

Inspiring leaders to
improve children's lives



National College
for Leadership of Schools
and Children's Services

Schools and academies

International approaches to children's services leadership and leadership development

Literature and good practice review

Resource

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Some of the content of this report is based on the views expressed by contributors, whose views were sought on an informal basis in order to complement the analysis of the available literature. Comments are included to shed light on the issues under consideration; they are not attributed to any one individual, and are only included if they are representative of the views of more than one respondent.

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Executive summary

Introduction

Leadership development of practitioners in senior management positions in children's services has been identified as a policy priority by the UK government, and new leadership development programmes for current and aspiring directors of children's services in England are being launched. In order to inform the development of these programmes, the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (the National College) commissioned a literature review to identify how senior leadership roles in children's services are configured and supported internationally and to assess the approach taken to reforming services in a selected number of countries, covering services across education, social services, health, child protection and wellbeing. Additionally, information was sought on the approaches to supporting leadership development for children's services leaders (however configured) in each of the selected countries.

The countries included in the review, which were selected on the basis of criteria designed to allow valid and relevant comparisons, were Denmark, The Netherlands, Ireland, Canada and Scotland, with additional information on some aspects of the review being obtained for Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

Findings

Although there has been significant reform of children's services in all the countries included in the study, there is significant variation in the arrangements for the management, administration and delivery of children's services. Commonality in the direction of change is evident, with all the countries studied responding to similar crises in child protection, and proposing a more decentralised, better co-ordinated model of service delivery. Factors such as the governance of public policy and service delivery and cultural differences appear to have determined the extent to which reform of children's services has progressed in different countries. Crucially for this study, none of the countries included in the research appears to have established a children's services system directly comparable to that in England, complicating the task of drawing meaningful lessons about leadership from their situations. Nevertheless, the following summarises the key findings to have emerged from the study, highlighting lessons from the provisions made in the countries included in the review for the management, administration and delivery of children's services.

Children's services policy and configuration

Arrangements for setting the policy framework within which children's services are delivered vary between countries, although there has been a trend towards the integration (or, at least, better co-ordination) of ministries of state with responsibility for these areas of policy. Responsibility for the planning and delivery of children's services at a local level also remain less integrated in the countries studied than they are in England.

Table 1 illustrates some of the key differences in responsibilities, and identifies recent policy initiatives reflecting the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda in England.

Policy initiatives are intended to achieve more positive outcomes across a range of broad indicators of wellbeing in children and young people, as the following policy statements illustrate:

- All children are entitled to a healthy and safe upbringing, and should be able to contribute to society, develop talents and have fun and be properly prepared for the future (The Netherlands).
- Every child should have access to: sufficient resources, support and services; childcare services; health, personal social services and suitable accommodation; good-quality play, sport, recreation and cultural activities; and appropriate participation in local and national decision-making (Ireland).
- Children have the right to be healthy (physically and emotionally), safe and secure and successful at learning, and should be able to be socially engaged and responsible (Canada).

Table 1: International differences in responsibilities and policy initiatives in relation to the ECM agenda

		Denmark	The Netherlands	Ireland	Canada	Scotland
Policy framework	National policy	Included as part of social affairs policies	Every Opportunity for Every Child	Our Children, Their Lives	National Children's Agenda	Getting it Right for Every Child
	Local plans	Cohesive child policy required	Local agreements on joint working required	Integrated working encouraged; no plans required	No requirement for local plans	Integrated working encouraged; no plans required
Structures and organisation	National	Inter-Ministerial Committee on Children	Ministry for Youth and Families	Ministry for Children and Youth Affairs	Ministry of Children and Youth Services	Directorate for Children, Young People and Social Care
	Regional /provincial /county	Health Specialist services Secondary schools	Care services (Youth Care Agency)	National agencies with regional structures for education, health and social care	Education at all levels	n/a
	Municipal /city	Early childhood education and care (ECEC) Social services Education Child welfare	Preventive services (education, leisure, health)	Pilot children's services committees	Early childhood education and care Social care	Social work Education Children's services

Arrangements for the provision of children's services at the local level vary between countries included in the study, reflecting two key differences: the extent to which central government remains engaged in service delivery; and the nature of the administrative and governance arrangements of the local government. For example, local initiatives to increase integration and effectiveness in the delivery of children's services in Ireland are led by government agencies, such as the Department of Education and Science and health boards. This approach allows central government to retain control of service delivery.

Conversely, in Denmark and The Netherlands, there has been a decentralising agenda in relation to local governance generally, and local authorities are increasingly required to lead on the implementation of national policy initiatives. Hence, the establishment of local partnership structures and the development of local plans are characteristic of children's service provision in these countries.

The drive for greater integration of service planning and delivery is reflected in all countries included in this review, most obviously through the establishment of facilities providing a wide range of services to children and families (eg in The Netherlands, Ireland and Scotland). However, in none of the countries included in the study was there any evidence of the establishment of structures at a local level as clearly defined as the establishment of children's trusts in England. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a significant amount of partnership working at local level in all countries included in the study. These are aimed at streamlining service delivery and ensuring vulnerable children and families in particular do not fall between services.

Children's services leadership

Similarly, the review failed to identify in any of the countries studied leadership roles that could be deemed equivalent to the director of children's services (DCS) role in England, with the possible exception of Scotland¹. Two main areas were identified in which differences appear to exist in the roles and responsibilities of children's services leaders in the countries included in this review. The first is the location of three key leadership roles:

- policy and strategic development
- service delivery
- scrutiny and accountability

The second area in which differences exist is the degree of integration between different aspects of children's services, with the division between education and social care representing the most common split in responsibilities.

There is a high degree of convergence, and most countries attempt to spell out a universal set of high-level outcomes for children and young people, not entirely dissimilar to the ECM outcomes. Where information has been available, it also appears that visionary leadership is required in order to help partners translate policy ambitions into practical actions at local level that influence the outcomes for individual children.

This review of the literature has failed to identify any evidence of a systematic approach to the assessment of skill needs among leaders of children's services in any of the countries included in the study. This is not to say that there is no work in this important area, simply that information on related activities has not been collated and reported in the public domain.

¹ In Scotland, while responsibility for leadership in the delivery of children's services is divided between directors of education and social work, there are several examples of local authorities where heads of children's services have been appointed to oversee some of the reforms needed to improve integrated working between departments and other agencies.

Leadership development

This review has highlighted a number of issues from the countries included in the study that are relevant to skill needs and the provision of leadership development for senior leaders of children's services. First, the role of leader of children's services in all the countries studied is becoming increasingly complex as a result of the development of more integrated services and the more complex and holistic outcomes that are sought from interventions. This has significant implications for the future of leadership development because leaders of children's services are expected to be effective generic leaders and managers of public services, including services that are not directly provided but are commissioned from a wide range of providers. They are also expected to demonstrate leadership to an increasingly wide range of professional groups delivering children's services, which will necessarily have implications for the nature of leadership development programmes, where the emphasis will progressively be on generic leadership and management skills that can be applied across professional groups.

This review has identified a wide range of programmes available to leaders of children's services in all countries included in the study (with the possible exception of The Netherlands). In most cases the training is not context specific, and it appears that leaders of children's services are generally only able to participate in generic public sector leadership development programmes. There are some notable exceptions to this (for example, the programmes provided by the Annie E Casey Foundation in the USA), but these provide only a small number of opportunities for leaders of children's services.

Many countries locate leadership training in university departments, allowing their provision to link closely with academic research and teaching programmes. In relation to children's services, it appears that there are no public sector institutions dedicated to this endeavour (ie along the lines of the National College) in any of the countries included in the study. While the location of these leadership programmes may vary, there appears to be a trend internationally to focus on this area of continuing professional and service development, drawing on a range of not dissimilar conceptual frameworks.

Research incorporating evidence on the impact of leadership programmes in the countries included in the study – and specifically on children's outcomes – appears to be limited. However, some evidence exists to suggest that instructional leaders (ie those who promote and participate in staff learning and development, and those who take an active part in planning, co-ordinating and evaluating work) have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of pupils. Similarly, those who develop and articulate a clear vision, establish goals and expectations and foster a culture of co-operation while at the same time providing a supportive environment for their staff also contribute directly to the attainment of positive outcomes for pupils. The need for leaders to remain focused on the occupation of their subordinates has been emphasised as a key element of ensuring positive outcomes, along with coaching, the implementation of succession training, and the use of monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the positive impact on children's outcomes that have been attributed to leadership development arose as a result of four parallel processes:

- internalisation of a results-based accountability framework
- focus on a single result
- transparency of inequalities
- the development of specific competencies for collaborative leadership

Conclusions and lessons for England

The results of this literature review present a number of findings of particular relevance to the National College in relation to the provision of support to leaders of children's services in England. Reflecting the findings of earlier work (eg Purcell, 2009), this review highlights the contextualised nature of leadership, but found few examples of leadership development programmes that address situations reflecting the context within which DCSs in England find themselves. However, there are several conclusions to be drawn from analysis of the literature, allowing for consideration of ways in which these findings can be applied to children's services in England.

Lessons for leadership development practice in England

Commentaries on developments in other countries included in this review suggest that the difficulties encountered by leaders of children's services in England – both in overseeing the delivery of more effective, joined-up services, and in accessing the kind of development support they need to be better equipped to do their jobs – are not uncommon. However, England appears to be ahead of most other countries (at least those included in this review) in two main aspects: first in relation to the (re-)configuration of children's services, going further than other countries in bringing together universal and targeted provision of the full range of services for children under the leadership of a DCS, and, second, in the development of leadership programmes for practitioners in a senior management role in all-encompassing (ie integrated) children's services settings.

While many of the countries included in the study are moving towards introducing common standards for school leaders, most appear to allow for a high degree of local flexibility in their application. This might reflect the way in which their education systems devolve responsibility for school management to the local level, and this accords with the approach adopted by the National College in the delivery of many of its programmes. The application of national standards in leadership of children's services might benefit from a similar approach, building on the National College's work in developing peer networks, and focusing on coaching, succession planning and support.

Several examples of generic public sector leadership development programmes have been identified, many of which are based on broad themes that reflect those contained in the National College's leadership development programmes. Some countries (especially Denmark and Ireland) are investing in leadership development for all senior management roles in the public sector, thereby promoting shared understanding of a common set of standards; this may be a way of working suited to adoption by the National College as it looks to broaden the range of options it makes available and strengthens its connections with partner organisations.

Other relevant lessons from the literature

The fact that leaders have pursued different career paths (eg school leaders in The Netherlands are not required to have a teaching background) illustrates the potential merit in opening the route into children's services leadership to a wider cohort than is currently the case. Some of the challenges of securing more effective integrated working between organisations and sectors in the provision of children's services may be overcome by supporting individuals with experience from these different sectors to take up the new leadership roles. The provision of tailored leadership development training to such individuals, for example, might help ensure they overcome barriers borne of their lack of experience of the local authority sector, and enable them to draw on their own experience to enrich children's services policies and the working practices of their colleagues.

There is ample evidence that the provision of children's services in other countries is increasingly incorporating integrated working practices. Effective leadership has been identified as a precursor to enhanced outcomes in this context, as well as being crucial in ensuring that all service managers and personnel are clear about what the process aims to achieve, and in encouraging their commitment to the process. The review identified some cases

where there is a clear demarcation between service planning and delivery, and others where practitioners and service planners work closely together. In both scenarios, evidence is beginning to emerge about the effectiveness of integrated working in bringing about improvements in children's outcomes, and it is clear that – whether structures are streamlined or separate – benefits accrue from the experiences of practitioners being fed directly to service planners, to ensure policy is informed by practice at a local level.

Further research

There remain a number of questions that this research has not been able to address fully, and which it is suggested may merit further enquiry:

- There is a need to secure concrete evidence of the impact of leadership development in relation to enhanced outcomes, not only in relation to academic performance but also to wider outcomes for children, young people and families.
- It would be useful to explore in more detail how different leadership models apply in the specific context of children's services.
- Several areas also merit further enquiry:
 - What knowledge and skills should be developed to create and develop effective leaders, and what programme features are essential to this?
 - What standards should institutions follow?
 - With a broad array of pre- and in-service programmes, how can we identify effective programme design?
 - What policy and fiscal structures and strategies are most likely to support effective preparation and in-service programmes, and are there models of excellence that can be replicated?

The rise of leadership development programmes is both a global phenomenon and a complex web of interconnected, but culturally specific, patterns of provision.

