be taken forward jointly particularly as extended schools and children’s centres co-located with schools increase in number. The White Paper underlines this, saying ‘the TDA (Training and Development Agency for Schools) – as a key partner of the new Children’s Workforce Development Council and

member of the Children's Workforce Network – is ideally placed to ensure there is the consistency of approach across the wider children's workforce that our partners on local authorities expect. It will also ensure that the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for all who work with children, young people and families is integral to the development of school staff.'

3.35 Recognising the importance of building a strong relationship between parents and schools, the 2005 Pre-Budget Report announced a £20 million programme to pilot a new Parent Support Adviser role in over 600 primary and secondary schools in the most deprived areas. This new preventative role will support children and families where there are early signs that they could benefit from additional help such as parenting programmes, mentoring for the parent or child, or one-to-one tuition for the child.

3.36 *Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS* published by the Department of Health sets out a new vision for the NHS, with the patient – including children – rather than the professional driving the system. Reformed commissioning arrangements should lead to better needs assessments of children and their families which will in turn require the workforce to adapt to meet these needs.

3.37 As part of the drive to increase the capacity of school health services the Government will publish, in spring 2006, a practical guide for head-teachers – *Looking for a School Nurse?* – which will set out both the benefits and some of the practical considerations that are associated with having a school nurse on-site or assigned to a school, or cluster of schools. School nurses are increasingly members of multi-skilled teams and the move towards integration of services and an increased emphasis on multi-agency working is supporting them to achieve healthy outcomes for children and young people.

Practical support for joined-up working across services

3.38 We are developing, at the national level, a range of practical tools to support local areas in joining up services to children and young people across agency and professional boundaries. To assist local authorities and their partners we will publish in March 2006 an integrated working implementation roadmap setting out how the national tools fit together and offering guidance on coherent implementation, drawing on successful local experience. From April 2006 we are providing increased funding to local authorities through the Children's Services Grant to enable children's trusts, amongst their other change priorities, to fund multi-agency training in areas such as information sharing and common assessment. The CWDC and the CWN will also be able to offer advice and support on joined-up working.

3.39 We have already launched a toolkit on multi-agency working, and guidance for local areas that have chosen to trial the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the lead professional role³. We are now carrying out evaluation work on the implementation of CAF and the lead professional role in 12 local areas, involving a wide variety of sectors including schools, health settings, social services, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions, the Police and substance misuse services. Evaluation of the trials will inform policy development and the revision of CAF materials and the lead professional guidance for national implementation from April 2006.

3.40 Building on the lead professional role currently being trialled, the 2005 Pre-Budget Report set out a proposal to develop a series of Single Account Holder Pathfinders, funded by an additional £10 million over two years, to determine whether a **budget-holding lead professional model** might be implemented more widely. Our aim is to work with 6-10 areas over a two year period to explore how budget-holding by lead professionals could further strengthen their role by giving them additional powers to:

- ensure children, young people and families get the public services they need when they need them; and
- reduce overlap and inconsistency from other practitioners.

3.41 This work, which will begin in June 2006, will introduce a second phase of trialling of the generic lead professional role and will also pilot the budget-holding lead professional role as an integral part of the testing and early implementation strategy for integrated targeted support for young people as set out in the Youth Green Paper.

3.42 To promote effective information sharing as a tool for early intervention, we have recently developed draft cross-Government guidance *Sharing Information on Children and Young People*. Consultation on this draft guidance ended on 15 November 2005 and we expect to publish final guidance in March 2006, supported by training materials on information sharing, and a nationally endorsed local information sharing protocol and privacy statement.

3.43 Since 2003 we have been developing proposals for an information sharing index as an enabling and supporting tool to allow practitioners to identify quickly a child or young person, and see who else is working with them. The index would support better information sharing practice and promote integrated working. Index approaches have been piloted in nine local authority areas. The Government recently announced its decision to proceed to implement an index to support children's services across England by the end of 2008. The Government will work closely with local authorities, other stakeholders, and with representatives of children, young people and families in implementing the index.

³ These materials can be found at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Planning and commissioning

3.44 Children's trust pathfinders and other partners have told us that the joint planning and commissioning process is the most difficult aspect of children's trust arrangements to understand and to implement.

3.45 In response to calls for Government to set out clearly what we mean by joint planning and commissioning, we are publishing a *Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services*. The framework will help managers in a range of local services understand the aims and ambitions underpinning the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme locally, and how joint planning and commissioning can be made to work locally to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

3.46 We are also discussing with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) stakeholders how best to strengthen engagement between the VCS and children's trusts locally. We have set aside £3 million to support this over 2006-08. We are clear, for example, that workforce development and the extension of integrated working locally will not be complete if it does not recognise the actual and potential contribution of the VCS.

