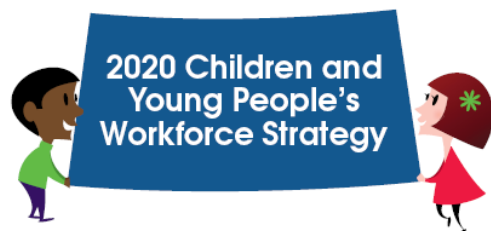department for
children, schools and families

2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy: Evidence & Knowledge Management

A Report for the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy Expert Group by the CWDC, NCSL & TDA

2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy

December 2008

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2020 Children's Workforce Strategy: Evidence & Knowledge Management

1.   Introduction

This paper has been produced in order to propose an approach to knowledge gathering and management[1] which will best inform the implementation of a strategic programme of effective workforce reform. Specifically, it draws on a synthesis of the CWDC, NCSL and TDA responses to the Evidence Papers submitted previously to the Expert Group, and includes the following:

1. An overview of what the submissions to the Expert Group reveal about what is known about the children's workforce.
2. Identification of key gaps in knowledge, and prioritisation of those needing to be addressed as priorities through the 2020 strategy and its implementation.
3. Identification of planned or ongoing knowledge management activity.
4. Recommendations about how to address the key gaps in knowledge.

For the purposes of conciseness, the themes addressed by the Evidence Papers have been grouped and presented in each section as detailed below:

- Workforce Demographics, Skills, Capacity and Roles
- Joint / Integrated Working
- Effective Interventions

Where sufficient evidence exists / has been made available, the information is provided in relation to each of the eight sectors identified in the Children's Plan. While the aim has been to make general observations about the children's workforce overall, priority has been given to issues and themes emerging from the experience of the contributing agencies, as information from other sectors (e.g. health, play work) has been less accessible to them.

In putting together proposals about the management of knowledge relating to the children's workforce, emphasis is focussed on the explicit and systematic management of all types of quantitative and qualitative information (e.g. data, research, intelligence, evaluation studies and case studies) that could be useful in informing the development and implementation of the strategy. This involves a number of processes – including generation, organization, dissemination, use and application – in pursuit of the strategy's objectives.

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[1] "Knowledge management involves activities related to the capture, use and sharing of knowledge by the organisation. It involves the management both of external linkages and of knowledge flows within the enterprise, including methods and procedures for seeking external knowledge and for establishing closer relationships with other enterprises (suppliers, competitors), customers or research institutions. In addition to practices for gaining new knowledge, knowledge management involves methods for sharing and using knowledge, including establishing value systems for sharing knowledge and practices for codifying routines" (OECD, 2005, para 303).

2. Current Knowledge

2.1 Workforce Capacity / Roles / Excellence

It is evident that there is great variation in what is known about workforce demographics, skills and capacity in relation to different sectors, settings, occupations and roles. For example:

- It is possible to obtain an accurate picture of the composition of the school workforce[2], and sector-specific issues, including school leadership capacity, leadership levers and approaches to filling hard-to-recruit positions.

- While there has been a substantial effort to collate and interpret information about the childcare and early years footprint[3], this work in particular has highlighted the fact that there are many gaps in knowledge about this part of the workforce.

- LLUK's analysis of Staff Individualised Record (SIR) data[4] – is helpful in providing an overview of the whole FE workforce, but does not include disaggregated data about staff working with younger people.

Some of the common themes emerging from analysis of the available evidence[5] are summarised below. These examples are included to illustrate how an effective knowledge management approach can inform the process of priority-setting by the Expert Group.

Diversity – evidence from various sectors indicates that the composition of at least part of the workforce is skewed; for example:

- Some groups are under-represented in the workforce as a whole: men, people from black and ethnic minority communities and workers with disabilities are all substantially under-represented across the early years and childcare workforce.

- Women appear to face barriers to progression to senior positions: whilst women make up 84% of the total teaching workforce in primary and 57% in secondary, women accounted for just 73% and 41% respectively of successful appointments to headship in 2007. Just over 5% of the total teaching workforce is identified as being from a minority ethnic background, but just 1.5% of primary and 2.2% of secondary headship appointments in 2007 were from this group

- Certain parts of the workforce have a relatively 'youthful' age profile: the early years and childcare workforce is characterised as comprising mainly young workers, although there is variation between employing sectors: workers in the maintained sector and the

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[2] e.g. – for example – the 618G survey returns.
[3] e.g. CWDC (2006); DFES (2006); DCSF (2007, 2008).
[4] Lifelong Learning UK (2008).
[5] Including: CWDC (2006); Simon et al (2007).

voluntary sector are more likely to be over 30 years of age (average 32 years) than those in the private sector (average 24 years).

Inequalities – there are significant discrepancies in the working conditions and rewards earned by people working in different roles and sectors, which impacts on recruitment and retention, including the following:

- Workers gaining qualifications do not necessarily secure better pay: a substantial number of workers with qualifications work close to the minimum wage in the early years and childcare sectors.