Brundrett and Dering, 2006: 92

Introduction

Research aim, objectives and questions

Our aim in undertaking this research was to enhance understanding about what the National College and its partners (including current and future directors of children's services (DCSs)) can learn from international evidence and practice in relation to the DCS role and its development. The National College's current understanding is that England is unique in its attempt to set out and secure the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes through the development of integrated services overseen by local children's trusts and the statutory DCS role. Nevertheless, given comparative evidence from UNICEF (2007) and others that children's wellbeing remains poor in England, it is keen to learn from other countries, and specifically to discover how they configure and support senior leadership roles in children's services and the approach these countries use to reform the key services involved, including services across education, social services, health, and child protection and wellbeing.

The following research questions provided a focus to the work:

- How are services being reconfigured to improve children's wellbeing and provide increased joint or inter-agency working in these countries?
- How are senior leadership roles in children's services configured and supported?
- How are such roles organised in the context of local and national government and in terms of funding?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of different leadership posts?
- What are the organisational infrastructures and governance framework and what are the implications for the leaders involved?
- What are the outcomes for which leaders are responsible and what evidence is there of their effectiveness in achieving these? How is their performance measured and what external accountability mechanisms exist to support this?
- What skill needs have been identified, what qualifications are leaders of children's services expected to have and what leadership development, training and mentoring do they receive?
- What evidence exists for the impact of any leadership development provision?
- What related evidence and analysis need to be considered (eg succession planning, demographic and career paths of leaders, public perceptions of these roles, extent of integrated working, approaches to change management etc)?
- What are the implications of the above for the National College and the leadership of children's services in England?

Context

The key driver for recent developments in statutory provision for the leadership of children's services has been the legacy of the Laming reports (2003; 2009), from which the connection between effective leadership and the safeguarding of children is made an explicit objective of government policy. Parallel priorities at the heart of government policy include the agendas encapsulated in Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003) and Narrowing the Gap (DCSF, LGA & I&DeA, 2007), focussing in particular on the operation of children's trusts (DCSF, 2004), which embrace safeguarding, efficiency and performance priorities in equal measure.

The circumstances that led to the establishment of the initial Laming inquiry are not unique to the UK, and there have been high-profile child safeguarding cases in many developed countries (eg Lachman & Bernard, 2006). However, the combination of policy initiatives established by government may have given unique emphasis to the integration of disparate services under the leadership of one figurehead (ie the DCS), bringing with it pressures and challenges not experienced elsewhere. Having said this, other governments have devised their own responses to their own circumstances, and these offer the potential to provide additional insights to UK government agencies in determining their future plans.

Constraints

It is necessary at the outset to emphasise the fact that the findings of this study are limited to an extent by the constraints ordinarily faced by a process of reviewing the available literature, including:

- the need to rely on literature, the focus of which does not necessarily dovetail with the subject under review
- variability in the availability of literature by theme and location
- limitations of time

These difficulties were exacerbated by the restricted availability of literature from other countries written in English. As a consequence, the findings for some countries (notably from the English-speaking world) are more detailed than for others, undermining the researchers' ability to make systematic comparisons and to draw complete conclusions on the issues under consideration.

Wherever possible, assistance in interpreting the available written material has been sought from practitioners in the countries under investigation, and the views of those who contributed in this way are reported in the findings. Additionally, we have sought to incorporate a rationalised approach to the overall analysis of the evidence we present in the report, allowing as much as is possible for comparison of the approaches to service provision and leadership development between the countries under investigation.

Methodology

The review was conducted in a number of discrete phases, starting with the establishment of a rationale for the selection of countries to include in the research, followed by the development and implementation of a rigorous search strategy, and finishing with the analysis and collation of information into a series of findings. Further details about each of these stages is presented below.

Rationale for the selection of countries

Four aspects were included in the reasons for selecting countries for inclusion on the study (a more detailed analysis is presented in **appendix 1**):

- socio-economic conditions (drawing principally on member countries of the OECD and with similarly performing economies)
- research on related areas (drawing together findings from international comparisons on the basis of countries' approach to and performance in early childhood education and care, childhood wellbeing and rights, and childhood poverty)
- accessibility of data, recognising the limitations in identifying and accessing relevant data from countries with different political and administrative structures, and where key resources are unlikely to be produced in English

The analysis of data on the performance of countries in relation to the range of themes described above was used to generate a longlist of countries which it was felt offered the potential to generate useful findings in relation to the research questions (listed alphabetically):

- Australia
- Canada
- Denmark
- Finland
- Ireland
- The Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Portugal
- Sweden
- USA (some states)
- Scotland

From these, a shortlist of preferred countries was drawn up, based on the likelihood of data being available in a useable format, including consideration of whether English was used in publications, and the potential ease of access to 'grey' literature (ie papers and reports not published widely). The following list presents these countries in order of priority (inasmuch as it was felt that the earlier countries on the list might reflect most closely the circumstances prevailing in England, and that their performance in key areas of children's outcomes was felt to be something to which this country might aspire):

- Denmark
- The Netherlands
- Ireland

- Canada and USA
- Australia and New Zealand
- Scotland

Search strategy

The approach adopted for the literature review was devised to be sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency, quality and comprehensiveness, and sufficiently flexible to be developed and tailored as the review progressed. The approach taken used multiple overlapping strategies to ensure all relevant documents were identified. The key databases searched were:

- Social Sciences Citation Index
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
- Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (incorporating Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Sociological Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts)
- IDOX Information Service Database

These databases were searched for articles, books and other literature published between 1980 and 2009. Relevant material published before 1980 and to which the researchers were guided was also included. All searches were undertaken in such a way that international sources were included.

Extensive searches of the internet were also undertaken, using a number of user-friendly search engines (including Google, Google-Scholar and Yahoo) and deep-search technologies, as these often prove useful in filling gaps, particularly in the 'grey' literature.

Discussions with key stakeholders (including contacts at the National College, Association of Directors of Children's Services, Improvement and Development Agency for local government (I&DeA) and other public sector support agencies) were also initiated as a means of identifying key documents, especially 'grey' literature.

Research deliverables

On completion, all the evidence from the research was analysed and brought together into a single comprehensive report on the lessons learned from approaches to the leadership of children's services in the countries identified. In the main, the findings have been grouped by country, although cross-country reporting has also been incorporated where particular themes suggest this to be appropriate.

It is intended that the different sections of this report can be accessed and used separately; ideally, however, they should be considered as a whole. The report therefore incorporates:

- descriptive elements, highlighting policies and programmes implemented in different contexts
- qualitative analysis of the impact achieved by different approaches, and an exploration of what conditions are felt most likely to have influenced the success or otherwise of these approaches
- discussion of the implications of the emerging findings, focusing in particular on identifying the approaches deemed most likely to offer the potential for application in the UK (and specifically England)
- recommendations for the actions the National College and its partners may wish to consider incorporating in their own action plans or in further recommendations to government, based on the discussion and analysis presented here

Configuration of children's services in selected countries

Denmark

Context

Denmark operates a two-tier structure of local government, incorporating municipalities (kommunes) and regional governments, which replaced county councils in the 2007 Municipal Reform Act. As in the UK, the reform of Danish local government has been described (Pedersen & Hartley, 2008) as having addressed three agendas:

- devolution of decision-making from central government to local organisations and communities
- building organisational and managerial capacity to improve the quality of service delivery and performance against centrally identified indicators
- increasing the choice of service provider and service provision for individual users and citizens

The process of local government reorganisation has been ongoing since 2007, with the number of kommunes reduced from 275 to 98 (Council of Europe, 2008). This process was introduced in recognition of the fact that demands on kommunes were increasing at the same time as central government was committed to reducing taxes. These challenges have been felt most acutely in children's services, as recognition is being given in increasing amounts to the special needs of children and young people, the figures having exploded over the past 10 years, which has resulted in spending increases of over 100 per cent in many kommunes in this period.

Responsibility for setting the broad policy framework within which children's services are to be shaped lies with central government, although there is no standalone government ministry with responsibility solely for children and young people. Instead, provision is made within legislation on social services (see below), with block grants awarded to local authorities in pursuit of centrally determined objectives. Additional attention is paid to overseeing the implementation of legislation and in ensuring that children's rights are protected through the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Children, and the operation of the state-sponsored (but independent) National Council on Children's Rights.

The Danish education system is 'very strongly decentralised' (Huber & Moos, 2004) with municipal authorities and school boards responsible for managing schools and education provision in line with local needs and priorities, albeit framed by national guidelines. A review by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) of early childhood education and care (ECEC) provision in Denmark (OECD, 2001b) concludes that the separation of responsibilities between different government departments and national and local government has led to some diversity in approach, provision and quality. As well as suggesting that guidance is needed on the implementation of local initiatives to help address national objectives in children's services, it is acknowledged that there is a role for local leadership in achieving and monitoring these goals in a systematic way. This view is reinforced in an assessment of the Danish approach to children's services (Krejsler, 2009), which concludes that there are differences in interpretations (between municipal authorities, institutional leadership and professionals) about how the quality framework should be enacted as a guideline for practice; the resulting battles between policy-makers at different levels – and between municipal authorities and leadership of institutions, and between leadership and professionals in institutions – have affected as implementation and distribution of resources.

Example 1: Excerpt from Consolidation Act on Social Services 2009

Part IV Chapter 6: children and young people

- (1) The municipal council shall ensure that the measures and activities affecting children, young persons and their families are implemented in such a manner as to promote the development, wellbeing and independence of children and young persons. This applies to the implementation of measures of a general and preventive nature, as well as more target-oriented measures relating to children and young persons with impaired physical or mental function or any other particular need for support.
- (2) The municipal council shall prepare a cohesive child policy designed to secure cohesion between the general and preventive work and the targeted-oriented measures relating to children and young persons in need of special support. The cohesive child policy shall be formulated in writing, be adopted by the municipal council, and be published.
- (3) The municipal council shall ensure that the measures implemented under this Act in respect of children and young persons with impaired physical or mental function or any other particular need for support complement any other statutory measures implemented in respect of the same children and young persons.

These centrally determined policies are implemented at a local level mainly by *kommunes* (responsible for children's daycare and school-age childcare, education and youth, child welfare and primary health care), with regional authorities responsible for specialist services (eg residential homes, upper secondary schools and hospitals). Responsibility for child welfare lies with municipal child protection boards, which make decisions (with particular regard given to the input of psychologists) on the best course of action for children identified as being in need of additional support. The rate of removal of children in need (to out-of-home care) is particularly high in Denmark (60 per cent), though this is achieved with less reliance on legal structures and compulsion than is the case in the UK, as agencies and parents work together closely to identify and agree the best course of action for each child (Grinde, 2007).

Example 2: Local service planning at Århus Kommune²

Since local government reorganisation, Århus Kommune has assumed responsibility for almost all areas of children's service provision (excluding higher secondary education) within the Department of Social Services (DSS), and has adopted the Aarhus development plan for children and youth to ensure these services are delivered in as efficient and joined-up a manner as possible. The plan serves as a value-based framework for the kommune's work with 0-18 year olds, and makes provision for support to disadvantaged children and families, focusing on prevention and the inclusion of the child in his or her immediate surroundings. Local services are required to incorporate the values set out in the plan in all the communities where they work with children and young people, and to work in close collaboration with professionals, volunteers, parents and the children and young people themselves.

Four central strategies guide the work with children and young people:

- **Learning and development** – professional learning must continue to be developed
- **Inclusiveness** – there must be room for everyone
- **Health and wellbeing** – children and young people must have the necessary support to lead a healthy and secure life
- **Parental involvement** – collaboration with parents is a central element for successful results.

2 See http://english.ism.dk/ministryofsocialwelfare/legislation/social_affairs/social_service_act/Sider/Start.aspx [accessed 7 Jan 2010].

The development plan makes provision for service delivery, with services grouped under the following themes, each overseen by a specialist consultant employed by the kommune:

- childcare (nurseries, childminders, kindergartens, integrated institutions)
- schools (primary and lower secondary schools, leisure clubs and after-school centres, after-school clubs, learning centres for children and young people, advice and special educational support, youth guidance)
- family support (family treatment and family care, crisis centres and temporary family boarding homes, advice, youth centres, crime prevention, family services)

Several development projects are included in the plan, delivered under the auspices of the DSS. These projects address a range of issues:

- obesity project for children and young people
- diet, exercise and special advice for disabled children and young people
- strengthening of the competencies of bilingual children through school referrals and language stimulation
- learning styles, social bearing and inclusion
- boys in traumatised refugee families
- life and learning of boys
- languages and reading

However, a recent critique of government policy on parental responsibility for their children's behaviour is critical of the Århus Kommune development plan, particularly its requirements that: 'efforts must be assessed and evaluated based on a common definition of what a child should be able to do at different stages of development and in different age groups' (Århus Kommune, 2007:8), and 'the work with the strategy is supported by defining specific indicators to assess and measure children and young people's wellbeing and health, for example, wellbeing tests and measurements, physical fitness ratings and BMI' (ibid:13). The critique of this approach questions the imposition of an implicit notion of the 'perfect child ... to whom all other children can be compared and who can be created by strategic thinking and targeted, planned education and intensive monitoring'; an assertion which is questioned as being based on a simplistic view of children, and which – as its corollary – justifies 'the need to punish the ill-adjusted, troublesome, imperfect children' (Palludan, 2009:3).

