

Report Title: **Children's Workforce Strategy**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): N/A

Report of: Director of the Children's Service

Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: Information

### **1. Purpose**

This paper:

- introduces the Government's Children's Workforce Strategy;
- explains what Haringey needs to have in place by April 2006; and
- notes what has been done to date.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 CSAC is asked to note the content of this report and to comment on the draft vision for the Children's Workforce

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### **3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 As part of the Change for Children Programme the Government has an ambition to develop and reform the workforce working with children and young people.
- 3.2 The aim is to improve the skills and quality of the workforce and to make working in services for children and young people more attractive so improving the recruitment

and retention of staff.

3.3 In 2005 the Government issued a draft strategy for consultation. The consultation period has closed and children's services authorities now need to respond to this initiative.

3.4 This report gives information about this Government initiative and developments in Haringey to date.

#### **4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)**

Need to develop a strategy in response to the Government's initiative on reforming the children's workforce by April 2006.

#### **5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

5.1 The Children's Workforce Strategy: Building a World-Class Workforce for Children, Young People and Families – Consultation document April 2005

5.2 The Children's Workforce Strategy: Building a World-Class Workforce for Children, Young People and Families - The Government's Response to the Consultation February 2006

5.3 Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce 2005

5.4 Common Assessment Framework for Children and Young People (CAF).

## **6. Background – What is the Children's Workforce Strategy?**

6.1 The Children's Workforce Strategy was launched for consultation by DfES on 1 April 2005. The strategy sets out the Government's vision for the Children's Workforce and the national and local actions that are needed to realise this vision. There has been some debate inevitably over what constitutes the 'Children's Workforce'. Government guidance defines the term by listing the services that the Children's Workforce provides: 'The principal services used by children, young people and families are early years and childcare, play, health, schools and colleges, youth work, sport and leisure, family support and children's social care, as well as a wide range of specialist services.'

6.2. The four broad strategic challenges set out in the document include:

- Recruiting more people into the children's workforce;
- Developing and retaining more people within the children's workforce;
- Strengthening inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working; and
- Promoting stronger leadership, management and supervision.

6.3 The strategy was published alongside several linked documents: the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce; draft guidance on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF); and a consultation document on the role of Lead Professional.

6.4 Together these initiatives should ensure better communication across professional and organisational boundaries throughout the entire children's workforce and equip

the workforce with a basic common core of skills and knowledge to enable them to deliver quality, well co-ordinated and consistent children's services.

6.5 The Government recently published a response to its consultation. In the response it announced the following key actions:

- To build an integrated qualifications framework, based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge that will help improve career pathways 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;
- To develop new roles and new opportunities at graduate level in the early years' workforce.
- To use the joint DfES/DH Options for Excellence review to agree the challenges and way forward for social work and social care;
- To support the development of local workforce strategies.

6.6 It also announced a new Transformation Fund to:

- stimulate the supply of Early Years' Professionals through the development, delivery and accreditation of appropriate training routes and by covering the costs of fees, bursaries, mentoring and supply cover;
- provide a recruitment incentive for full day care settings in the private and voluntary sectors to employ graduate professional leaders for the first time;
- provide a quality premium for settings with an existing level 5 or level 6 professional leader to support the training and development of non-graduate staff;
- enable a higher proportion of the early years workforce to be trained to level and above; and
- train more staff to work with disabled children and those with SEN.

6.7 We understand that further details of the Transformation Fund will be set out in guidance to be issued by early March.

### **What we need to have in place by April 2006**

6.8 By the end of April 2006 every local authority area will need to have in place an initial Children's Workforce Strategy. The strategy will be for the entire Children's Workforce across all agencies working with children and young people and will need wider ownership as it is developed and rolled-out.

- 6.9 The strategy will cover a number of different strands of work - some for immediate action, some for future development.
- 6.10 There is no expectation that the content of our strategy should have been delivered by April. What we do need to have in place is a strategy that shows how the areas identified within the Government guidance are going to be addressed in Haringey. Broadly, these areas are:
- A process for analysing service users' needs of the Children's Workforce in Haringey;
  - A process for analysing the local and regional labour market;
  - A process for determining whether the Children's Workforce currently has the capacity to deliver all services required, and to establish need for future growth;
  - A process for auditing the current skills of our Children's Workforce (training audit) and the resources currently expended on workforce training;
  - The development of Joint training events and a skills training programme for the Children's Workforce (to include Common Core of Skills, Common Assessment Framework, development of Lead Professionals);
  - A process for developing a joined-up recruitment and retention strategy based on Children's Workforce Strategy materials; and
  - Clear plans for consulting on the strategy.