- There are variations between sectors in relation to entry qualifications and routes to higher qualifications and professional development opportunities.

- Staff working face-to-face with children as foster carers, children's home care staff, and in early years and childcare settings receive lower wages than those with professional or clearly designated job titles.

- The overall remuneration package is strongest for those working in the maintained sector in terms of pension rights, sick pay and holidays.

- While there is evidence that remuneration patterns are poor for those working sessionally, information about the size and composition of the sessional workforce remains incomplete across sectors.

- Pay and conditions in the 'for profit' sector are mostly lower than in other sectors. Those working in the private sector have fewer holidays and will usually be required to work shifts and split shifts.

- There is a strong relationship between qualification levels, pay, employment sector and gender; occupations with the highest proportions of women workers mostly have low qualifications and pay and a high likelihood of employment in the for-profit sector.

- Whilst childminders and some foster carers can select their working patterns and working hours, they are less likely than any other sectors to have sick pay and pension rights, or to have paid holidays.

Motivation – several sources[6] suggest that the majority of people who work in the children's workforce (and particularly the early years and childcare sectors) do so because they enjoy working with children. This assertion (particularly important as it can be used to justify giving workers lower rewards) is not substantiated by detailed evidence. Likewise, it has been suggested that the status attributed to this sector of the workforce fails to take account of the demands of the work, or their contribution to maintaining the social fabric of society[7].

Leadership capacity – there is evidence to show that enhanced school leadership capacity can have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

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[6] e.g. Hobson et al (2004).
[7] Harker (2007); Sumison (2006).

Roles – some evidence[8] illustrates the difficulty in defining the main roles in the children's workforce, reflecting the fact that there is a multiplicity of roles, complicated by the fact that they feature in different employing sectors (where there is inconsistency in the application of job titles), and that new roles are emerging all the time, especially in response to ongoing workforce development initiatives. Additionally, one individual may be employed in more than one position / role; or one worker may fulfil more than one role (as defined in relation to the emerging occupational standards) in any given occupation. While this emphasises the importance of work to streamline occupational and qualifications frameworks, it also illustrates the potential for any existing and emerging data related to 'roles' to be potentially misleading, or open to (mis)interpretation.

2.2   Joint / Integrated Working

As with workforce composition, there is great variation in the quality of information about joint / integrated working in relation to different sectors. For example:

- The evidence[9] provides some examples of efficient integrated working in extended schools, children's centres and early years settings, suggesting that such provision offers the potential to make a positive impact on children's and young people's achievement and personal development, especially for the more vulnerable. This examples cited emphasise the importance of **team leadership** in improving institutions, and provides exemplars of new **team roles** devised to address the ECM agenda (e.g. the role of 'director of community well-being').

- The **benefits** of inter-agency working[10] centre on three main areas:
  - for children and their families, improved services, direct outcomes and prevention;
  - for agencies, the benefits centre on offering them a broader perspective, a better understanding of the issues, and increased understanding of, and improved interactions with, other agencies (although this can be countered by the additional demands made on individual agencies);
  - for individual professionals, their work alongside other professionals broadens their perspective and raises their awareness of the operation of other agencies (although it often leads to increased work pressure).

- Partnerships between NHS Trusts and local authorities have been shown[11] to have delivered improvements in quality in a range of areas with **innovation and flexible service delivery**, especially when co-operative styles of working are encouraged. Secondments

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[8] e.g. Johnson et al (2005).
[9] including Ofsted (2008a); NCSL (2008a).
[10] Atkinson et al (2002).
[11] Weeks (2006)

have provided a route to deliver change without threatening professional identity or causing difficulties in relation to employee relations.

- A number of **challenges** have been identified[12], including:

    - the need to secure the active involvement of children, young people and families;
    - the importance of the role of lead professional;
    - the need for workforce training; and
    - the potential for tension around shared standards across the workforce.

- In many instances [13], insufficient attention is given to investment of resources and effort needed to achieve integrated working with consequent difficulties for its delivery. Also, while there is[14] much anecdotal evidence of impact of integrated working on individual cases, it is often based on personal relationships that, although currently effective, may not be sustainable.

Much of the available evidence around joint / integrated working[15] concentrates on process issues. From this, it has been shown that lessons can be learnt about how workers from different agencies can increase the efficiency of their working together, including the following:

(i)   The **key attributes** of practitioners acknowledged as contributing towards effective joint working include:

- Practitioners enjoy working with children and young people, treat them with respect and are good at communicating with them.

- Children's practitioners place the interests of children and young people at the heart of their work.

- Practitioners concern themselves with the whole child, whatever their specialism.

- Children's practitioners are committed to equality of opportunity for all children and young people, and actively combat discrimination and its effects through their work.