General observations

Reform of the education system in Denmark has been ongoing for the past decade, with school leadership identified as one of the key areas for implementing change, particularly in relation to improved student experiences and outcomes (Boje, 2009). The employment of pedagogues in a range of contexts in Denmark (Children in Scotland, 2009), including both in school settings and care contexts, predominantly for children under 10, allows the closer integration of teaching and non-teaching staff.

While in some cases provision has been made to co-ordinate service provision at the local level (as in the case of Århus Kommune), this is not always the case. Similarly, leadership development to date has focused mainly on school leaders.

The Netherlands

Context

Children's services in The Netherlands are grouped together under youth policy, where the term 'youth' applies to children and young people aged between 0 and 24 years. The kinds of child and youth care services provided for this age group in The Netherlands include ambulant care, day care, residential care, foster care, youth protection and youth mental health care.

The Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI, 2007) asserts that youth policy is high on the political agenda in The Netherlands, and identifies two trends in policy over the past two decades. First, policy has focused on decentralising responsibility for service planning and delivery, with a large proportion of services formerly managed by central government being transferred to local and provincial administrative levels. Second, a clearer distinction has been established between general and preventive youth policy and the youth care system. Local preventive youth policy (for which the 450 local authorities are responsible) includes education, leisure services and health care, along with specific preventive tasks (eg access to help and care co-ordination at the local level) with a special focus on parenting support. The youth care system (responsibility for which lies with the 12 provincial and regional authorities) covers all forms of care available to parents and children that address serious development and parenting problems.

National youth policy is co-ordinated by the Ministry for Youth and Families³, which was established in 2007 after a three-year consultation period on youth services called Operation Young. The first policy initiative arising from Operation Young identified 11 priorities for action (NMHWS, 2004):

1. An effective system of care and counselling must be established in and around schools so that children with problems can be helped more quickly.
2. The education system must achieve better results, with fewer children leaving school without qualifications and a higher incidence of basic qualifications obtained.
3. An effective system of education and care is needed for all children aged 0 to 12.
4. Problems affecting children and young people must be flagged up more quickly; the relevant authorities must be clear among themselves who is to be notified, what measures must be taken and who is responsible for taking them.
5. Authorities must improve the way their indicators are co-ordinated and must make them understandable to children and their parents.
6. More must be done to address children's need for space in public places and buildings such as schools, day nurseries, etc.
7. Co-operation with different partners in a system must be based on an effective exchange of information between different institutions and sectors. Obstacles to this exchange of information must be swiftly removed.
8. A preventive youth policy and sound, basic provisions are crucial to ensuring that children and young people do not become disadvantaged. This must be done at local level, with a guarantee of municipal input.
9. There are many different programmes designed to help young people overcome problems. These programmes must be screened for their effectiveness and quality and their co-ordination must be improved.
10. The effects of the government's youth policy must be measured more effectively using practical indicators.
11. Policy must be supervised in a more cohesive way.

3 The Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI) is a non-departmental public body established by the government to compile, verify and disseminate knowledge on children and youth matters (specifically child and youth welfare, [residential] youth care, health, justice and children's development and wellbeing, as well as parenting support, community schools, child abuse and early child education). For further information, see www.nji.nl/eCache/DEF/1/05/642.html [accessed 5 Jan 2010]. See www.jeugdengazin.nl/english/ [accessed 9 Feb 2010].

The ministry acknowledges that although international comparative surveys rate Dutch children among the happiest in the world, certain issues still require concerted effort between government ministries, municipal and provincial authorities, youth care institutions, schools and other stakeholders. Areas identified for particular attention are:

- child abuse
- children with behavioural problems
- the unhealthy lifestyle of some youngsters
- the number of children who attend neither school nor work
- an increase in anti-social behaviour among the young

The ministry is responsible for delivering the national youth and family programme (NMYF, 2007a), which has been designed to achieve the following goal:

a country where children can grow up safely and healthily, develop their talents, enjoy themselves, learn to be good citizens and be properly equipped for the future: in short, a country where all children enjoy equal opportunities.

NMYF, 2007a:5

The aims of the programme are comparable to the ECM outcomes:

- healthy upbringing
- safe upbringing
- contributing to society
- developing talents and having fun
- being properly prepared for the future

The programme includes proposals to:

- develop the skills and resources of parents to enable them to provide better support to their children
- ensure that services identify individual children and families with problems (and respond with appropriate interventions) at an early stage
- promote greater clarity about the responsibilities of different stakeholders, including parents, children, professionals and government

Many of the actions relating to these responsibilities are comparable to initiatives being driven forward in England and include:

- the requirement for a member of each local authority executive to assume responsibility for youth and family services
- the establishment of a network of youth and family centres
- local agreements to guarantee effective co-operation and co-ordination (as exemplified by rolling out pupil support advisory teams and a requirement on local authorities and agencies to enter into binding agreements to simplify the care system for young people)
- the introduction of an integrated referral framework

The Dutch national youth and family programme also includes proposals designed to enhance the quality and status of professionals working in youth and family services, focusing on the following four priorities:

1. Make professional qualifications more transparent, ie by exploring what knowledge and skills are needed to work in the sector.
2. Improve training.
3. Ensure that all workers in the sector belong to a professional association.
4. Introduce disciplinary and review procedures for the sector.

The ministry has also introduced changes to the arrangements for the provision of child and youth care, establishing the Youth Care Agency (YCA) to operate in all 12 provinces and major urban centres across the country. The YCA provides a safety net, affording children, young people and families the opportunity to have their circumstances assessed if they feel local agencies have not been able to help them with their problems. Overseeing the provision of care services at a national level is the Council for Child Protection, which ensures that YCAs devise and implement interventions based on a full and thorough assessment of the circumstances of individuals and families who present themselves for assessment.

Some examples of interventions (NJI, 2008) being implemented currently are included below to illustrate the way in which youth services in The Netherlands are being reformed.

- Triple P: The Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI) is responsible for the implementation of the Australian-derived Triple P programme in The Netherlands. Triple P is an evidence-based, multi-level family intervention programme, designed to promote positive parenting strategies and prevent emotional and behavioural problems in children at different ages. The NJI co-ordinates Triple P training for practitioners in the youth and health care systems, and offers support and consultation to local policy officers and youth care institutions on the implementation of this programme.
- Get-at-able social assistance: Study visits and information-sharing have been organised to promote awareness among Dutch policy-makers in the youth field of the Sure Start and children's centres initiatives in England, which are promoted as a get-at-able form of social assistance for parents and children. This work focused in particular on close co-operation between health care, educational support and social services, and the creation of an integrated workforce.

Example 3: Youth and family centres

The Dutch government has provided guidance (NMYF, 2007b) about the range of services it expects to find in each of the newly established youth and family centres (YFCs), which it intends will be available in every city by 2011, starting in the municipalities of Almere, Amsterdam, The Hague, Eindhoven, Rotterdam, Tilburg and Utrecht. In order to operate under the title of YFC, the facility must combine at least the following four elements of the basic model:

1. Youth health care:
 - child health clinics and municipal health services
2. The five functions stipulated by the Social Support Act (2007):
 - information and advice
 - identification of problems
 - guidance to help
 - minor pedagogical help
 - co-ordination of care including social work, family coaching and parenting support

3. Link to youth care offices
4. Link to care and advice teams

As well as the services included in the basic model, it is anticipated that YFCs will incorporate several additional functions that reflect the needs of the local community, tailored to specific local needs.

These functions could include:

- childcare, play-school and early childhood education
- school attendance officers
- developments in community schools and appropriate education
- welfare (general social work, youth work and street-corner work)
- frontline care, such as GPs, maternity care-givers and midwives
- municipal youth health care
- municipal work and income services, including a youth department
- debt relief for parents and young people
- police and judiciary

General observations

It has proved difficult to obtain information about the provision of children's services at a local level in any of the major cities in The Netherlands. However, it is possible to identify the key characteristics of social services provision in the country, and to extrapolate from these the issues faced by leaders in the provision of children's services.

As described above, services in The Netherlands are highly decentralised, and citizens benefit from a relatively high level of provision of universal services, where priority is given to client empowerment and local user forums. A significant proportion of welfare services is provided by non-profit-making organisations (funded by state, provincial and local authorities as well as social insurance), reflecting the political emphasis on the development of a market-orientated and needs-led service.

The issue of child protection has, as in the UK, achieved a high public and political profile in response to a case in which a child ('Savanna') died in spite of being under the closest scrutiny by social welfare officials. This has resulted in an increase in the number of children being put on the child protection register or placed in care, along with an increase in the number of complaints about what is perceived by some as the excessively risk-averse and interventionist approach of child protection services and professionals. Additionally, the case has had a significant effect on the morale of children's services professionals, presenting leaders with the challenge of reinvigorating their services and motivating their staff.

As in the UK, integrated working has emerged as a priority for the delivery of children's services in The Netherlands. The establishment of YFCs and – in some cities, such as Amsterdam – Parent and Child Centres is central to the delivery of this objective, although it has been asserted that, in order for these to be effective, they must not 'stop short at identification, referral and coordination, but evolve into the main support agency for families and provide parents with direct assistance when required' (Prinsen & Prakken, 2007: 4).

Ireland

Context

The arrangements in Ireland for the provision of services to children have undergone substantial change over the past two decades. This is partly in response to a concerted campaign on the part of key players in the third sector and the childhood research community, who argued that childhood wellbeing and service provision were at unacceptably low levels, but also reflects the increase in the availability of EU funding and the burgeoning Irish economy in the early years of the 21st century. The structures that are now in place to oversee the development and implementation of children's services policy reflect those in England:

- The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA / National Children's Office) is headed by a minister of state who attends all cabinet meetings and co-ordinates government policy across three departments: those of health, justice and education. The OMCYA is charged with overseeing the implementation of the National Children's Strategy, which focuses on harmonising policy issues that affect children in areas such as early childhood care and education, youth justice, child welfare and protection, children's and young people's participation, research on children and young people, youth work and cross-cutting initiatives for children.
- The Implementation Group, chaired by OMCYA, involves all relevant government departments, the Health Service Executive (HSE, which oversees children's social services), representatives of local authorities, the education sector and other agencies as required.
- The Implementation Group also links with HSE's Expert Advisory Group on Children.
- The government also supports two independent functions – the Office of the Ombudsman for Children and Special Legal Rapporteurs for Children – to bring an additional degree of accountability to the process.

The children's services inspection regime is somewhat less complex than in previous years as a result of a recent review by the Irish government of all regulatory and inspection agencies. Regulation and inspection of children's services in Ireland is undertaken by:

- Department of Education and Science (DES) Inspectorate, which evaluates schools and the quality, effectiveness and standards of education, and the quality and effectiveness of the provision of education in the state
- Social Services Inspectorate

Unlike the arrangements in most other European countries, many services in Ireland are managed and controlled nationally rather than locally. This implies a different leadership dynamic, particularly in relation to policy implementation, with responsibility for leading the change agenda resting with individuals at the centre. Indeed, it has been asserted that 'without a mandate from the key person at national level, many services are unable or unwilling to engage locally in cross-sectoral working' (Langford, 2007:253). This places the onus on the Implementation Group to provide effective leadership for the process.

At the local level, the government has supported the establishment of a pilot multi-agency Children's Services Committee (CSC) in four local authority areas, which are quadripartite bodies from local government, local development agencies, the state sector and social partners designed to mirror the national arrangements. This configuration is beginning to roll out to all city and county development boards. These committees are required as part of OMCYA's national partnership agreement to ensure a collaborative, cross-sectoral approach to delivering children's services. They involve officials from statutory agencies with responsibility for budgets and service delivery working together to develop a strategic approach to services for children in the county. There is some flexibility in how CSCs approach this work, although they are required to interface with the Implementation Group, providing information on the needs of children, resource allocation and outcomes arising from investment in children's services. Local accountability for achieving better outcomes for children is to be secured primarily through the relationship between CSCs and local authorities.