### **What we have done to date**

- 6.11 A steering group was established last autumn to raise multi-agency awareness of the need to develop a Children's Workforce Strategy. The steering group has representation from across relevant parts of the Council including the Children's Service, YOS, HR, OD&L and Economic Regeneration and partners such as PCT police, Connexions, LSC, voluntary sector etc.
- 6.12 Having considered the job to be done and in light of the Government guidance, the steering group decided to separate the work to develop a Children's Workforce Strategy into five component workstreams that together cover the substantive content of paragraph 6.10 above:
- Developing our vision for the Children's Workforce in Haringey
  - Needs Analysis (service users, workforce (capacity, growth), labour markets)
  - CAF and Lead Professional development
  - Training Analysis (current skills, training audit, current spend, development of training programme/training events, Common Core of Skills)
  - Recruitment and Retention (linked strategies)
- 6.13. The steering group also agreed that logically the first two areas set out in 6.9 above needed to be tackled first. This would help us to clarify both the end goal and our baseline starting position. At the same time it was agreed that we needed to move quickly on the third area set out in 6.12 – rolling out the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional guidance in Haringey. This last issue is the subject of a separate report to CSAC.

6.14 Two sub-groups were established to make rapid progress on developing the vision for the children's workforce and to manage the collection and collation of available data about the current Children's Workforce in Haringey. The '**Vision**' group has produced a draft vision (see Annex A) for the Children's Workforce that includes:

- an explanation as to why the strategy is being created;
- a definition of what we want the Children's Workforce to deliver for children, young people and their families in Haringey; and.
- the professional competencies that staff working within the Children's Service, and the wider Children's Workforce, will need to have/develop.

6.15 The '**Data**' group is working to produce:

- a preliminary needs analysis of service users drawing on the needs assessment prepared to support the development of the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-9;
- a list of the professionals who make up the Haringey Children's Workforce – supplemented by our own definition of the term 'Children's Workforce';
- a table showing the total number of people in our Children's Workforce;
- wherever possible, identification of services delivered by private and voluntary/community sector;
- wherever possible, identification of gaps in current workforce – in terms of both skills and numbers; and
- a preliminary analysis of the local Labour Market.

6.16 A data-gathering questionnaire has been sent out to relevant agencies in Haringey asking for a wide range of information about the current children's workforce. The vision statement once agreed, the product of the data group, the project plan for the implementation of the Common Assessment Framework and the Lead Professional guidance and our initial thinking on recruitment and retention are all being brought together into an initial Children's Workforce Strategy that will be available in draft in March. This will give us an initial strategy in advance of Government timescales that can then be consulted on and developed further during the course of the next year. The expectation from Government is that workforce strategies will be kept under regular review. It is suggested that the initial Children's Workforce Strategy should be brought back to a future meeting of CSAC for information and discussion.

## **7 Recommendations**

7.1 You are invited to note the content of this report and to comment on the draft vision for the Children's Workforce.

## **8 Comments of the Director of Finance**

8.1 The financial implications of the Children's Workforce Strategy have not yet been quantified. Any additional costs will need to be dealt with as part of the Council's normal budgetary and planning procedures. There are no immediate financial implications associated with the development of the strategy.

## **9 Comments of the Head of Legal Services**

9.1 The proposed recommendations and actions put forward appear to have no adverse issues to consider in terms of any unlawful acts or breaches of employment or education legislation, at the present time.

9.2 When considering how to develop and reform the workforce working with children and young people the following requirements need to be borne in mind:

9.2.1 to undertake Criminal Record Bureaux checks;

9.2.2 the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply in terms of obligations placed on individuals to disclose criminal offences, pending prosecutions, cautions or convictions relating to young people on application forms and;

9.2.3 Haringey's internal policies in relation to recruitment of employees working with children and young people.

## **10 Equalities Implications**

10.1 The overall aim of the workforce developments is to attract more people into work with children and young people and to improve the skills of the workforce. This development should impact on equalities in two ways. By improving skills, those working with children and young people should become better aware of equalities issues and their impact and how to respond to them sensitively. Attracting more people to work with children and young people will hopefully encourage more people from different backgrounds and circumstances to apply to join the children's workforce.