- Children's practitioners pursue positive outcomes for children and young people whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement.

(ii)   Schools cite the effective use of data as a means of ensuring effective joint working (i.e. they know who their vulnerable children are and they

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[12] CWDC (2008).
[13] IDeA (2008).
[14] DCSF (2007a).
[15] e.g. GTC, GSCC & NMC (2007).

target their resources appropriately, based on a clear vision, and working through partnerships to ensure collaborative advantages are secured).

(iii)   The key skills associated with effective integrated working include a commitment to and a willingness to be involved in multi-agency working; understanding the roles and responsibilities of other agencies; communication skills (including listening, negotiating and compromising) and leadership or drive at strategic level.

(iv)   It is necessary to have in place common aims, and systems and procedures, such as for communication and involving the relevant people; and to ensure adequate resources in terms of funding, staffing and time (and that there is shared access to these).

2.3   Workforce Interventions: What Works?

The available evidence about the impact of workforce reform is patchy, although information is available about the impact of particular forms of service provision on children, young people and their families. For example:

- A review of available literature conducted for the NAO[16] reports variability in the impact of early years provision, concluding that high-quality care produces better outcomes. Benefits associated with participation in early years provision include enhanced 'school readiness' and cognitive abilities, particularly for disadvantaged children, along with benefits to these children's emotional and social development.

- The findings about variability in impact are reinforced in other longitudinal research[17], suggesting that the processes contributing towards effectiveness are extremely complex, reflecting (among other things) training, professional experience and personal understanding of practitioners. Thus, it is suggested that 'effectiveness' should be viewed 'as a whole rather than particular aspects taken in isolation from each other'. For example, teachers' capacities to be effective are influenced by variations in their work, lives and identities and their capacities to manage these, while CPD has been found to have a consistently positive influence on teachers across all professional life phases in relation to these different factors and their ability to manage them.

- Research conducted by Ofsted[18] to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of workforce reform in schools indicates that – due to enhanced understanding of how their work contributes to school improvement / pupil attainment – both teachers and the wider workforce can contribute more effectively to both academic attainment and wider issues relating to the lives of pupils and their families. These findings are reinforced by other research[19], which

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[16] Melhuish (2004).
[17] Moyles et al (2002); Day et al (2006).
[18] Ofsted (2008)
[19] Harris et al (2008); Blatchford et al (2008)

asserts that the additional elements embraced by wider workforce reform approaches (incorporating extensive innovation in the form of new structures, new working relationships and new professional practices) act as a major catalyst in securing improved attainment, attendance and behaviour in schools.

A review of the evidence of the effectiveness of workforce reform[20] – including both children's and other workforces – has indicated the following key drivers with links to impact:

- The creation of conditions and strategic frameworks which allow the workforce, at all levels, to engage critically, proactively and in forward planning mode with their service users and clients at local level. This promotes autonomy, innovation and responsibility taking.

- Ongoing engagement with local knowledge; this can enhance impact within workforce reform initiatives when cultural contexts are valued and recognised as heterogeneous.

- The creation of change teams comprising multi-levelled workforce members working collaboratively and with the lines of communication opened across the workforce.

- Leaders with vision and with communicable rationales accessible to all levels of the workforce and with a momentum generated that continues into the client group/customer.

- A capacity for problem-solving by multi-levelled workforce teams; this is instrumental in driving change through to impact.

- Opportunities for co-location for newly forming multi-professional teams and avoidance of discipline specific jargon; multi-disciplinarity aids holistic responses to service users and clients which they see as improved and more effective practice.

- The sustaining of training and education programmes that allow workers to identify their own training and development needs alongside national and strategic frameworks for development and reform.

This last point is reinforced by the findings of TDA-sponsored research[21] which suggests that by focussing on the training and development needs of the whole school workforce (i.e. teachers and the wider workforce), schools generate better relationships between staff groups, particularly those working directly with pupils; improved professional skills for support staff; role enhancement; and staff confidence to be independent, flexible and take responsibility for their own work and development.

The NHS Employers' Organisation has collated information on over 150 new ways of working / new roles introduced since the launch of the ECM agenda.

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[20] CWDC (2008).
[21] Coldwell et al (2008)

As well as collating case study evidence on these, their report[22] identifies the benefits arising from these changes, including increased parental control over their child's care; a reduction in both referrals and waiting time; and enhanced workforce capacity, diversity and effectiveness / productivity.