Example 4: National Children's Strategy: Our children, their lives

Ireland's National Children's Strategy (Irish Government, 2000) aims for:

an Ireland where children are respected as young citizens with a valued contribution to make and a voice of their own; where all children are cherished and supported by family and the wider society; where they enjoy a fulfilling childhood and realise their potential.

Irish Government, 2000:4

The strategy is grounded in six operational principles, which require that all actions taken will be:

- child centred
- family oriented
- equitable
- inclusive
- action orientated
- integrated

The key elements in the new framework identified by the strategy are:

- managing the change through new, national-level structures
- delivering the change through improved local structures
- promoting the development of human resources, with a specific aim of developing inter-agency working and training

In its work to implement the strategy, OMCYA asserts that the city and county development board structures and strategies provide ideal vehicles for local articulation of the National Children's Strategy (see Example 3), suggesting that these could contribute much to improving the co-ordination of work with children, which the strategy groups under the following themes:

- childcare
- child and youth participation, including a youth parliament
- child welfare and protection
- early years education, including a national quality framework and a workforce development plan
- Irish youth justice service
- children and young people's services development, including national policies on play and recreation, a prevention and early intervention programme, and a young people's facilities and services fund
- research, including a national longitudinal study on children and research measuring child wellbeing and basic data on children and young people⁴
- youth affairs

4 See www.childrensdatabase.ie [accessed 10 Feb 2010]

Parallel initiatives that are closely related to the new framework include the Irish government's commitment in its ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to the implementation of those rights in laws and policies articulated in the convention, and the development of a 10-year strategy known as T16 (Irish Government, 2006) to enhance collaboration in service planning and delivery between different tiers of government in Ireland. To achieve the vision stated in the National Children's Strategy, the government has undertaken to sign up to T16 with its social partners to achieve the following long-term goals for children in Ireland:

- Every child should grow up in a family with access to sufficient resources, support and services, to nurture and care for the child, and foster the child's development and full and equal participation in society.
- Every family should be able to access childcare services which are appropriate to the circumstances and needs of their children.
- Every child should leave primary school literate and numerate.
- Every student should complete a senior cycle or equivalent programme (including ICT) appropriate to their capacity and interests.
- Every child should have access to world-class health, personal social services and suitable accommodation.
- Every child should have access to [good] quality play, sport, recreation and cultural activities to enrich their experience of childhood.
- Every child and young person will have access to appropriate participation in local and national decision-making.

In order to provide service planners and delivery managers with a clearer understanding about what is required of them in taking forward these policy ambitions, the government has produced a series of guidance materials (OMCYA, 2007a; 2007b; 2007c; 2007d). Generated in the form of reflective questions, this guidance provides policy-makers and frontline service managers with direct guidance on how to address the agenda laid out in the framework and the related policies described above.

Example 5: South Dublin County Council Children's Services Committee

The membership of South Dublin Children's Services Committee (SDCSC) is drawn from a wide range of statutory, community and voluntary organisations with a remit for young people in the administrative area of South Dublin County Council. Co-chaired by the county manager and HSE assistant national director, membership includes:

- Gardai Síochána (Police Service)
- National Children's Hospital
- Probation Service
- Childhood Development Initiative (Atlantic Philanthropies)
- South Dublin County Childcare Committee
- HSE
- National Education and Welfare Board
- South Dublin County Council
- Barnardo's
- Archway
- County Dublin Vocational Education Committee
- Tallaght Partnership
- Clondalkin Partnership
- Department of Education and Science

The main objectives of SDCSC are to:

- develop strong cross-agency working relationships
- secure support for the joint implementation of policy initiatives
- maximise the integration of service delivery at local level

SDCSC is working to enable agencies engaged in service delivery to children and their families to familiarise themselves with the work of other agencies, and to work together to develop better services for children. It has identified six priority areas:

1. Education and development
2. Safety and security
3. Child welfare, child protection and family support
4. Systems communications, data and planning
5. Inter-agency case-work
6. Participation

A working group has been established to devise action plans and oversee activities under each of these priorities. The following summarises some of the target outcomes identified by these working groups.

Education and development

All children will have the key skills needed to engage successfully in the education system on entry to primary school.

Every child will achieve their learning potential through the school system and other learning opportunities.

Safety and security

Children are physically and emotionally safe in their homes, families and community. Children engage positively in their community through [good] quality play, sport and recreational facilities.

Child welfare, child protection and family support

All children develop to their full potential in their family and wider community, enabled by effective family and child support.

In addition to the action plans drawn up in pursuit of these issues, SDCSC has set up a subgroup particularly looking at inter-agency work in the field of child welfare, protection and family support. This was highlighted in a series of case studies as a major area of mutual concern, and the subgroup aims to devise a checklist for inter-agency meetings and protocols for sharing information and multi-agency welfare cases.

Systems communications, data and planning

Systems, structures and data collection processes are in place to work collaboratively to identify and address children's needs. Services for children and families are accessible and integrated.

Inter-agency case-work

Leadership features among the other challenges identified so far, such as information-sharing, agency boundaries (geographic and on the basis of work practices) and a focus on outcomes rather than activity. In recognition of this challenge, SDCSC has adopted a set of protocols for inter-agency working (SDCSC, 2008); the implementation of these is guided by a set of principles, one of which emphasises the importance of strong leadership across agencies along with senior level and front-line buy-in.

Participation

All children and families have the opportunity to actively participate in improving their communities and services.

General observations

Using EU funding, the Children's Services Planning and Information Group⁵ has devised a framework (CAWT, 2008) to assist practitioners in undertaking integrated planning based on improved outcomes for children. Although focused on the cross-border regions (ie not the whole of the Republic of Ireland), the framework incorporates several references to the role of leaders within children's services, which it is intended will inform practice across the whole island. For example, in discussing what needs to be in place in order to focus on outcomes in service planning and delivery, it is acknowledged that organisational cultures and pressures 'can sometimes militate against adopting this approach', and that it is 'important for agency staff, and in particular leaders, to recognise and be aware of this' (CAWT, 2008:8). Specifically, it is suggested that it is necessary to identify a lead person 'who can drive the process and attain the commitment of agencies and staff' (ibid:14). Stating that integrated planning 'can require organisations to reform, in turn causing turbulence which can weaken support for the process of planning and commissioning', it is suggested that the leadership role includes ensuring that all partners work together and 'maintain focus' (ibid:16).

The Child Care Policy Unit of the Department of Health and Children (DHC) recently conducted a review of service provision in order to identify good practice in meeting the care and welfare needs of children and families (DHC, 2009). Arising from this work, a set of principles of good practice in child and family services was identified, classified according to management-level principles and intervention-level principles, including the following that are most pertinent to leadership demands.

Management principles

- Services have clear objectives and a management and organisational culture that facilitates their achievement.
- The service has a culture of learning and development.
- The service has a commitment to effective partnership practice.

Intervention principles

- The service is whole-child focused.
- Services are integrated.
- The service is responsive to need and effective.
- The service works in a way that is collaborative and strengthening.

5 The Children's Services Planning and Information Group is a co-operative working group that draws expertise from children's service planners and researchers from all four Health Boards, and academics from Galway University; see www.outcomesforchildren.org [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

Canada

Context

As in many other countries included in this study, the Canadian government – working with other tiers of government – has taken the lead in setting a framework for the development of enhanced children’s services. Initiated in 1997, work on the National Children’s Agenda (NCA) accelerated after the adoption of the Social Union Framework Agreement by the Canadian government and the provincial and territorial governments (Government of Canada, 1999). The agreement is effectively a mechanism to develop a national social policy and undertake the reforms necessary to enhance the effectiveness of social programmes in Canada, and committed these different levels of government to work more closely together to meet the needs of all Canadians⁶.

Further federal-provincial-territorial agreements have been negotiated in order to implement specific elements of the NCA, including an Agreement on Early Childhood Development (Government of Canada, 2009b) which is designed to improve and expand early childhood development programmes and services across the country. This has resulted in large blocks of funding being transferred from the Canadian government to provinces and territories in support of their investments in early development programmes and services. This funding has been used to improve and expand services in four key areas:

- healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy
- parenting and family support
- early childhood development, learning and care
- community support

Another multi-government agreement – on Early Learning and Child Care (Government of Canada, 2003) – resulted in the establishment of a framework which aims to improve access to affordable, good-quality, provincially and territorially regulated early learning and childcare programmes and services. As in the UK, this has resulted in additional resources being channelled into children’s centres, family child care homes (effectively an extended childminder service), pre-school facilities and nursery schools, based on four principles: quality, universal inclusivity, accessibility and developmental focus.

Example 6: National Children’s Agenda

Responding to this policy driver, the federal-provincial-territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal developed a national agenda for enhancing the wellbeing of Canada’s children, based on a shared vision and a common understanding of children’s changing circumstances and needs, both as children and as future adults. Policy development also incorporated a substantial degree of public consultation (Government of Canada, 2000a), with a number of key national forums in particular lobbying on the process (eg Campaign 2000⁷ on the need to end child poverty, and the National Children’s Alliance⁸). The NCA aims to ensure that all Canada’s children have the best possible opportunity to develop to their full potential as healthy, successful and contributing members of society. The vision, values and goals of the NCA⁹ are shown in **Table 2**.

6 All provinces, with the exception of Quebec, have signed the Social Union Framework Agreement and the National Children’s Agenda.

7 See www.campaign2000.ca [accessed 7 Dec 2009].

8 See www.nationalchildrensalliance.com/nca/index.htm [accessed 7 Dec 2009].

9 See www.socialunion.gc.ca/nca/June21-2000/english/sharedvision_e.html [accessed 9 Feb 2010].

Table 2: Goals of Canada's National Children's Agenda

<p>A. Our vision: What do we, as a society, want for our children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We want all of our children to be loved and to thrive. – We want every child to be valued and to develop his or her unique physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and creative capacities. – We want every child to be respected and protected, and in turn, to respect and protect the rights of others. – We want all of our children to belong and contribute to communities that appreciate diversity, support different abilities and share their resources.
<p>B. Our values: What do we, as a society, believe about our children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – We believe that children thrive within families and communities that can meet their physical needs, as well as provide security, nurturing, respect and love. We believe we can support children by helping parents, families and their communities provide the resources their children need. – We believe our children must be recognized for their inherent worth and valued for who they are as much as who they will become. We believe that children's voices must be respected in determining their best interests. We believe that protecting children's interests is a basic social responsibility. – We believe in the importance of parents, elders and extended families in nurturing Aboriginal children. We value the voices of Aboriginal children¹⁰, and honour their traditional and spiritual significance in Aboriginal communities. – We believe our goals for children must reflect Canada's rich traditions and cultures. We believe our goals must be achieved in partnership with the communities we live in. – We believe that the protections granted to children by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child must be preserved.
<p>C. Our goals: What do we hope to achieve? Children who are:</p> <p>1. Healthy, physically and emotionally:</p> <p>children who are as physically and emotionally healthy as they can be, with strong self-esteem, life skills and enthusiasm</p> <p>children who are physically and mentally active, live healthy lifestyles, are free of preventable disease and injury, and enjoy healthy environments</p> <p>2. Safe and secure:</p> <p>children whose basic needs are met, including love, shelter, food, clothing, recreation and play</p> <p>children who are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation and dangerous environments, and who are given support by caring adults</p> <p>Continued on next page</p>

¹⁰ Canada's Aboriginal peoples include First Nations, Inuit and Metis.

3. Successful at learning:

children who achieve physical, emotional and social development, language skills, literacy, numeracy and general knowledge to the best of their capabilities

children who are ready for learning throughout their lives so they can gain the abilities they need for present and future fulfilment

4. Socially engaged and responsible:

children who can form stable attachments to nurturing adults when they are young and develop supportive relationships within and outside their families

children who value Canada's cultural heritage and diversity, and who develop an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of belonging to a wider society

children who respect themselves and others through being respected, and understand the personal and social consequences of their choices

Education at all levels¹¹ is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provincial and territorial governments. The work of the different governments is co-ordinated nationally by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), which has developed a joint vision for education in Canada (CMEC, 2008) that identifies a range of common priorities for educational provision nationally. This has been deemed necessary because while many similarities exist between the provincial and territorial education systems, there are differences in the curriculum (CMEC, 2009). Local governance of education varies, with the educational provision in different localities overseen by school boards, school districts, school divisions, or district education councils, whose powers are delegated by provincial or territorial governments. As a result, leadership at school and locality levels can vary appreciably.