## Annex A

### Workforce Development Strategy

#### Developing the vision

1. The Government's vision is of a world-class workforce that:
  - strives to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people;
  - is competent and confident;
  - 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/carers, children and young people trust and respect.
2. The national Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce sets out the basic skills and knowledge needed to enable effective multi-disciplinary working (including by volunteers). The skills and knowledge are described under six main areas:
  - Effective communication and engagement with children, young people and families;
  - Child and young person development;
  - Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child;
  - Supporting transitions;
  - Multi-agency working; and
  - Sharing information.
3. In Haringey, our aspiration is that every member of the children and young people's workforce will:
  - have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to carry out their roles and responsibilities to the highest standards;
  - demonstrate an awareness of the diversity of our community and know what that means for the ways in which they will work with children, young people, families and colleagues;
  - keep the child or young person at the centre of their focus and to base decisions and interventions on the best available evidence;
  - know how to listen to children, young people and families and to reassure them that their views have been heard;
  - know how to communicate with children, young people and families that demonstrates respect and an appropriate understanding of their needs;
  - be committed to collaboration and partnership working with colleagues within and beyond the Children's Service;
  - have the confidence to challenge appropriately and to be challenged in order to provide better outcomes for children, young people and families.
  - be aware of their own professional competencies and limitations and to prioritise their own professional development to ensure that they are able to respond to changing service requirements.

4. This vision will shape the continued development of the children and young people's workforce in Haringey. The Children's Service was established, with the support of the partners of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership on the basis of a number of aims for improving outcomes for children and young people. The service exists so that children and young people in Haringey:
  - are better safeguarded from harm;
  - have improved opportunities to develop and reach their potential;
  - receive support earlier if they experience difficulties; and
  - are able to access services faster due to better links between services.
5. Every member of the children and young people's workforce has the right to be clear about what is expected of them in their role and how they will be supported in their practice. The vision will be translated into practice through the workforce development strategy.
6. The Children's and young people's workforce consists of staff with great diversity in terms of experience, knowledge, skills, training, policies, practice and procedures, pay conditions and professional behaviours. These will continue to be essential to the delivery of high quality specialist services. The workforce development strategy will bring these strengths together and enable the organisation to develop the additional skills, knowledge and behaviours that will deliver our vision for children and young people.
7. This will provide an opportunity to develop new roles and professions and for staff to experience different ways of working. This may mean both inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary working with colleagues across all the agencies working with children, young people and families. Many staff have transferable skills that may be used in different settings and the strategy will support them to explore different career pathways.
8. Work will place with the different training providers to identify and maximise the possibilities for common accreditation of training and professional development. Training routes may continue to be different, but as a minimum, staff should expect to receive training that is consistent with the aspirations for the children and young people's workforce. This will be supported by initiatives at national policy level to relation develop common training for the children and young people's workforce.
9. The establishment of Children's Networks will be central to the delivery of the five ECM outcomes for children. The networks will facilitate inter-agency and multi-disciplinary working and provide opportunities to develop different ways of working together to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. The work of each network will be based on a thorough analysis of the needs of the local community, including the particular challenges of high levels of mobility and transience into and within Haringey. Therefore the context and needs within networks will change and evolve and the workforce development strategy will ensure that services are responsive to these changes. Wherever possible, we want the children and young people's workforce to reflect the local population in Haringey.
10. The workforce will continue to be based upon the specialist areas of skill and expertise that are currently held by staff. The intention is not to create a workforce of staff with



generic skills who can do everything. However, we will consider how to establish a broad base of understanding across staff and managers that will enable them to manage and contribute to partnership working. These will focus on the major policy frameworks underpinning the health, education and social care of children and young people. Examples of this might include:

- ensuring that all staff have an understanding of the Framework of Assessment;
- ensuring that all staff understand the principles of Working Together To Safeguard Children;
- ensuring that all staff are aware of the framework for delivering education, including the National Curriculum framework, key stage transitions and national testing and examination systems.

Staff at all levels will be supported through the strategy to understand the relevance of these frameworks for children and young people and the implications for their own role and practice. An example of this could be decisions taken about the timing of a care placement of a child/young person in relation to critical points in their education.

11. The strategy will ensure that managers are able to support their teams to deliver the vision for the service. The composition of teams may change and may include from staff from different disciplines and experience and the strategy will also include principles for the ensuring that the specialist aspects of the service continue to be subject to proper scrutiny and accountability.
12. The delivery of the vision for the Children's Service will be supported by change at every level. Our strategy will ensure that these changes are planned and managed at an appropriate pace and that the needs of children, young people and families are kept as our central focus. The strategy will change and adapt in line with the planned priorities outcomes for children and young people and families.