The available evidence includes information indicating a clear link between the quality of individual staff / leaders and outcomes[23], specifically in relation to the impact of variables within the school's control on academic attainment in schools ("school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning"). For instance, the NCSL-sponsored ECM Premium project[24] demonstrates the relationship between practice and better outcomes for children, emphasising the importance of the systematic pursuit of the ECM agenda; auditing and revising services to meet the needs of students; targeting services on children and young people whose needs have been identified through systematic data monitoring; restructuring and re-culturing, through remodelling of leadership teams, and creating new roles and responsibilities for staff; empowering parents (N.B. the SPEEL research[14] highlights the difficulty in achieving this in more disadvantaged areas); and close and sustained collaboration with statutory and voluntary agencies to extend expertise and resources that support children and families. This work has also identified eight leadership 'levers', focused on delivery of ECM that also improve standards:

- − Navigating national, local authority and community politics.
- − Engaging commitment of staff, students and partners in a vision of the purposes and ethos of the school.
- − Shaping school culture and ethos proactively around children's needs.
- − Creating structures that distribute leadership, spread responsibility and foster trusting relationships.
- − Managing workforce remodelling with a clear understanding of, and sensitivity to, professional expertise and capacity.
- − Placing high priority on the professional development of the whole staff.
- − Managing external relationships and the permeable boundaries between school and community.
- − Ensuring sustainability of commitment, finance and resourcing.

While much of the foregoing research attempts to identify causal relationships between workforce reform interventions and impacts, some findings[25] indicate that, while the external policy-led drivers set the context, successful outcomes are often the result of:

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[22] NHS Employers (2006).
[23] DFES & NCSL (2006)
[24] NCSL, 2008
[25] Harris (2008)

– Internally generated not externally prescribed actions;

– A focus on learning, rather than results; and

– Approaches embracing innovation.

3. Strategic Knowledge Priorities

3.1 Cross-Cutting Themes

The foregoing analysis of the available evidence indicates that there are several key cross-cutting themes which could be accommodated by the knowledge management strategy. These include:

- The generation of accurate and consistent data to generate a complete picture of the **composition** of all sectors of the children's workforce, allowing for analysis of trends over time, on a geographic basis and within and between sectors (including public, private and third sector variations).

- The determination of the **impact** on children's outcomes of different workforce development interventions and service delivery approaches across the whole of the children's workforce.

- The need to generate a standardised approach to the definition and measurement of '**excellence**' across the whole of the children's workforce.

- How best to incorporate **early intervention or prevention** activity into all roles in the children's workforce.

- How to determine whether or not interventions to enhance the **status** of certain sectors of the children's workforce (e.g. early years and childcare workers) – particularly those focussed on pay and rewards – have resulted in an improvement in the quality of new recruits and increased retention rates.

- How to ensure the **transfer** of learning to enhance practice, including: how lessons learnt at a local level can be translated to national guidance; how effective interventions in one sector of the children's workforce can be transferred to other sectors; how lessons learnt can be transferred between the statutory/maintained, private and third sectors.

- How to obtain accurate data about the **attainment of qualifications** by members of the children's workforce, including: the impact of enhanced qualifications on workers' employment status / rewards; the skills needs of different sectors, occupations and employers; and how the attainment of qualifications by staff contributes towards enhanced children's outcomes.

- How to build a better understanding of the **motivations** of the members of the children's workforce (including details of individuals' aspirations, commitments, sensitivities, and 'elasticity'), so that appropriate levers can be devised to secure their subscription to emerging workforce reforms.

- How to establish effective arrangements for **leadership** / **succession planning** in all settings / services for children and young people.

- A determination of the extent to which the introduction of the **Common Core** has contributed towards enhanced outcomes for children and young people, and which – if any – measures have had the greatest impact.

3.2   Strategic Knowledge Priorities

As highlighted by the information summarised in the foregoing sections, a significant amount of effort has been applied in trying to generate a greater understanding about all sectors of the children's workforce. The development of the 2020 Children's Workforce Strategy provides an opportunity to improve the co-ordination of these efforts so that the knowledge generated is more meaningful and can be applied to support consistent improvements in service delivery and outcomes for children and young people.

In order to achieve this, it is recommended that initial focus be applied to three priorities, as discussed in more detail below. These have been selected from the foregoing list as they offer the greatest potential to enhance the strategic process, and there is a significant degree of overlap in the way in which their further investigation can inform the policy.

For instance, there is an undoubted need to establish a clearer picture of the composition of the workforce, as much of the evidence points to both the importance and the scarcity of comparable data. The generation of a clearer picture of the current / changing state of the workforce is a necessary precursor to the introduction of initiatives to its reform, so this must be the first priority in the knowledge management process associated with the strategy.

Similarly, as highlighted in evidence cited above, the evidence of effectiveness of different approaches to workforce reform is limited, especially in relation to the children's workforce. Any robust, evidence based strategy ought to incorporate only proposed interventions which have been shown to be effective, and about which the factors of success are clearly understood in order for replication / modification to be achievable.

Finally, reflecting the fact that the diversity of contexts within which the children's workforce is employed impacts significantly on the likelihood of successful workforce reforms, it is recommended that further work be undertaken to establish greater clarity and consistency in relation to the aspirations of the strategy. While workers in different sectors, professions and settings might find it relatively easy to understand what is meant by the

pursuit of better outcomes for children within the ECM framework, the strategy also needs to take cognisance of the different professional and values bases that motivate and inform workers' practice. Critical in this area of concern – especially as multi-agency working and the *team around the child* are likely to feature prominently in the strategy – is the definition of 'excellence', about which insufficient evidence is shared between the professional, occupation and employing sectors.