3.47 Volunteers need to be part of the equation too. The 2005 Pre-Budget Report recognised the significant contribution that mentoring can make, announcing that a new pilot project will be launched to establish peer mentoring schemes in 180 secondary schools over two years. But, more broadly, local areas will need to think about innovative ways in which they can support and encourage volunteers to help children, young people and families, building on much of the excellent practice that already exists.

Strengthening leadership, management and supervision

This section sets out what we will do to strengthen leadership, management and supervision through:

- the work of Leadership Centres through the Public Services Leadership Consortium;
- a shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours for those leading and managing within integrated services;
- work to improve the quality of front-line management and supervision, especially in children's social care; and
- the development of indicative career pathways.

3.48 Well managed services deliver better outcomes. High staff turnover, which is expensive and demoralising, is strongly associated with poor leadership, management and supervision. People want well-designed jobs, with appropriate support, development, and respect.

3.49 We are working with partners to bring a new coherence and focus to the development of knowledge, skills and competence amongst strategic leaders, operational managers and professional supervisors across children's services.

- We have already developed a National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership. 400 people have started on this post-graduate course this year.
- We have a clear commitment to develop graduate leadership for full day-care settings.
- Building on their work on the National Social Care Leadership and Management Strategy, the CWDC and Skills for Care will work to test a shared unit on supervision which can be used in a range of settings.
- Care Services Improvement Partnership has commissioned two leadership programmes: a national Leadership Programme for Child and Adolescent mental health workers, and a national programme for leadership for NHS professionals working in safeguarding children.
- The establishment of the Leadership Centre for Local Government is developing the next generation of opportunities for local authority leaders, alongside which we have already run an induction and networking programme for new Directors of Children's Services.
- The Social Care Institute for Excellence has developed a Leading Practice programme for social care.
- The National College for School Leadership has transformed the development of school leaders.

3.50 All the existing Leadership Centres are helping to drive forward joint action on leadership development through the Public Services Leadership Consortium. From early this year they will start to benefit from the learning resources and toolkits the Consortium is preparing. These will further promote integrated leadership development in the children's workforce.

3.51 Next is the implementation of a shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours for those leading and managing within integrated children's services. We have already developed, with a wide range of partners, the *Championing Children*⁴ prospectus. This is being tested in a sample of local authority areas and, subject to any necessary revision from the testing phase, will be integrated into existing development opportunities across all services from next year. To complement this we are asking the CWN to consider what also needs to be done to enhance the development of the particular knowledge and skills required of those leading, managing and supervising in specialist services.

4 Available at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/championingchildren

3.52 Our ambition is to ensure that those running specialist services have the essential core knowledge of their own service, and the necessary skill to integrate their work with that of other services to ensure that the total package of services for each child is coherent and easy to access.

3.53 One area we will examine urgently is promoting better front-line supervision for the workforce dealing with the most vulnerable children including those who are looked after, children in need of protection and disabled children with complex needs. One of the reasons social workers leave is that they do not feel sufficiently protected and supported in difficult situations by good supervisors. We would therefore expect a partnership across the Employers' Organisation for local government, the CWDC and Skills for Care to make the development of leadership and supervision skills in social care a top priority.

3.54 To demonstrate the coherence and focus of these various elements of the reform process we will ensure that this work is reflected in the development of improved career pathways. This will form part of the work on the integrated qualifications framework and will show how, over the next few years, we will connect more closely the core skills, knowledge and values required in front-line practice to those expected in a professional supervisory role, an operational management role and a strategic leadership role.

Establishing a more professional workforce in the early years

The Government's aim is to help to develop a more professional early years' workforce so that we raise the status of working with pre-school children. This section sets out how we will support this through:

- developing a new Early Years Professional role for those leading children's centres and full day care settings⁵, including work- and study-based routes to gaining this status; and
- significant new investment through the Transformation Fund to improve the qualification levels of both those leading settings and the workforce as a whole, without passing the cost to parents.

3.55 Evidence from the *Effective Provision of Pre-School Education* project shows that the quality of the early years' experience is directly related to better outcomes for children. Key factors contributing to the quality of this experience are leaders with higher qualifications, trained teachers working alongside and supporting less qualified staff, and staff with a good understanding of child development and learning.

