



## **Daycare Trust response to the Children's Workforce Strategy update – Spring 2007**

### **1 Should we do more on integrating the youth and children's workforces?**

Yes, but there also needs to be recognition of the differences between the different workforces. The common core of skills should reflect both the differences and similarities between the two sectors. However there does need to be some cross-over between the two sectors, and with CWDC and Skills Active. For example play workers will work with 4-11 year olds in out of school clubs, which will traverse both the early years and play agendas. Any additional training or qualification required would depend on the person's current and future job. For example, someone moving from an out of school club for 5-11 year olds to a youth worker would need some additional training, whereas someone moving from a youth worker to an early years worker would require substantial new learning and development.

### **2 Should we develop the agenda on Parenting?**

Yes. Parenting support is very important for **every** parent. This must not solely be focused on those parents or children 'at risk' but must be available and accessible to all parents. It will be essential to have good outreach attached to parenting services so that all parents can engage with the agenda, and do not feel threatened or judged as part of the programme.

### **3 What should be the future role for Sector Skills Councils in promoting workforce reform?**

Daycare Trust believes that the SSCs need appropriate responsibility and funding opportunity (to pass onto practitioners) to shape their area of the workforce. Daycare Trust believes that CWDC, in consultation with practitioners and partners, should have the influence and responsibility it needs at government level to be able to put into place the developments needed for the workforce. For example, currently there are debates surrounding the relative status, pay and conditions of early years professionals and qualified teachers. (see more below)

There is a lack of clarity in the role of the 'early years professional'. Daycare Trust welcomes the recommendation that job holders with Early Years Practitioner (EYP) status need to be evaluated to ensure 'fair reward'. However there are concerns that there needs to be a more consistently applied role definition with greater clarity of the relationship between QTS (a high proportion of whom have no birth to three experience) and EYP status staff. There also needs to be long-term consistent strategies on how to

implement this in the mixed market of the childcare and early years sector. Without this clarity there are concerns that it will be difficult to attract professionals to the EYP status.

Daycare Trust is concerned that issues of pay and conditions of service continue to be a barrier to a truly integrated workforce. More work is needed as it is clear that there is a link between pay, qualifications and workforce retention. Particularly in the early years, we are concerned that *'pay is low compared even to others in the children's workforce and this is compounded, in some instances, by unattractive terms and conditions, especially for workers in non-maintained settings'* (CWDC advice to DfES, October 2006). Any integration and reform of the workforce **must** address these issues seriously if reform is to be successful. In the early years, this must take into account the models of PVI and maintained settings, and the cost must not be passed onto parents, who already struggle with the cost of early education and care. An across the board review of childcare subsidy may well be needed to achieve this.

As qualifications have been repeatedly shown to improve quality and child outcomes, (eg the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education study and Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative evaluation) this should be improved across the board. Daycare Trust, in common with the CWDC, strongly recommends that Level 3 be set as the minimum qualification level for the early years, with graduate leaders in all group settings. The consultation document states that *'the number and proportion of those with Level 3 qualifications continues to increase'*. However, we still have yet to reach the national standards of all managers and supervisors at Level 3 and half of all other staff at Level 2 (DfES Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2005). Daycare Trust believes that there needs to be more funding and training available to support the upskilling of the workforce, in addition to higher national standards.

Daycare Trust also believes that we need to develop a culture of continuing professional development within the childcare and early years sector, as this is another important element in achieving quality. Continuing professional development is a key requirement of many professions in the children's workforce, and should be the same for the early years.

We need to have long-term funding in order to achieve workforce reform. This is particularly important in the early education and care PVI sector, which tends to have lower staff qualification levels. The CWDC must ensure that there is long term funding to support long term changes. This may require an extension of schemes such as the Transformation Fund, for which the current length of funding has been too short for many settings to engage properly in the workforce reform opportunities. Daycare Trust recommends that there be confirmation about future funding as soon as possible so that opportunities for workforce reform are not lost and that local authorities are given greater flexibility to use funds to intervene and improve quality and skills where necessary.

As mentioned above, there will also need to be improvements in pay, status and conditions to truly achieve workforce reform. Again, this is pertinent to the PVI sector, who tend to have lower pay and status.

#### **4 Should the *Refresh* consider how best local change can inform and influence national developments?**

Daycare Trust believes that it is important for any workforce update to state national priorities and also identify local good practice that is helping workforce reform to happen. For example, the Transformation Fund was administered by local authorities, and different areas had differing approaches (and success-rates) to promoting and using the Fund. Good practice identified through this should be shared and built upon.

Likewise, given the low numbers of men, disabled people and people from black and minority ethnic groups in the early years workforce, local authorities could usefully share good practice about the recruitment of these groups.

#### **5 How might we develop the calibre and diversity of the young people's workforce - including ways in which we could take forward the professional development of managers, leaders and future leaders and introduce programmes to boost the recruitment of new talent into the sector at different levels?**

The professional development of private and voluntary sector managers and leaders also needs to be considered. Through our work with providers, we are constantly told that business skills are essential for nursery and early years managers, and consideration should be given to how to facilitate this.

#### **6 How do we ensure that we develop the capacity across the voluntary and community sector to ensure that the workforce, including the many volunteers, have the necessary skills to work with young people from a diverse range of circumstances and backgrounds?**

Daycare Trust believes it is essential that any funding, such as the Transformation Fund, has a strand that can help train and develop volunteers. Given volunteers are such a crucial part of the children and young people's workforce, we need to help them feel valued and part of the whole workforce. With the Transformation Fund in particular, we believe that the training on disability, race equality and English as an Additional Language, will be very important to volunteers. In addition, many workers start as volunteers and then become paid staff as they gain experience. They too need access to training and qualifications, in particular the relevant Level 2 and 3 qualifications.

The voluntary and community sector must also not be seen as a 'cheap option', but valued in the same way as the maintained and private sector. Voluntary and community groups will have overheads, as with other sectors, such as management committees, and these costs should be recognised in any funding arrangements.

## **7 How could we better support the delivery of Integrated Working?**

As mentioned above, Daycare Trust is concerned that the current issues of pay and conditions are a barrier to integrated working. This is difficult to address in the childcare and early years sector, as there is a mixed market, with maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers. Even if the solution to these difficulties needs to be implemented over a longer period of time, we recommend that a plan for the development of pay and conditions for all early years staff is made clear. The early years workforce needs to know that this is being considered and will be delivered, even if not immediately.

## **8 You may, of course, have other issues you would like to see included in the Refresh? We are keen to have your views.**

Daycare Trust believes that there needs to be further mention of teachers and schools staff in the document. They are part of the children's workforce and need to be seen as such.

**Daycare Trust**  
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