The inter-relationship between these three suggested priorities is evident. For example, as further research is undertaken into the impact of workforce reform, the findings may illustrate and provide evidence that settings where 'excellence' has been achieved reflect similar characteristics in relation to workforce composition and reform initiatives. Research attempting to capture information on these three aspects should also be able to highlight the way in which the different variables have a different impact on children's outcomes.

3.2.1 Workforce Composition: Understanding the Nature of the Workforce

This work should incorporate three elements, in which data is generated; analysed; and the findings applied to inform future practice.

1. **Robust data** / **information** should be collated for all sectors of the children's workforce, and decisions need to be taken about the potential to draw on existing data-generation systems and replicate their application in other settings. For example, the schools census data allows for the generation of an accurate picture of the whole school workforce, while early years and childcare provider knowledge is based on survey data. Given the need to better understand the make-up of the whole of the children's workforce, it may be advantageous to roll out the census approach (for example, as part of the inspection regime), emphasising the benefits to providers as well as to service planners to ensure high levels of participation. Other sources of information will need to be incorporated into the knowledge generation process, including commissioned case studies and externally-sponsored research and evaluations. For example

2. It may be possible to collate data on **diversity** through analysis of employer returns submitted under the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act.

3. It may be necessary to produce **guidance** to employers in each of the sectors of the children's workforce on the proposed approach to data collection. Thereafter, a standardised approach (such as the schools census, NHS and HESA) might be easier to implement.

4. Activities to improve the understanding of the children's workforce and improve future planning should **involve all stakeholders in the analysis** of emerging data and information. Networks of research and analytical staff (e.g. DCSF, CWDC, TDA and NCSL) as well as forums (such as the CWN) offer a sound base on which to develop collective interpretation of data / information, and should be involved centrally in discussions about

what the evidence indicates. Analysis is likely to be improved significantly from input by service users, suggesting that work should be undertaken to develop a national forum to facilitate parental input to this process (alternatively, the research and professional networks could strengthen their links with existing parent networks, such as the National Parent Partnership Network, and the Institute of Ideas' Parents Forum).

5. Likewise, the approach to **using data** / **information to target actions** should be inclusive, and the way in which evidence informs policy development needs to be transparent. For example, any proposed intervention should be based upon the findings of research / data collection / case study work that indicates how it has been successful elsewhere / previously. Wherever possible, proposals should be tailored to reflect the broad interpretation ascribed to emerging data / information, and should allow for local variations to inform the detailed implementation. The way in which these messages are communicated to the workforce will inevitably impact on the way in which workers adopt the proposed practices, reinforcing the need for an inclusive approach. This, it is suggested that 'grassroots' members of the workforce should be involved in processes / structures (e.g. via participation in local networks, trades unions, professional bodies, etc.) to engage with issues around practical application of emerging proposals.

3.2.2 Impact of Workforce Reforms

As indicated above, there is limited detailed evidence about the impact of workforce reforms, although – on the basis of what is known – it has been suggested[26] that there is a need to address the capacity building needs of both workforce and clients. This analysis suggests that there is a need to focus on the following range of issues, reflecting the full spectrum of reforms already implemented in all sectors, settings and occupations:

- The link between the level / qualifications of staff and children's outcomes across a range of measures (including consideration of the different skills / focus required at different stages of a child's development);

- How different occupational structures / management arrangements impact on children and young people (in terms of wellbeing, achievement, etc.);

- Which models for the *team around the child* are most successful in terms of outcomes for children and young people;

- The impact of newly-emerging and extended roles in the children's workforce, particularly in the early years and education sectors (such as 'para-professionals', children's centre leaders, managers leading more than one setting, heads/directors of federations, clusters and 'all through schools', or business managers) on outcomes;

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[26] Harris (2008); Wolstenhome et al (2008).

- The extent to which the diversity of the workforce (including consideration of gender, ethnicity, cultural, religious and racial dimensions) makes a difference to children's experience of the service and their outcomes, particularly as expressed by children and young people themselves;

- Whether or not the status of non-professional occupations in the children's workforce has been enhanced by workforce interventions, and the impact this has had on recruitment (especially on the quality of candidates);

- The impact of enhanced workers' pay / rewards packages on children's outcomes; and

- Which kind of record-keeping / information-sharing systems make the greatest contribution towards outcomes for children, and how these involve parents / carers.

Given the greater emphasis on joint / integrated working likely to be incorporated in the Strategy, this aspect – the effectiveness of joint / integrated working, and specifically what approaches to supporting it contribute directly to the attainment of desired outcomes – requires further exploration, to generate a clearer understanding of, for example:

- Whether or not joint / integrated working can be applied to generic service provision to children and young people, as well as in response to specific issues identified for individual children / families in need or at risk.