Example 7: Toronto's First Duty Pilot Programme

Toronto First Duty¹² (TFD) is a partnership of the city of Toronto, Toronto District School Board and community agencies and supported by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. TFD is a universal early learning and care programme for every child in the city that simultaneously:

- meets the developmental needs of children to ensure they reach their full potential
- supports parents to work or study
- supports parents in their parenting role

TFD brings kindergarten, childcare and parenting support together in a single programme, securing for parents access to the full range of child and family support available in their community, provided by the three partners in the following manner:

- Toronto City Council is the systems manager for a large network of community-operated childcare and family resource services, in addition to its directly operated services that include childcare, public health, libraries, and parks and recreation programmes.
- Toronto District School Board operates a half-day kindergarten and supports school-based family centres and school readiness and nutrition programmes. It also leases in-school space to community-operated childcare and family support programmes.

¹¹ 'Education' comprises early childhood learning and development, elementary and secondary schooling, post-secondary education, and adult learning and skills development.

¹² See www.toronto.ca/firstduty [accessed 11 Jan 2010].

- Atkinson Charitable Foundation is committed to the development of a universal early learning and childcare system. The foundation provides funding and staff resources to projects that further that goal in the city.

An evaluation of the scheme (Toronto First Duty Research Team, 2006) concluded that the integration of professional support had improved the quality of early childhood programmes, reduced risks for parents and children and offered a more cost-effective alternative to service provision. It suggested that by engaging parents in the school and their children's early learning, children's social, emotional and academic readiness for school is enhanced. The pilot phase of TFD is now complete, and it is intended that integrated service delivery becomes the operational standard for Toronto's children's service system in the light of the evaluation of this pilot. Indeed, the lessons learnt from TFD will inform the implementation of the Best Start 10-year Strategy (a strategy for meeting the early learning and care needs of young children) in Toronto and across Ontario.

Scotland

Context

The arrangements in Scotland for the provision of services to children remain broadly as they were in England until the implementation of the Children Act 2004, inasmuch as the following structures are in place:

- The Scottish Government (or Executive) sets the broad policy framework for service provision¹³ and for regulation and inspection regimes¹⁴.
- Local authorities implement national policy at a local level and oversee service delivery, both through direct service provision and commissioning.
- Typically, children's services are split between two main departments (for social work and education), although there has been a tendency for recent organisational restructures to result in the establishment (often within Social Work Departments) of a children's services group.

Example 8: National policy context: Getting it Right for Every Child

A new national approach to supporting and working with all children and young people in Scotland, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) impacts on all services for children and on adult services where children are involved. It is designed to ensure that all parents, carers and professionals work effectively together to give children and young people the best start possible and to improve their life opportunities.

As with Every Child Matters, GIRFEC requires that all services for children and young people – social work, health, education, police, housing and voluntary organisations – adapt and streamline their systems and practices to improve how they work together to support children and young people, including strengthening information-sharing. This approach is intended to help those facing the greatest social or health inequalities and enshrines the following core components (Scottish Executive, 2008):

- a focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families based on a shared understanding of wellbeing
- a common approach to gaining consent and to sharing information where appropriate
- an integral role for children, young people and families in assessment, planning and intervention
- a co-ordinated and unified approach to identifying concerns, assessing needs, and agreeing actions and outcomes, based on the wellbeing indicators
- streamlined planning, assessment and decision-making processes that lead to the right help at the right time
- consistently high standards of co-operation, joint working and communication where more than one agency needs to be involved, locally and across Scotland
- a lead professional to co-ordinate and monitor multi-agency activity where necessary
- maximisation of the skilled workforce within universal services to address needs and risks at the earliest possible time
- a confident and competent workforce across all services for children, young people and their families
- the capacity to share demographic, assessment and planning information electronically within and across agency boundaries through the national e-Care programme where appropriate

13 eg Getting it Right for Every Child; the Early Years Framework; and Changing Lives: the Report of the 21st Century Review of Social Work.

14 The Scottish Government recently completed a review of 29 different inspection agencies, arising from which is the adoption of a new Scrutiny Framework. Within this, two agencies are charged with overseeing social work and children's services, namely Healthcare Improvement Scotland (supporting service improvement) and Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (supporting assurance).

Example 9: Local context: Dundee Integrated Children's Services

Dundee Integrated Children's Services (ICS) draws together partners from Dundee City Council, NHS, police, voluntary organisations and the private sector. Its purpose is to oversee the development and implementation of Dundee's Children's Services Plan, which expresses a shared commitment that 'every child and young person in Dundee is Safe, Nurtured, Healthy, Achieving, Active, Respected and Responsible and Included' (Dundee City Council, 2005: 1).

Dundee's integrated approach is based on improving and delivering services and outcomes for children and young people. This is being achieved through better co-ordination of existing and new resources, whilst keeping a focus on the delivery of effective child-centred activities:

- The Strategic Planning Group (SPG) places central importance on the wellbeing, needs and interests of all children by engaging all relevant interests, building on and linking existing services and resources, and developing a shared vision of working together and a shared commitment to improving services. Membership of the SPG includes city council departmental directors, service leads from external agencies (such as police and NHS), and other interested parties (eg children's panel and Barnardo's).
- The Implementation Management Group (IMG) has responsibility for quality assurance, co-ordination, performance management, workforce planning, staff development, communication, information-sharing, consultation and service development. Membership is drawn from the SPG and operational staff from engaged agencies.
- Priority areas and groups identified by the SPG and IMG are linked to the Children's Service Plan themes of safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected and responsible, and included. These groups address the following priorities:
 - child protection
 - community learning and development
 - alcohol and drugs
 - early years
 - attainment and achievement
 - healthy children
 - sports and physical activity
 - looked-after children
 - youth justice

General observations

Although it is not a statutory requirement, most local authorities in Scotland have some form of multi-agency planning forum to co-ordinate children's services. These tend to operate at two levels: strategic (forums at which directors of education and social work make their contribution) and operational. While this approach ensures that strategies are in place to ensure that the national agenda is incorporated into local planning, there is a danger that the strategies that emerge do not reflect local need adequately, as strategic-level officers are divorced from operational issues. The role of head of children's services (where it exists: there are not many individuals employed in this role in Scotland) is seen as offering scope to overcome some of these challenges. Such roles tend to be located within social work departments, suggesting their emphasis is on child welfare and protection as opposed to education.

The effectiveness of these arrangements varies between localities; where they are felt to be most effective, it is apparent that this is due to the contribution of visionary leaders. Specifically, it is acknowledged that the GIRFEC approach requires services to do things differently, and that this requires leaders to 'relinquish power and share some of that with their partners' which in turn is dependent upon their 'having a commitment to children/families and showing a willingness to put them at the centre and make processes fit the new model'¹⁵ (Anon, 2009).

15 Anon (2009); contributors' unattributable comments

Leadership development programmes

This section of the report summarises the details of available information about the different approaches to leadership development in each of the countries included in the study. As well as exploring what training and development opportunities exist for leaders of children's services in these countries, information has been gathered from initiatives to enhance the leadership capacity of individuals leading the component services. In particular, this has included reference to school leadership development, where it is evident that there has been a substantial amount of activity over the past two decades in countries across the world. Additionally, information about the range of generic public sector leadership provision has been included, as a means of identifying where – if no targeted, service-specific provision is evident – leaders of children's services can access training and development. Finally, information from other countries not included in the study that emerged during the review of the literature has been included, as it was felt this might offer a useful insight into alternative approaches to leadership development. Wherever possible, this focuses on the context of children's services, but also refers to generic training deemed relevant to the context of this study.

Denmark

The Danish government has acknowledged the importance of developing leadership capabilities in all areas of public life. A programme of leadership reform has emerged, building on work developed and delivered in the education system, which acknowledges explicitly the need for the application of a distributed leadership model and for reduced bureaucracy. Initially established as a partnership between different Danish associations of school leaders and board members and the Ministry for Education, the Partnership on Leadership (Mortensen, 2009) is drawing up proposals to define qualified leadership in the educational system, including a description of the competences a school leader ought to have and a competence development plan for school leaders. Additionally, a budget allocation equivalent to €2 million has been ring-fenced for school leadership development in 2009–10.

A recent report on leadership in Danish education (Moos, 2009) notes that it is not yet a precondition for school principals, nor those applying for principalships, to be formally educated in leadership. Nor is it the case that the government has established – or intends to establish – any formal standards for the qualifications that are available, reflecting resistance at the local level for this to be imposed (Huber & Moos, 2004). School leadership development remains the responsibility of individual *kommunes*, some of which pay their leaders to participate in diploma programmes in public leadership at the university colleges or Master's programmes in educational leadership. In most cases, leadership development is achieved through participation in school leadership networks, while some municipalities fund coaches for school leaders.

Increasingly, school leadership development is being delivered by Local Government Training and Development Denmark¹⁶ (the equivalent of I&DeA in the UK). Principals and prospective principals can enrol on this two-year, part-time diploma course in general public leadership at one of several university colleges, and it is anticipated that completion of the course is likely to become a precondition for applying for school leadership.

For the wider public sector leadership initiative, the Danish government has initiated a process of leadership reform that incorporates recognition of the following:

- All public leaders have the right to a recognised leadership education.
- Public leaders need to be evaluated at least every third year.
- Public leaders need to have distinct leadership responsibility and space to practise leadership.
- Good leadership needs to be appreciated and rewarded.

In order to ensure that the impact of leadership development is felt across all areas of public life, responsibility for overseeing its implementation has been given to a new unit within the Ministry of Finance – the Centre for Quality, De-bureaucratisation and Leadership (KAL) – which is responsible for initiatives and projects that concern the implementation and follow-up of the Danish Quality Reform¹⁷, including leadership, de-bureaucratisation, public administration and management policies and budgetary systems. KAL has supported programmes being developed by the Forum for Top Executive Management¹⁸, including a workshop for chief executives incorporating Denmark's first code for 'chief executive excellence' (FTEM, 2005) and the Forum for Dialogue of Public Leadership.

Among other government-sponsored vehicles for public sector innovation is MindLab¹⁹, an inter-governmental unit for citizen-centred innovation. Owned by the Danish ministries of economic and business affairs, taxation and employment, MindLab facilitates innovation processes, including qualitative data collection and fieldwork, design workshops, concept development, prototyping and evaluation. MindLab runs workshops and seminars across the public sector in Denmark, the UK and throughout Europe.

Example 1: The Management Hothouse

In response to the changes heralded by the Municipal Reform Act 2007, trade unions (led by the Danish Association of Local Government Employees' Organisations) and Local Government Denmark (LGDK)²⁰ have worked together on the development of a management and leadership programme for managers in the public sector. This has resulted in the establishment of a trading entity, operating under the unique brand of The Management Hothouse (TMH). Acknowledging the distributed nature of leadership, TMH aims to provide a range of programmes to support management and leadership development at all levels throughout the Danish public sector. All programmes and tools are therefore targeted at one of the following management levels:

- executive management (eg general and administrative managers)
- middle management (eg area managers and chiefs of staff)
- heads of public institutions (eg hospital matrons, senior medical consultants, headteachers, nursing home managers)

TMH's programmes focus on the specific, daily challenges that face managers, and have been devised to reflect the experiences and responses of employees and managers in the public sector. These programmes build on a model of successful management and a code of good management and leadership practice (Table 3).

TMH's management and leadership programmes and materials include:

- Management without boundaries: how managers ensure job satisfaction among their employees and reduce stress in an organisation in which job functions are no longer defined by traditional professional boundaries
- Management evaluation guide: need-to-know issues for the evaluation of leadership and presenting 10 principles on how to conduct leadership evaluation
- Get new managers off to a smooth start: how to give new managers the best conditions in which to exercise leadership
- Networking managers: tools and advice on strategic co-manager networks
- Collective management: articles on the management challenges involved in Danish structural reform, as experienced by executive managers in the public sector

TMH also runs an online platform where managers can download free articles and updates on the latest research and tools for use in municipal and regional management.

16 See www.cok.dk/2007/default.asp?id=97154715808510119122007 [accessed 10 Jan 2010].

17 Details of the Danish Quality Reform, which builds on the structural reforms described earlier, can be found on the English page of the Ministry of Finance website at <http://uk.fm.dk/Portfolio/Public%20modernisation/The%20Danish%20Quality%20Reform.aspx> [accessed 4 Dec 2009].