⁵ By full day care we mean facilities that provide day care for children under eight for a continuous period of four hours or more in any day on premises which are not domestic premises, and which have been registered as such by Ofsted. Under proposals in the Childcare Bill, which is currently before Parliament, such provision will be known as early years settings and later years settings.

3.56 Responses to the consultation welcomed the proposal to introduce clear professional roles in children's centres and full day care settings. Responses also supported the ambition to develop a more highly qualified workforce generally.

3.57 The CWDC and the TDA are working together to draw up a standard for the skills, knowledge and practice experience to be required of someone taking a leading role in the delivery of high quality provision in children's centres and full day care settings. In doing so, they have advised that we need to have in place, by the end of 2006, a robust process for conferring the status of Early Years Professional (EYP) on those who can demonstrate the required standard. Further work is now in hand to:

- define fully the standard of skill, knowledge and practice experience required for the EYP role;
- clarify the extent to which those skills, knowledge and practice experience requirements are met already by those most likely to want to take on the EYP role, including those trained as teachers, community nurses or social workers, and those in practice currently with early years, childhood development and play related qualifications; and
- develop proposals for additional training solutions for those whose existing skills, knowledge and practice experience need some further development to demonstrate the EYP standard.

3.58 CWDC will publish a short web-based statement setting the scene for the first phase of this work. This will be available at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/earlyyears in February. Specific proposals for further consultation will then follow in the spring; and a full prospectus will be published in June 2006.

3.59 Following publication of their proposals, CWDC and the TDA will work closely with existing early years' practitioners and employers, higher education institutions (HEIs) and students to refine details of the core skills, knowledge and practice experience required to lead practice in early years' settings. These requirements, along with the range of training options available to acquire them, will then be confirmed in the prospectus. In parallel this work will inform reviews of relevant foundation and full degrees, including the Early Years Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree itself. Teacher training will also be reviewed to ensure it meets the requirements for the early years. All occupational and professional standards will reflect the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge as well as meeting the additional requirements for early childhood development and working with parents and carers.

3.60 The establishment of a standard for the professional skills, knowledge and practice experience to be required of someone taking a co-ordinating role will help bring coherence and structure to workforce development across the early years, and will dovetail with the development of the integrated qualifications framework. It will articulate a clear ambition

for career progression routes which enable the sector to 'grow its own' professionals. This will meet the strong desire amongst employers and early years' workers alike for work-based routes into a professional cadre for those already committed to the sector. They will also open up routes into early years' practice at a professional level for school leavers via undergraduate study and for those currently employed in related sectors such as education, health, culture, sport, play and social care.

3.61 This work to develop a cadre of EYPs will be supported by the Transformation Fund which is intended to improve the quality of provision in the early years, without passing the cost to parents. In 2006-08, the Fund will be used to:

- stimulate the supply of EYPs through:
 - the development and delivery of appropriate training routes both for those currently working in the sector and those wishing to join it in the future;
 - covering the costs of fees, bursaries and supply cover for those training from within the sector;
- provide a recruitment incentive for full day care settings in the private and voluntary sectors to employ graduate professional leaders for the first time on condition that the leader of professional work in the setting has attained the new EYP status by September 2008 at the latest;
- provide a quality premium for settings with an existing level 5 or level 6 professional leader, on condition that the leader of professional work in the setting has attained EYP status within two years of the award of the premium and that the setting invests in the training and development of its non-graduate staff to help improve the quality of provision in the setting;
- enable a higher proportion of the early years workforce to be trained to level 3 and above; and
- train more staff to work with disabled children and those with SEN.

3.62 We can therefore confirm that we will aim to have EYPs in all children's centres offering early years provision by 2010 and in every full day care setting by 2015. In addition, building on the responses to the strategy consultation, we will aim to secure a higher proportion of the workforce in all settings qualified to at least level 3 by 2008. We will be asking CWDC to advise us, by September 2006, on appropriate strategies and targets to secure this ambition.

3.63 These reforms will contribute to both improving outcomes and narrowing inequalities in life chances for children. Young children will enjoy improved provision; parents will have greater confidence in and reassurance about the quality of the service. A more professional workforce will play a key role in helping to deliver the single quality framework for children from birth to five, the Early Years Foundation Stage, which we

proposed in our ten year strategy for childcare. It will also contribute significantly towards the future requirement on local authorities to improve outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage and to reduce inequalities between the level of development achieved by children with the poorest outcomes and the rest.

3.64 Increased status will also help to enhance existing employee motivation and job satisfaction and attract new people to the profession – creating a virtuous circle of enhanced quality of care for children and improved outcomes.