- How to enhance the impact of service provision through the closer involvement of parents, children and young people as key stakeholders, both through strengthening their 'voice' and providing opportunities for them to exercise choice.

- What type of support / overview is needed locally to ensure effective processes, focussed on ECM outcomes.

- The contribution towards outcomes made by training / qualifications in joint working (e.g. NPQICL).

- The impact – and challenges to the implementation – of single / standardised assessment processes.

Given the sometimes intangible (and often sensitive) nature of potential impact of workforce reform on children, young people and their families (as well as staff and service-providing organisations), it is likely that this work will be looking at outcomes / improvements which cannot easily be quantified. Thus, much of the data on impact is likely to rely on the perceptions of change and personal understandings of children, young people and their families, as well as members of the workforce. Therefore, research needs to go beyond a simplistic analysis of these perceptions, by seeking to inter-connect these potentially contradictory perspectives through – for example – thematically inter-related multiple case studies.

3.2.3 Understanding Excellence

Work on implementing the Strategy is likely to have the effect of bringing the different sectors closer together, and the increased focus on joint working is likely to result in more cross-sectoral interactions. As a result, there is a need for service planners and individual members of the workforce to have a better shared understanding of what is meant by 'excellence' in relation to the different occupations and sectors. While work on implementing the Strategy should be able to accommodate multiple notions of 'excellence' (as it may mean different things to different individuals and sectors of the community), it may be deemed appropriate to work towards the generation of a shared definition of 'excellence' as it applies to the delivery of the full range of services to children, young people and their families. This work might usefully incorporate consideration of the government's recently published framework for improvements in public services[27], which highlights the following characteristics:

- Delivering **excellent outcomes**.

- Offering **personalised approaches** that are responsive to individual needs and aspirations.

- Being **fair and equitable**.

- Offering good **value for money**.

If the Strategy promotes further development of a pedagogic approach to the delivery of children's services, this work might also include a mapping exercise exploring the extent to which this approach currently informs practice and the delivery of training[28], along with a detailed exploration as to the views of members of different sectors of the workforce as to the its applicability.

4.   Current / Planned Research

Along with the DCSF, the CWDC, NCSL and TDA have a number of current and planned research activities, which are likely to contribute towards the priorities identified in Section 3. The following summarises the combined efforts of these agencies in relation to the suggested priorities, as well as introducing illustrative examples of relevant work planned by other organisations not involved in preparing this paper:

4.1   Workforce Composition

CWDC / **CWN**: Occupational and Functional Map of occupations within CWDC footprint (due to report in October 2008).

CWDC: State of the Children's Social Care Workforce (Data available now, report in preparation).

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[27] Cabinet Office (2008).
[28] e.g. as recommended by Boddy et al (2005).

TDA: Sector Skills Review 2008 (due to report in January 2009).

DCSF: Extended Schools Survey of Schools and Pupils (due to report in November 2008).

DCSF: Deployment and Impact of Support Staff in Schools (due to report in December 2008).

DCSF: School Workforce in England (due to report in January 2009).

DCSF: Early Years and Childcare Providers Survey 2008 (tbc).

4.2   Impact of Workforce Reform

CWDC: Research into Different Models for a *Team Around the Child* (due to report in February 2009).

CWDC: Evaluation on Integrated Working (due to report in October 2008).

TDA: Review of the Effectiveness of the TDA School Improvement Planning Framework (due to report in October 2008).

TDA: CPD in England – State of the Nation (due to report in October 2008).

TDA: Staff Development Outcomes Study (due to report in January 2009).

DCSF: Evaluation of New Professionalism (due to be commissioned in 2009, and to report in summer 2010).

DCSF: Research into workforce remodelling strategies and their impact on school standards (due to report in February 2009).

DCSF: Extended Schools Subsidy Pathfinder Evaluation (due to report in summer 2010).

DCSF: Extended Schools Analysis Project & Evaluation (tbc).

DCSF: EPPI Review: Impact of Support Staff on Pupil Outcomes (due to report in December 2008).

DCSF: Review and Evaluation of the Fast Track Teaching Programme (tbc).

DCSF: Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes (final report due in January 2009).

DCSF: Workforce remodelling strategies and their impact on school standards (due to report in January 2009).

4.3   Excellence

NCSL: Ongoing collation of information / data on full range of standards, including:

- National Standards for Leaders of Sure Start Children's Centres http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/National_Standards_CC_Leadership.pdf
- National Standards for Headteachers (http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/NS4HFinalpdf.pdf)
- National Standards for Leadership (in development between NCSL, social partners and DCSF)
- 'Championing Children'

NCSL: National Succession Diversity Consultation (data received from 104 Local Authorities, report due soon).