18 See www.publicgovernance.dk/?siteid=672&menu_start=672 [accessed 4 Dec 2009].

19 See www.mind-lab.dk/en [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

20 LGDK is equivalent to the UK's Local Government Association (LGA). See the English pages on LGDK's website at www.kl.dk/English/ [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

Table 3: TMH's code of good management and leadership practice

The successful municipal manager shows:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an understanding of people – the manager reads and understands human relationships - true sparring skills – the manager inspires trust and invites dialogue - active leadership – the manager is prompt and direct in his or her interventions - a capacity to delegate – the manager insists on delegating tasks and responsibilities - firm grounding, even under pressure – the manager sticks to his or her principles and values, including when these are being challenged
Statements that all managers – irrespective of profession, sector or level – need to take on board in order to practise good leadership:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I take responsibility for my leadership. - I know the boundaries of my professional space and the political context I am a part of. - I know and understand the professional context I am a part of. - I create an organisation in which we meet citizens at their level. - I communicate political and administrative decisions clearly. - I practise purposeful leadership to achieve better results. - I work to build a 'we' culture in my organisation, and I promote our workplace in the outside world. - I create job satisfaction and a good working life for each member of staff. - I allow room for reflection and innovation. - I reflect on and develop my leadership skills. - I see my organisation as part of a diverse world.

TMH's management and leadership programmes and materials include:

- Management without boundaries: how managers ensure job satisfaction among their employees and reduce stress in an organisation in which job functions are no longer defined by traditional professional boundaries
- Management evaluation guide: need-to-know issues for the evaluation of leadership and presenting 10 principles on how to conduct leadership evaluation
- Get new managers off to a smooth start: how to give new managers the best conditions in which to exercise leadership
- Networking managers: tools and advice on strategic co-manager networks
- Collective management: articles on the management challenges involved in Danish structural reform, as experienced by executive managers in the public sector

TMH also runs an online platform²¹ where managers can download free articles and updates on the latest research and tools for use in municipal and regional management.

21 See www.lederweb.dk (not in English) [accessed 3 Dec 2009].

The Netherlands

School leadership development

Provision for school leadership development in The Netherlands distinguishes between primary and secondary systems, although there is no mandatory requirement for headteachers to hold a leadership qualification. While the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MECS) is responsible for developing training programmes for school leaders, the nature of the education system in The Netherlands²² and the fact the programmes are delivered by a wide range of organisations mean that their take-up and impact have been difficult to quantify.

The Association of Secondary Education, which is the national secondary school leaders' union in The Netherlands, recently conducted a project to assess the competencies required of secondary school leaders in initiating and implementing school improvement in The Netherlands (Kruger, 2009). Based on a model of effective leadership, the results of this work deduced five general basic competencies required by school leaders:

1. **Vision orientation:** The school leader is able to formulate, communicate and disseminate a vision in order to realise the desired learning outcomes at student level.
2. **Context awareness:** The school leader is able to take the school's context (the school community and the institutional context) into account, consider its consequences and translate these to the specific school situation in order to optimise student learning and achievement.
3. **Deployment of strategies that match new forms of leadership:** The school leader is able to deploy strategies in new forms of leadership (transformational, inspiring, ethical and enquiry-based leadership) in order to advance school development and improvement.
4. **Organisational awareness:** The school leader is able to mould the characteristics of the school organisation. More specifically, the school leader is able to mould the four steering domains: structure/culture, instructional organisation/pedagogical climate, personnel and facilities.
5. **High-order thinking:** The school leader is able to act on the basis of insight into the coherence between all factors that play a role in student learning: vision (including own beliefs, experiences and personality traits, and desired student outcomes), the school's community, the institutional context, and organisational and cultural characteristics.

A variety of institutions offer leadership development training for school leaders, including: universities, national pedagogic centres, trade unions and commercial training institutes. Several government-sponsored initiatives are also currently being implemented, including the provision of financial support to schools employing new leaders so that they can secure coaching support for them as they settle into their role, and a concerted effort to recruit school leaders (particularly in the primary sector) from outside the education sector. The following summarises the main school leadership development programmes:

Based at Amsterdam University, the School of Educational Management²³ (NSO) provides a range of courses designed to enable graduates to manage and participate in the management of a school or educational establishment, and to provide them with a formal qualification that may be a precondition to acquiring a post in school management. All courses are based on a regularly revised competency framework incorporating five key competencies: vision, awareness of surrounding organisations, strategic acting, awareness of organisation and higher order thinking (Bal & de Jonge, 2007).

22 The Dutch constitution enshrines the right of citizens to establish their own schools, and the role of central and local government is therefore to provide support and guidance to these institutions, rather than to dictate how they should be run. Accordingly, decisions about how schools are run rest with individual school councils or governing bodies, although their headteachers must be qualified and experienced teachers; see Dering et al (2005).

23 See www.nso-onderwijsmanagement.nl/1default.htm [accessed 8 Jan 2010].

The School of Management Studies offers a Master's programme to current and aspiring school leaders that has been developed by a consortium of five universities (Amsterdam University, Free University of Amsterdam, and the universities of Nijmegen, Utrecht and Leiden). The programme is accredited by the Dutch Principals Academy (NSA)²⁴, and is subsidised by MECS which pays half the fees.

The NSA has also established De Brink²⁵, a knowledge centre for leadership in primary education, which aims to encourage leadership development, stimulate learning by school leaders and contribute to the further professionalisation of this group.

Public sector leadership development

Several HE institutions in The Netherlands provide development opportunities for managers in the public sector, some of which address the leadership development requirements of the sector. A selection of courses and institutes is presented here to illustrate the range of opportunities available.

Amsterdam Leadership Programme®²⁶

The Amsterdam Leadership Programme® (ALP) is aligned with the Amsterdam Business School MBA programme, and is based on three concepts: values, purposes and competencies. Students learn to apply these concepts in the context of their workplace and to observe and define what they mean for them as individuals. The programme focuses on the needs of commercial enterprises, as opposed to the public sector, although MBA students from service-delivery agencies are supported in applying the programme to their context.

24 See www.nsa.nl/default.aspx (not available in English at the time of writing) [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

25 See www.nsa.nl/Home%20subpages/NSAdocumenten.aspx (not available in English at the time of writing) [accessed 8 Jan 2010].

26 See www.abs.uva.nl/mbaprogramme/overview.cfm [accessed 6 Jan 2010].

Example 2: NSA leadership competencies profile

<p>View of personal leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership qualities and styles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core qualities Styles of learning Self-assessments Personal development and action plan 	<p>View of school leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic policy and vision of school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal analysis Management of change Organisational structure Planned organising
<p>Quality of school leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership through coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict management Carrying on a dialogue Quality assurance (system) 	<p>School leader as team leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching, teambuilding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback Communication and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating learning teams 360-degree feedback
<p>The proactive school leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common vision External analysis Changing strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Financial management 	
<p>Qualities of the professionally competent school leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with colleagues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiation Professionalism Ability to maintain leadership 	

The Netherlands School of Public Administration²⁷

The Netherlands School of Public Administration (NSOB) offers post-academic educational programmes through a partnership between Leiden University, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam, the Delft University of Technology and Tilburg University. NSOB runs a series of programmes for senior management in public administration and public sector organisations, including²⁸:

- **Master of Public Administration:** an internationally accredited 2-year programme aimed at upper middle management of the Dutch civil service who are deemed to offer high potential for progression. It provides a combination of cognitive elements, theoretical and professional reflection, the development of professional and personal competencies and the application of new knowledge and insights in complex assignments.
- **Metropolis** targets senior managers in the four large municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.
- **The Interdepartmental Management Course** targets senior public sector officials, and is directed at management and leadership in the entire range of competencies that a manager in the public sector should have.
- **Strategic Action in Educational Policy** focuses on the strategic, visionary and personal qualities required of senior educational managers, and ‘offers a balance between warp (strategy, policy and steering) and weft (knowledge, insight and skills)’.

Netherlands Institute of Government²⁹

The Netherlands Institute of Government (NIG) is an inter-university research school in which faculties from nine Dutch universities participate. NIG co-ordinates and stimulates research in the areas of public administration and political science and offers a training programme for doctoral students.

Example 3: de Baak Management Centrum

Having originally been established by the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW) over 60 years ago, de Baak Management Centrum develops programmes in partnership with academic institutions from across The Netherlands and Europe, claiming to have pioneered the understanding of ‘the human side of enterprise’ (Friedman, 2009: 14). The institute’s focus is on the individual, and the individual’s effective interaction within the organisation or company, and within society. It acknowledges that an understanding of context is critical to developing effective leadership³⁰:

a person’s transitional qualities alone are not enough to be successful. A good knowledge of the context in which you are operating is crucial. You have to be able to detect the objective social determinants of behaviour and understand the unconscious social defence mechanisms as well as the routes likely to lead to change in organized social systems.

Amado, undated [online]

27 See www.nsob.nl/pagina/english/102 [accessed 10 Jan 2010].

28 See www.nsob.nl/pagina/english/102/Programmes/107 [accessed 10 Jan 2010].

29 See www.eur.nl/fsw/english/publicadministration/nig [accessed 10 Jan 2010].

30 See www.debaak.nl/en/knowledgecentre/news/leadership/transitionalchange [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

de Baak delivers learning programmes created to integrate goals set by clients and their organisations (mainly, but not exclusively, from the private sector). The institute also offers a range of open-access courses:

- The **de Baak Leadership Programme** incorporates five modules over nine months, and a personal coaching consultation.
- **Next Level Leadership** is aimed at aspiring leaders.
- A three-day course is available on **emotionally intelligent leadership**.
- A three-day **leadership masterclass** also takes place.
- The **Leadership, Reflection and Development Programme** has been devised for senior managers in the public sector and covers a range of topics such as self-management, leadership in a political-managerial context, organisational change and coaching (Table 4).

Table 4: Modules in de Baak’s Leadership, Reflection and Development Programme

<p>Module 1: Leadership and self-management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reflection on your own position and role – Understanding your own qualities – Dealing with other people – More effective leadership 	<p>Module 2: Manager as a coach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discovering talents and cultivating these – Feedback on your own coaching – Designing a step-by-step plan
<p>Module 3: Managing organisational change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Acting within set conditions – Insight into power fields inside and outside your organisation – Group processes 	<p>Module 4: Organisation and context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Coaching, teambuilding – Feedback – Communication and discussion – Creating learning teams – 360-degree feedback

Ireland

The Irish government recognises that leadership development has a central role to play in modernising their public services, asserting that 'the reform agenda will rely heavily on cultural change for its success. Culture, especially cultural change, is inextricably linked to leadership. We recognise the key role of leaders in defining visions and inspiring people to achieve them' (Irish Government, 2008: 27). Better leadership is also seen as a key element of the push towards improved policies on and provision of children's services in Ireland, especially within government agencies, with further development of leadership capacity and commitment identified as an element requiring continual attention in order to ensure that national goals for children can be achieved and sustained (Keenan, 2007). Although there are several initiatives for the development of leadership potential within the children's services sector, they appear not to be as advanced or as widespread as in England. The following summaries provide an overview of the kinds of activity undertaken.

School leadership development

Leadership Development for Schools³¹ (LDS) is a national programme established by the Department of Education and Science (DES) to promote school leadership at primary and secondary levels. It is based on a professional development framework (LDS, 2003) which acknowledges the diversity and variety of leadership roles in schools and distinguishes between school principals, their deputies and middle management. The programme promotes leadership as a collaborative process based on respect and the valuing of collegiality, and aims to build capacity in four domains: personal, transformational, organisational, and teaching and learning. Informing these domains are five principles:

- moral purpose
- modelling
- situational awareness
- courage to act
- sustainability

LDS currently offers six programmes at post-primary level:

- Misneach is for recently appointed principals or acting principals.
- Forbairt targets experienced principals and deputy principals within school teams.
- Tánaiste is aimed at recently appointed and acting deputy principals.
- Cothú is for principals and deputy principals of special schools.
- Middle Leadership is a pilot programme for middle leadership teams.
- Cumasú is a residential programme for school leaders working in schools that are part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative and Disadvantaged Area Schools (DAS).
- Tóraíocht is a programme for future leaders offered in conjunction with the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) and accredited as a postgraduate diploma in school leadership.

31 See www.lids21.ie [accessed 26 Nov 2009].

Public sector leadership development

Example 4: Leadership Challenge Programme

The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) is the Irish national centre for the development of best practice in public administration and public management. Launched by IPA in 2005, and run in partnership with Cambridge Leadership Associates and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, the Leadership Challenge Programme (IPA, 2009) is designed to achieve deep learning and develop leadership behaviours and skills to achieve real and lasting change. Over 100 senior public servants drawn from central and local government, state agencies and the health sector have attended the programme to date.