Tackling the problems facing the social care workforce, through Options for Excellence

This section sets out what we will do to tackle the problems facing social and foster care through the work of the Options for Excellence Review. It describes:

- the key questions and issues being examined by the Review; and
- what the Review will deliver.

3.65 Responses to the consultation, whilst welcoming and endorsing the propositions made to improve supply, stability and quality, suggested the need for a full and considered review of the social work and social care workforce. Ministers in DfES and DH – recognising the central importance of the social care workforce to the delivery of both the Every Child Matters: Change for Children and *Independence, Well-being and Choice* agendas – announced on 21 July 2005 the establishment of a joint review of the workforce, Options for Excellence.

3.66 Options for Excellence has been tasked by Ministers with bringing forward specific recommendations to:

- increase the supply of qualified social workers, social care workers and foster carers;
- define the role(s) of qualified social workers and ensure the fit between the role(s) and training and qualifications requirements;
- improve the quality of social work practice; and
- develop the wider social care workforce and links with related child and adult services to improve career opportunities and service standards.

3.67 The Review will consider the long-term trends in needs, industry and market development and assistive/medical technology, user-managed care and new models of service delivery. It will assess the workforce reforms needed to ensure that services are able to meet the challenge of being both personalised and service-user led, and safeguard the well-being of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities, including identifying any particular issues associated with serving particular client groups, such as children or families.

3.68 The Review will seek to answer a range of questions, drawing on both international comparisons and lessons to be learned from other public sector modernisation programmes, assessing the fit between social care today and that likely to be needed in the future, including:

- **What should only social workers do?** The Review will ask if the training and qualifications structures adequately address the challenge of the different roles undertaken by social workers, across a variety of settings and sectors. It will consider whether we are making most appropriate use of social workers; and, more fundamentally, what more needs to be done to ensure that social workers are not distracted by tasks that do not require their specialist skills.
- **What more is possible to attract and retain people into social work?** Building on the current recruitment campaign and recent developments such as the creation of the new 3-year degree (over 7,000 starters in its first two years), registration of the workforce by GSCC (with over 77,000 social workers, including students, now registered) and Protection of Title, the Review will focus on more flexible routes in for existing graduates and for existing/potential support-level staff to pursue work-based routes, and promote the entry of mature people. The Review will also ask how improvements in leadership, management, supervision, rewards, regulation and continuing post-qualifying development could enhance retention.
- **How do we support the wider social care workforce?** The Review will explore how changes in training and development, career opportunities, registration and regulation could improve standards within social care services and stability within the workforce delivering those services. This will include exploring options for ensuring we have a workforce, at all levels, that reflects the diversity of people using social care services.

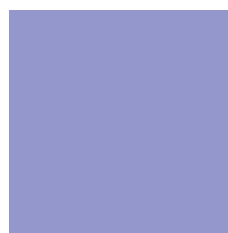
3.69 The Review will also consider what cost models would support reform and what timetable should be recommended to deliver change. It will look at how to strengthen user and carer engagement in developing the workforce.

3.70 The Review will take account of the Children's Workforce Strategy and the recent DH White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services*, and the Government's forthcoming statutory guidance, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

3.71 Options for Excellence will deliver:

- analysis of the economic and social case for social care services, to help inform the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review, drawing out the contribution that social care services make to the achievement of wider Government objectives, notably, health and well-being, educational attainment and participation in the labour market, to inform and support discussions with HM Treasury;
- by September 2006, a worked-up vision of the workforce to 2020 with a long-term implementation plan.

4. Action Plan: milestones, key actions and outcomes for the strategy to 2015



When?	Who will do what?	What will the impact be?
Winter 2005/ Spring 2006	CWDC have published advice on devising & implementing an Integrated Local Children's Services Workforce Strategy	Improved support to those drawing up Children and Young People's Plans. Available at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk
	DH White Paper <i>Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services</i> , published 30 January 2006	Health and social care services provided closer to home by professionals working together around the needs of patients and service-users rather than providers; presenting both an opportunity and a challenge to local areas to ensure effective joint commissioning arrangements are in place across children's services
Summer/ Autumn 2006	CWDC business plan and CWN work plan published	Clarity as to the priorities, roles and responsibilities of both the Council and the Network
	DfES publishes its response to Youth Matters	Improved opportunities and services for young people; clarity for local authorities and their partners on the framework for delivery of more integrated services for young people and the workforce implications
	DfES publishes revised version of Working Together to Safeguard Children	Updated guidance available on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will support co-operation between local services
	Integrated Qualifications Framework implementation plan published by CWDC	A public commitment by key delivery partners to develop the Framework, providing clarity on milestones, roles and responsibilities
Summer/ Autumn 2006	Children and Young People's Plans published, including consideration of workforce implications, in all local authority areas	Improved service design, based on clear understanding of local needs and existing workforce capacity, focused on delivery around the needs of children, young people and families
	Revised lead professional and CAF guidance published by DfES. Cross-Government guidance on information sharing published	All local areas will have access to standard processes to support joined-up working across services and professions for children with additional needs. Information sharing will be facilitated by clarification of what is legal and effective practice