4.4   Other Parallel Initiatives:

The newly-established **Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services** (C4EO) aims to identify and co-ordinate the best evidence of 'what works' at national, regional and local level. The Centre will conduct 18 sets of knowledge reviews, based around three key lines of enquiry for each of the six national ECM themes. For example, the three priorities for the Early Years theme are as follows:

- Improving development outcomes for children through effective practice in integrating early years services.
- Improving children's attainment through a better quality of family-based support for early learning.
- Narrowing the gap in outcomes for children from the most excluded families through inclusive practice in early years settings.

The **Innovation Unit** is carrying out an ongoing programme of work on transfer and scaling up[29].

The **Children's Workforce Network** is planning to devise and implement a methodology to measure the impact of T&D for the leaders of children's workforce on outcomes for children. The CWN is also working with LGAR to explore whether or not proposals for the expanded Schools' Sector Data Protocol LGAR data framework for local government can cover the whole children's workforce.

The **Care Services Improvement Partnership** is launching the Children's Services Mapping (CSM) exercise in October 2008, which will this year be extended to include local authority children's services and those services commissioned, managed or led by Children's Trusts. The mapping exercise is jointly sponsored by the Department of Health and the DCSF.

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[29] e.g. Cordingley & Bell (2007

4.5   Implications / Further Considerations

The foregoing summary illustrates that there is a not insignificant amount of current / planned research activity; it is also undoubtedly the case that other organisations will be engaged in research of a similar nature. However, it is necessary for the emerging knowledge management framework to take account of the following considerations highlighted by more detailed analysis of the available information:

There is evidence of some **duplication** of effort between the various agencies involved in this exercise (particularly under the workforce mapping), suggesting the potential benefit of streamlining activities between these partners. Where different pieces of research are addressing different sectors, it may be appropriate for commissioning agencies to agree a standardised approach to the definition and collection of different types of data and information; this will allow for more effective comparison and cross-referencing to inform future decisions.

Further **mapping** of current / planned research activities by other key stakeholders – such as the NHS, professional bodies, and in sectors of the workforce under-represented in this report – would be advisable as a means of ensuring that the strategy's implementation is informed by the widest possible evidence base (and that overlap with these activities is minimised).

The level of current / planned activity in relation to **'excellence'** is significantly lower than that for each of the other two priority areas. While this might be unsurprising – given the significance and priority afforded these other areas to date by the partner agencies – it also presents a challenge, as it suggests that partners need to give explicit consideration to the importance they give to the subject matter covered by the 'excellence' agenda. If – as suggested above – a better understanding of this subject is likely to prove integral to the successful implementation of the strategy, then its exploration merits more resources than have currently been identified.

5.   Challenges

The challenges to implementing a co-ordinated knowledge management process to the children's workforce, as identified in the submissions to the Expert Group, can be grouped under three main headings.

5.1   Complexity

The difficulty experienced in trying to generate a comprehensive picture of the early years workforce (with published data relating to the individual occupations proving difficult to find and inconsistent), is likely to be complicated further in attempting to map the wider workforce. The collation of comparable workforce data / information is further complicated by the fact that different job titles are applied for the same roles depending on the sector or context in which the post is employed. Indeed, there are some cases (usually in the statutory sector) where workers in the same setting can be employed to carry out the same tasks, but have different job titles and work in different

networks, as their employer relies on different financial streams to fund their posts. While the knowledge management strand of the strategy needs to attempt to overcome this complicating factor, the strategy itself might usefully attempt to streamline the language relating to occupations in the children's workforce.

In some areas (e.g. childcare and early years), it has proved more difficult to generate / interpret information about those parts of the workforce employed by the private and third sectors than their counterparts employed in the statutory / maintained sector.

Trend information is not always accurate, due to the lack of connectedness between different sources, and changes in the approach taken to collecting data.

There is lack of clarity about how existing roles (such as that of the school leader) have changed as a result of the ECM agenda and the Children's Plan (as well as other initiatives such as the Building Schools for the Future and Primary Capital programmes, and the 14-19 agenda).

Less is known about those working through agencies (particularly in the social care sector) who are likely to be employed on different terms and conditions to the directly employed workforce.

5.2   Churn / Displacement

It is not evident if workers remain in the children's workforce when they leave a particular sector, making it difficult to assess mobility within the workforce. (N.B. One submission asserts that due to their hierarchical nature, the occupations included in different sectors the children's workforce are unlikely to compete to recruit the same kinds of workers, although there may be the potential for competition within each of the sectors).

Evidence is limited about how professions within the children's workforce interact, and movement of individuals between professional groups.

Little is known about the career paths of individual workers; it might be useful to understand what 'typical' careers within the children's workforce look like.

When data indicates changes in overall size and composition of children's workforce, it is not always clear whether reduction in one occupation or geographic area results in increase elsewhere, and vice versa?