The programme is based on the concept of adaptive leadership, which acknowledges the connectivity between values and choices needed to bring about change. In particular, the programme aims to enable leaders to work with their services to help overcome institutional and personal barriers to change. The approach is based on short formal inputs, groupwork, practice and reflection on behaviours. Individual coaching, using 360-degree leadership competency instruments, forms part of the programme, and helps participants reach insights into their leadership behaviour and the transfer of learning to their workplace.

Canada

School leadership development

In Canada, school leadership development initiatives are available at provincial and territory levels. There is no requirement for school principals to hold a leadership qualification, but school boards and principals themselves recognise the value of leadership development.

Example 5: Education Leadership Canada

A professional development unit operating as a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Ontario Principals' Council³² (OPC), Education Leadership Canada designs, develops and delivers a range of learning and support programmes to OPC members. These focus exclusively on the professional development of principals and vice-principals, and include workshops, video resources, online learning opportunities and mentoring.

Education Leadership Canada offers three programmes that are accredited through the Ontario College of Teachers and promoted in partnership with school boards across the province:

- Principal's Qualification Programme
- Supervisory Officer's Qualification Programme
- Experienced Principal's Development Course

Public sector leadership development

Leadership development is addressed through a range of initiatives, designed and delivered at different levels. As in most other countries, these are not necessarily targeted at leaders of children's services, but they do afford individuals the opportunity to develop their leadership capabilities alongside practitioners from other fields in public services.

Example 6: National Leadership Development Programme

As part of its commitment to innovation and change within public services, the Canadian government sponsors the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS). CSPS runs a number of leadership development programmes³³, which build on key leadership competencies:

- values and ethics: serving with integrity and respect
- strategic thinking: innovating through analysis and ideas
- engagement: mobilising people, organisations and partners
- management excellence:
 - action management: design and execution
 - people management: individual and workforce
 - financial management: budget and assets

CSPS runs a wide range of courses, short learning events, long-term leadership programmes and tailored organisational activities using approaches such as coaching to provide the most effective results. These activities are designed to:

32 See www.principals.on.ca/CMS/default.aspx [accessed 10 Jan 2010].

33 See www.cspc-efpc.gc.ca/lde/index-eng.asp [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

- develop the next generation of leaders (CSPS is broadening the continuum of leadership development programmes to include supervisors to senior leaders)
- strengthen leadership competencies
- respond to priority issues (eg CSPS creates just-in-time interventions to respond to the needs of senior leaders and other executives)
- build communities and strengthen networks
- provide tools to build a strong community of leaders in organisations, including communities of practice to help leaders improve their management capacity

Local leadership development programmes

The two following examples are members of the Canadian Community Leadership Network³⁴, all of whose members participate in sharing best practice and mentoring on new programmes. The aim of community leadership programmes (as articulated on the cclnet website) is to 'promote and encourage outstanding community leadership by developing the leadership capabilities of citizens who care about the community, who understand its strengths and weaknesses, and who are willing to make a personal investment to improve a community's quality of life' (<http://www.cclnet.org/section/view/>).

The Leadership Vancouver Programme³⁵ is a leadership development programme run by a not-for-profit organisation that is aimed at aspiring decision-makers in business, government and the social sector. Each cohort of up to 40 participants brings together individuals from a range of backgrounds, selected for their commitment to leading civic engagement for positive change. The programme provides next-generation leaders with a solid foundation in leadership skills as well as knowledge of the issues and opportunities in the region. The six-month programme comprises six day-long sessions and four evening sessions, and aims to develop a range of transferable skills through specific training modules and participatory learning experiences. As with the Common Purpose³⁶ programme in the UK, participants are provided with access to a cross-section of senior leaders from business, government and community endeavours. These are people engaged in addressing the community's most pressing challenges, and provide participants with insights into the opportunities and demands of real-life leadership.

Whistler Forum for Leadership and Dialogue

The Whistler Forum's³⁷ mission is to build community by improving civic engagement and developing collaborative leadership, principally in British Columbia, but also nationwide and increasingly with international links. Using its expertise in citizen engagement and collaborative leadership, the forum develops leaders by convening groups of leaders, experts, stakeholders and ordinary citizens to address issues in current Canadian public policy. Its main vehicle for leadership development is the Leadership Sea to Sky Programme, which adopts an action-learning approach, allowing participants to learn from their peers and build trust. A cohort of 20 participants is recruited to take part in the programme each year, on the basis that they exhibit the following characteristics:

- self-awareness and viewed as creative, responsible and effective in their endeavours
- personal commitment to going beyond conventional thinking to search for new opportunities for change and growth
- motivation to assume a leadership role in the region and commitment to working collaboratively towards community action

34 See www.cclnet.org [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

35 See <http://leadershipvancouver.org> [accessed 15 Dec 2009].

36 Common Purpose is a not-for-profit organisation providing opportunities for people from a variety of backgrounds to participate in locally-delivered programmes designed to help them become more effective leaders in society, providing them with inspiration, knowledge and connections to help them become more active and engaged in society. See <http://www.commonpurpose.org.uk/> [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

37 See www.whistlerforum.com [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

The programme is delivered around four pillars:

- knowing yourself
- knowing the region
- engaging with others
- taking action

Participants work collaboratively in exploring these four pillars through:

- launch event
- two-day retreat on the challenges of leadership
- eight monthly learning days focusing on building skills and awareness in specific areas
- team-based project work addressing an unmet community need

Scotland

Children's services leadership development

Opportunities exist for practitioners in senior management roles in education and social services to participate in leadership development programmes designed to help them develop the skills they need in relation to their roles. These have been developed in partnership with the two professional bodies for directors of the two main services responsible for children's services in Scotland, as described below.

Changing Lives (Scottish Executive, 2006), which emerged from an extensive government-sponsored review of social work practice over a number of years, concluded that there was a need to strengthen the governance and professional leadership role of the local authority Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) to oversee social work services and ensure the delivery of safe, effective and innovative practice. Specifically, the review identified a number of key issues to be clarified and addressed:

- role and function
- competencies, scope and responsibilities
- accountability and reporting arrangements

Consequently, a recently completed consultation (Scottish Government, 2009) on proposed guidance on the role of the CSWO has incorporated a range of proposals, many of which are consistent with the children's services leadership development agenda in England. The draft guidance includes the assertion that the CSWO be responsible for providing professional leadership, and should:

- support and contribute to evidence-informed decision-making at professional or corporate level by providing appropriate professional advice
- seek to enhance professional leadership and accountability throughout the organisation to support quality of service and delivery
- support the delivery of social work's contribution to achieving local outcomes
- promote partnership working across professions to support the delivery of suitably integrated social work services

Related to these specific leadership roles, the guidance indicates that the CSWO should also be responsible for accountability and reporting arrangements by:

- influencing corporate issues, (eg managing risk, setting budget priorities and contributing to public service reform)
- accessing and reporting to the chief executive and elected members
- overseeing the relationships, responsibilities and respective accountabilities between operational line managers and the CSWO

Example 7: Leading to Deliver

Funded by the Scottish government since 2003, Leading to Deliver (L2D) is a postgraduate leadership development programme for first-line and middle managers in social services. It was designed to build leadership skills and confidence, help manage change, promote work across boundaries and create strengths in strategic planning, implementation and performance management. A total of 5 cohorts of up to 100 students have completed the programme, the objectives of which are to:

- produce leaders who understand the Changing Lives agenda and are able to play a leadership role within it
- equip participants as adaptive leaders, able both to act as role models and lead change
- produce sustainable benefits from the knowledge, skills and understanding of the participants beyond the end of the programme

A published evaluation of the programme (Scottish Government, 2008) asserts that, although it is 'difficult to assess the degree to which the programme has had an impact on service users ... it provides high-quality leadership training otherwise not accessible to employees within social services' and that 'participants are now better equipped to be adaptive leaders and are increasingly motivated in their relationships with other members of staff' (Scottish Government, 2008:60). This corresponds with the findings of an earlier evaluation of leadership development in Scotland, which asserted that the most significant barrier to organisations' ability to develop leaders is 'a perceived inability, in the eyes of senior managers/budget holders, to prove a direct impact on organisational performance from leadership development activities' (Tourish et al, 2007:39).

L2D has been modified in the light of evaluation, and is currently testing reflective tools in support of a prototype leadership framework and further developing regional leadership communities among L2D graduates.

Example 8: Edinburgh Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership

Responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the Integrated Children and Young People's Plan, the Edinburgh Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has accessed funding from the Scottish government's Fairer Scotland Fund to address five areas for early intervention:

- alcohol and drugs
- looked-after children
- mental health and wellbeing
- parenting
- exclusions and truancy

In order to bring about the desired outcomes, the partnership has identified that organisational change is required in three priority areas, the first of which is a culture and systems change programme, which, it is suggested (Edinburgh Partnership, 2009: 13) requires a 'comprehensive approach, wholehearted commitment and [crucially] leadership'. To achieve this, a cross-sectoral leadership development programme is being developed. This will engage key practitioners as champions to support the delivery of the systems, culture and practice-change programme, including building professional and political understanding of a GIRFEC- and early intervention-based approach to planning and delivering universal and targeted support services.

Integrated service provision has been identified as a priority in the Scottish government's initiatives informing and building on GIRFEC. One initiative to pilot a highly integrated approach to the planning and provision of services for children has been running in the Highland region for nearly 20 years. This has included the establishment in 2000 of a Joint Committee for Children and Young People (involving schools, police, social workers, youth action teams, health-based workers and voluntary agencies) and the appointment in 2003 of a head of children's services (NHS Highland and the Highland Council).

An early report on the impact of this initiative (Stradling & MacNeil, 2007: 46) claims that 'the changes in practice have been spectacular in some areas', and includes early indicators of the positive impact of the integrated approach. In particular, it has achieved:

- better safety for Highland children
- improved support for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and those with high-level needs
- clear progress to support young people in being respected and responsible
- improvements in attainments by looked-after children that can be directly related to specific initiatives

The impact of leadership on the effectiveness of the integrated working initiative was also highlighted, with particular reference to the fact that the shift towards more integrated working had cross-party political support and strong leadership from the authority's lead officers and heads of service. Strong leadership was also identified as playing a key role in helping partner agencies to strike a balance between being as inclusive as possible in the governance arrangements, and minimising the potential for key players to become entrenched in their own ways of working.

School leadership development

Recent research has found that headteachers in Scotland are able to exercise less autonomy than has previously been the case, reflecting an 'increasingly centralist tendency' within local authorities, as a result of the perceived need to keep within the constraints of government policy and a tightening inspection regime (MacBeath et al, 2009:43). This research also concludes that the 'heroic' conceptualisation of leadership is inappropriate, emphasising as it does the 'folly of one person trying to tackle not just every leadership challenge but also a plethora of ad hoc tasks' (ibid: 54), propounding instead an approach to successful leadership that develops management teams or places heads at the core of a team of leaders. This approach is described as 'allowing [headteachers] to distribute leadership and responsibility across staff, which enables them to focus on their key tasks' (ibid:54).

School-based leadership development initiatives have been informed by the Scottish executive's Standard for Headship (SEED, 2005), which analyses the role of the headteacher in terms of professional actions and four essential elements:

- professional actions of the headteacher
- strategic vision, values and aims
- knowledge and understanding
- personal qualities and interpersonal skills

The Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) was developed to ensure that staff wishing to become headteachers could access the professional development they need before appointment. The qualification is designed to develop and improve participants' practice as school leaders and managers, and is delivered in a partnership between local authorities and approved HE institutions. The SQH is open to teachers who have five or more years' teaching experience and who are registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Candidates are nominated by their employers on the basis of an assessment of their potential to develop the competencies required for effective school leadership and management.

Example 9: Association of Directors of Education Services

The Association of Directors of Education Services (ADES) has identified the leadership development needs of its members as a priority, and the organisation actively promotes a range of development opportunities, delivered mainly by the Virtual Staff College Scotland³⁸:

- The Coaching and Mentoring Programme³⁹ is provided to support newly appointed chief officers in education or children's services during their first year in post. It matches participants with an experienced and accredited person in an equivalent post for access to ongoing dialogue and support.
- Leadership workshops⁴⁰ are held as retreats for directors of education and children's services and senior colleagues from the Scottish executive's education department.
- Action learning sets⁴¹ are available to directors of education and children's services who have participated in the leadership workshops, and provide opportunities for a small group of colleagues to meet regularly to share professional issues and seek coaching support from the group before determining further action.
- The Becoming a Strategic Leader⁴² module is designed for colleagues who aspire to senior posts within education and children's services. Marketed as the Leaders of Tomorrow Programme, it is currently being provided to staff from the City of Edinburgh, and Fife and Scottish Borders councils.