When?	Who will do what?	What will the impact be?
Summer/ Autumn 2006	CWDC to publish updated advice on devising & implementing an Integrated Local Children's Services Workforce Strategy	Local workforce planners will have access to differentiated support to help their planning of their April 07 Children & Young People's Plans; CWDC will work in partnership with Directors for Children and Learners, Directors of Children's Services and regional field forces. To be made available at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk
	DfES publishes proposals to improve outcomes for looked after children	Proposals to deliver a step-change in outcomes for looked after children, including the role of commissioners, providers of children's services and foster carers
	A vision of the social care workforce to 2020 developed by the DH/DfES Options for Excellence review	Focus given to further reform in social work, social care and foster care
	Models of targeted youth support teams developed within wider DfES Youth Matters framework	Local areas will have access to examples of how to configure services and people to provide better more integrated support for young people
	Report on impact of reward packages on recruitment and retention published by CWDC	Improved understanding of the way in which pay and other elements of the total rewards package affect employers' ability to recruit and retain staff, including the impact of the introduction of an integrated qualifications framework
	Early Years prospectus published by CWDC and TDA	Higher education institutions and other training providers will be able to develop training solutions to equip new and existing early years' workers with the additional skill and knowledge to attain EYP status
	CWDC publishes advice on strategy to increase numbers of staff in the Early Years with level 3 qualifications	Further driver to improve service delivery and so outcomes for children
	DfES field-testing of Championing Children complete	Lessons drawn to inform further reform of leadership development

When?	Who will do what?	What will the impact be?
	First EYPs in place, funded through the Transformation Fund	Improved outcomes for children attending children's centres offering childcare
	A higher proportion of the early years' workforce qualified to at least level 3, following Transformation Fund investment	Improved outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage and reduced inequalities between the level of development achieved by children with the poorest outcomes and the rest
2007-8	Children's Workforce Network establishes common baselines for workforce data	Common baselines will mean changes to the workforce caused by workforce reforms can be measured more easily and accurately. This should improve collections of workforce data relating to ethnicity, gender, age and disability. These results will inform local and national policy developments from April 07
	Children's trusts arrangements in place in all areas	Improved service design, based on clear understanding of local needs and existing workforce capacity, focused on delivery around the needs of children, young people and families
	All areas will have completed a Joint Area Review	Lessons drawn to drive further reform and improvement in service delivery

When?	Who will do what?	What will the impact be?
2008-2010	CAF and lead professional role implemented in every local authority	There will be professionals in each service for children confident and competent to operate established multi-agency processes which lead to earlier and more effective intervention delivering improved outcomes for children and young people with additional needs
	CWN to incorporate the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge into National Occupational Standards for the workforce	Better integrated working, based on workers with common knowledge and understanding, leading to better outcomes for children, young people and families
	Information Sharing Index rolled out	All practitioners working with children and young people will be able to identify quickly a child with whom they have contact whether that child is receiving the universal services to which he or she is entitled; and be enabled to communicate more easily and work more closely with other practitioners involved with the child. This will support earlier and more effective intervention delivering improved outcomes for children with additional needs, and better safeguarding
	Integrated qualifications framework in place	Simplified structure to support workforce development and individual career pathways
	Streamlined workforce planning demands and field-force rationalisation complete	Simplified planning arrangements for children's trusts
	Third of all secondary schools are extended schools, including access to a range of support services	Improved access for children, young people and families to key support services and a wider range of childcare and extra-curricular activity
2015	Early Years Professionals in all 3,500 children's centres offering childcare	Improved outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage and reduced inequalities between the level of development achieved by children with the poorest outcomes and the rest
	Early Years Professionals in every full day care setting	Improved outcomes for children at the end of the Foundation Stage and reduced inequalities between the level of development achieved by children with the poorest outcomes and the rest

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