5.3   Sensitivity / Confidentiality

A key challenge in attempting to understand what type of workforce reforms work, particularly in bringing about improvements in outcomes for vulnerable children and their families, is the sensitivity of the information relating to individual circumstances.

All data are open to interpretation, a situation complicated by the vagaries of the data-collection processes. For example, it is evident that survey data collected about the attainment of level 3 qualifications is flawed, as some respondents report their participation in level 3 standard training in the same way that others report achievement of full qualifications. It is necessary for analysis of findings to take account of such potential shortcomings.

6.   Conclusions / Recommendations

The following proposals have been devised to reflect the DCSF's research priorities[30], which assert (p.11):

> "we need to make sure our analytical strategy … looks … system-wide. This means understanding the users of our services better through developing our evidence base, including through customer insight. It means looking into the medium and long-term to identify the challenges and opportunities we need to be ready to face. It means developing our understanding of the children's workforce. And it means providing the analytical underpinning for work to understand and change behaviours among individuals and communities."

The following action points are suggested as a means of contributing towards the achievement of this statement of intent in addressing the proposed knowledge / evidence priorities detailed in section 3.2, above.

It is recommended that the Strategy embrace a systematic approach to the generation, organisation, dissemination and application of knowledge that achieves alignment between the different sectors making up the children's workforce. This should allow for greater ease of analysis of need for different intervention and comparison of progress between sectors on the basis of a number of key variables, including thematic, geographic and employing sector. Prior to adopting the proposed approach to knowledge management, decisions will need to be taken about responsibility for overseeing its implementation, based on an analysis of which organisations are best placed (in terms of resources, research expertise and relationships across sectors) to facilitate the process. Likewise, adequate resources will be required to implement additional workloads.

6.1   Generation

A more systematic and widespread approach to quantitative data-collection is needed, specifically seeking to raise the standard of information generated about sectors (e.g. early years) and occupations (such as nannies) about which little is known currently to the same standard as (for example) occupations covered by the school census. As well as exploring the potential for a more standardised approach to collecting information across the sectors, the approach to knowledge generation needs to seek to include all other potential sources of data / information, including the following elements:

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[30] DCSF (2008a)

- Conference papers, and papers in academic and practice journals

- Reports / information prepared for local workforce development partnerships

- Locally-commissioned evaluations of initiatives and workforce interventions

These sources of data should be used to contribute towards a qualitative pool of knowledge that can grow and develop over time. As described above, it is recommended that quantitative data collection from employers should take the form of some kind of census / reporting system, rather than relying on analysis of secondary data sources.

6.2   Organization

How the collated information is organised will have a critical effect on how it is used. As well as the eight sectors identified in the Next Steps document, it is recommended that information be organised in such a way that allows for analysis of occupational data against other distinguishing characteristics, including:

- Employing sector: maintained / private / third sectors

- Nature of provision: universal / multi-agency teams / targeted service

- Geographical variations

- Generational and cultural distinctions

It has been noted elsewhere in this report that there are multiple reporting routes to government for the different sectors comprising the children's workforce, and that this has the potential to complicate the process of data / information generation. Consideration needs to be given to how this might impact, too, on the organisation of data / information. In particular, the various NDPBs and agencies charged with overseeing the implementation of the strategy need to establish a consistent format for the organisation and sharing of data / information, to allow for its ready transfer between / application in different settings. Also, future changes to the way in which data is organised need to reflect any initiatives emerging from the revised strategy in relation to new reporting structures.

6.3   Dissemination

The DCSF and the three contributing NDPBs already make available research findings, reports, etc. via their websites. The exercise to gather evidence to inform the 2020 Children's Workforce Strategy has brought together a further, substantial amount of workforce information, which is currently held on a secure website. More information which might be used to inform the strategy's development and implementation is already likely to be in existence, but is not all likely to be readily accessible. It is proposed that all knowledge used in relation to the strategy be made as accessible as possible,

and that dissemination of knowledge is proactive. There should, therefore, be regular calls for evidence, access to which could be shared with all contributors, and events might be arranged to report back on progress in enhancing knowledge, in the first instance focussing on the three recommended priorities.

6.4   Use & Application

The management of knowledge relating to the children's workforce should not only help to generate a more sophisticated understanding by planners of the workforce, its constituent sectors or specific occupations, but it should also facilitate learning between sectors along with improvements in services at the point of delivery. Any decision-making processes based on the knowledge generated under the proposed approach should be inclusive and transparent, so that there can be clear understanding of how the data / information has been used. Likewise, by involving representatives of different occupational groups in the decision-making processes, it should be possible to ensure cross-sectoral transfer of knowledge and practice.

The use and application of knowledge generated in this way should be delivered as a dynamic and transformational process that incorporates service users within service development at all levels. Indeed, it should be acknowledged that service users offer the potential to most substantially inter-connect the constituent sectors of the children's workforce.

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