38 See www.virtualstaffcollege.co.uk/regional_boards.html [accessed 14 Feb 2010].

39 See www.adescotland.org.uk/coachingand%20mentoring.htm [accessed 24 Nov 2009].

40 See <http://www.adescotland.org.uk/coachingand%20mentoring.htm> [accesses 14 Feb 2010]

41 See www.adescotland.org.uk/actionlearningsets.htm [accessed 24 Nov 2009].

42 See www.adescotland.org.uk/Strategic%20Leader.htm [accessed 24 Nov 2009].

Public sector leadership development

Several leadership development programmes are provided by academic institutions across Scotland, ensuring ease of access by practitioners from all localities. The following examples are included as illustrations of the programmes most likely to apply to current and aspiring leaders of children's services in Scotland.

- The Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Enquiry: Leadership at Stirling University Institute of Education⁴³ aims to support the leadership development of practitioners to enable them to contribute effectively to the improvement of practice in their own professional setting. Addressing the central themes of developing professionalism in the public services, the programme is targeted mainly at school-based practitioners.
- The MSc in Organisational Leadership at Glasgow University School of Education⁴⁴ is targeted at students from different human service backgrounds (particularly childhood practice, school settings and children's services). It addresses the leadership of organisations, with a focus on the leadership of specific services and agency sectors. The emphasis is on leadership learning, and the structuring and impact of leaders' work. The programme highlights the contextualised nature of leadership and knowledge, the development of leadership capabilities, types and levels of leadership and their links to policy, leaders' personal attributes, and cultural and situational factors that shape leadership practice.
- Leadership in Professional Settings at Aberdeen University's Professional Learning and Development Centre⁴⁵ is targeted at aspiring and existing leaders in different professional settings and provides a framework for leadership development in the context of government and local authority policies. The programme offers a menu of courses, allowing participants to achieve the qualification that suits them (ie at certificate, diploma or MSc level) and a pathway that reflects their own experience, setting and aspirations:
 - Developing and applying leadership is for participants with little experience of leadership.
 - Integrating leadership is for participants with experience of leadership in particular settings.
 - Demonstrating leadership is for participants who have either achieved sufficient credits, or who can provide a continuing professional development (CPD) portfolio containing evidence of leadership activity.
- Support for Leadership in Highland⁴⁶ is offered by the Highland Leadership Community. As well as developing this programme, Highland Council devolves funding to individuals to support their CPD, provides dedicated training and has developed a virtual environment to help staff communicate with a wide cohort of leadership participants. Aimed mainly though not exclusively at teachers, the programme is based on a management competency framework and:
 - provides direction by promoting the council's goals and values
 - focuses on service delivery
 - achieves results through working with people
 - manages resources to achieve objectives
 - manages improvement and facilitates change
 - manages personal development and improvement

43 See www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/course_info/hum_science/inst_edu/prof-enq-leadership.php [accessed 14 Feb 2010].

44 See www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/education/graduateschool/taughtprogrammes/mscorganisationalleadership [accessed 24 Nov 2009].

45 See http://abdn.ac.uk/pldc/programmes/view_programme.php?code=leadership_settings [accessed 24 Nov 2009].

46 See www.highland-leadership.sitc.co.uk/ [accessed 24 Nov 2009].

Leadership development programmes in other countries

The review of materials revealed details of a small number of programmes from around the world that have been designed to develop the leadership capabilities of people in various roles in children's services. This section provides a summary of each of these.

USA

Annie E Casey Foundation

The Annie E Casey Foundation (AECF)⁴⁷ has operated since 1948 as a private charitable organisation, 'dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States'. The primary mission of the foundation is 'to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports [sic] that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families' (AECF, undated). A range of activities designed to address the needs of children at risk of poor educational, economic, social and health outcomes are supported through the award of \$190 million in grants each year. Activities include:

- designing and delivering services to secure and sustain life-long family connections for children and youth
- advocating reforms in public human service systems to ensure that they operate effectively and efficiently to strengthen families
- expanding social and economic security for families in poor communities
- gathering and promoting the use of data as a tool for change
- transforming tough and isolated communities into family-supporting environments

The foundation also runs its own leadership development programmes. Working with a number of national and state partners, the foundation aims to develop a pool of well-trained leaders of children's services by identifying emerging leaders and improving the skills of managers who can:

- oversee cutting-edge organisations
- implement complex system reforms
- lead struggling community-based groups

Specifically, the foundation's leadership development activities seek to:

- supply major systems reform and community change efforts with qualified and capable leaders knowledgeable in what works to improve outcomes for children and families
- strengthen the leadership, organisational capacity and financial sustainability of public and non-profit grantees whose work is essential to the foundation's mission
- support parents and residents across communities as they learn skills and take up leadership roles in the foundation's major initiatives

Leadership development is targeted not only at professionals, but also at residents in some of the country's most disadvantaged communities. The foundation argues that 'positive change for children and families living in these areas will only happen with active leadership and sustained participation from parents and residents'; hence the focus of the foundation's programmes is on 'strengthening community-based leadership and developing local capacity to amplify the role and voice of residents' (AECF Core Strategies⁴⁸). Two of the foundation's leadership development programmes are designed to support leaders of children's services and these are summarised below.

47 See www.aecf.org [accessed 12 Feb 2010].

48 See <http://www.caseyfoundation.org/MajorInitiatives/LeadershipDevelopment/CoreStrategies.aspx> [accessed 12 Feb 2010] and AECF 2008.

Children and Family Fellowship

The foundation offers a Children and Family Fellowship⁴⁹ programme to individuals who hold positions through which they can have a major impact on the lives of children and families⁵⁰. The fellowship is a 20-month programme designed to develop participants' skills, vision and professional networks and increase their confidence, while remaining focused on helping them achieve measurable results for children and families. The use and interpretation of data are presented as critical tools for change, and a significant part of the skills development programme focuses on results-based accountability (RBA). The RBA framework is designed to help children's services leaders 'choose realistic, reachable goals, implement effective strategies, and identify clear benchmarks by which to measure success' (AECF, 2007: 3).

The programme comprises the following elements:

- **Group seminars** have been designed in collaboration with New York University's Robert F Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. These four-day events employ a dynamic, experiential learning approach to build on the programme's core proposition – ie that effective leaders 'understand the dynamics of a shared-power world and that real change requires productive partnerships involving families, communities, and the faith, for-profit, public, and non-profit sectors' (AECF, 2009:7); they focus on four areas:
 - leadership for the benefit of children, families and communities
 - leadership for the development of their organisation
 - leadership to transform the systems leaders work within
 - participants' personal and professional development
- **Individual learning plans** are drawn up with all participants at the outset of the programme. These include participants' own personal theory of change (ie their vision of how change occurs for the children, families and communities with whom they work, and the leadership roles they aspire to in creating that change). There is scope for the plan to evolve as the fellowship progresses, although it remains a key reflective tool, focusing on the results fellows want to achieve, including their personal learning and professional development goals.
- **Individual learning activities** are undertaken in parallel with the group seminars and include special projects, conference participation and directed readings to enable fellows to pursue individual experiences that address the specific needs and goals set out in their learning plans.
- The **fellowship project** supports fellows in identifying a project on which to work during the programme as a means of applying the ideas and tools discussed throughout the seminars, and their own learning activities.
- The **alumni network** is open to fellows and provides opportunities for professional collaboration and support through one-to-one mentoring relationships that maximise the impact of the fellowship experience. There are regular network meetings and professional development activities, and the network provides grants and supports collaborative activities among fellows in order to encourage them to share their knowledge and expertise.

Participation in the Casey Children & Family Fellowship is by invitation / nomination, as the Foundation is keen to engage not only 'the right people' but also people at 'the right moment of their careers'. This is designed partially to maximise the programme's impact, and to ensure that individuals are committed fully to the demands of participating on the programme. There are currently over 70 Network Fellows from over 25 States, and it is claimed that they are responsible for over \$6billion expenditure on services for over 10 million children across the country.

49 See www.aecf.org/Home/MajorInitiatives/LeadershipDevelopment/ChildandFamFellowship.aspx [accessed 12 Feb 2010] and AECF (2009).

50 25 per cent of fellows direct non-profit-making organisations or foundations that serve children and families, while 15 per cent run big-city or state social services agencies; the remainder hold senior management positions in these types of organisation.

Leadership in Action

A more targeted 14-month programme, Leadership in Action (AECF, 2006), brings together up to 40 key leaders, managers and residents from public agencies, non-profit-making organisations and community groups in a particular state, county, city or neighbourhood. Focusing on an issue identified in the target area, the programme provides training and support to participants to enable them to accelerate the pace of change and to generate concrete, measurable results. The programme is delivered through a series of nine, two-day sessions that focus on skills development in the following four areas:

- Results-based accountability is an approach to the interpretation of data that is designed to help children’s services leaders ‘choose realistic, reachable goals, implement effective strategies, and identify clear benchmarks by which to measure success’ (AECF, 2007: 3).
- Leading from the middle enables participants to recognise the resources, authority and influence they have, and to bring their leadership to bear on priority issues.
- Collaborative leadership strengthens relationships between participants and aligns their resources with those of other leaders and organisations to achieve enhanced results.
- Race, class and culture dialogue increases understanding of inequalities, and promotes active dialogue and the development of strategies to close the gap.

As well as taking part in these sessions, participants are supported in working on practical initiatives between sessions, putting theory into practice. They are encouraged to undertake rapid cycles of planning, action and reflection in order to assess what is working and why, and to make necessary changes. In this way, the programme models a results framework that links the use of data in decision-making to measurable outcomes. Participants are encouraged to generate both immediate results (eg within one year) and to lay the foundations for long-term gains. The programme is co-designed – by participants and foundation staff – to ensure that it meets the needs of the target area, and is subject to regular review to ensure it remains focused on the needs of children and families in the area.

Parent Leadership Development Institute

Established by the Center for Excellence in Public Leadership (CEPL, see below), the Parent Leadership Development Institute (PLDI)⁵¹ is a collaborative venture between CEPL, the Fight for Children Foundation⁵² and Children’s Youth Investment Trust Corporation (CYITC)⁵³ in the District of Columbia (DC). It aims to develop the leadership capabilities of parent and care-giver leaders, in order for them to make a positive difference in the education of children in DC. Parent and care-giver leaders taking part in the programme are trained to:

- actively and effectively support the academic achievement of the children in their care
- interact assertively, effectively and proactively with school personnel and others in support of the learning, development and academic achievement of children
- inspire, organise and encourage the active participation of parents and care-givers and community members to address common school-level or multi-school-level issues and to be proactive in taking advantage of educational opportunities for children

51 See www.gwu.edu/~cepl/community/parent.html [accessed 12 Feb 2010].

52 Fight For Children is an independent not-for-profit organisation that serves low-income families in Washington DC. For more information, see www.fightforchildren.org [accessed 14 Jan 2010].

53 CYITC brings together schools, public sector agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations to develop partnerships that expand and improve services and opportunities for children and young people in the District of Columbia (DC). For more information, see www.cyitc.org [accessed 14 Jan 2010].

- understand all aspects of the instructional system of public, charter and private schools, such as the curriculum, testing procedures, opportunities for parental involvement, and school- and community-provided learning support services
- develop their leadership capabilities, including skills such as leading meetings, making effective presentations and managing projects
- become increasingly proactive, effective and empowered in living and enhancing their own lives and accomplishing life goals that are important to them

Child and Family Health Leadership Training Programme

The University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) Child and Family Health Leadership Training Programme (CFHLTP)⁵⁴ provides interdisciplinary training in maternal and child-health practice, research and policy analysis for health professionals enrolled in the Master of Public Health (MPH) programme at UCLA's School of Public Health. The programme offers advanced professional training in the design of family-centred health services, formulation and analysis of policy options, advocacy for children and families, and research and evaluation of health systems serving mothers, children, families and communities. The basic curriculum for the training programme includes epidemiology, biostatistics, health services, environmental health and behavioural sciences, as well as research and analytical methods, policy and programme planning and evaluation, with advanced courses in child-health policy, nutrition, perinatal health and other maternity and child health related areas. Leadership development is accomplished through coursework, internships, mentorships and participation in local community-based planning organisations serving children and families. Trainees receive annual stipends and tuition and are admitted from all departments within the School of Public Health. The training programme is housed in the UCLA Centre for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, which is dedicated to providing children with the best opportunities for a healthy life and productive future.

Courses include those on:

- child health, programmes and policies
- leadership in health care and public health organisation
- community organisation
- evolving paradigms of prevention: interventions in early childhood
- interventions in adolescence
- pregnancy and childbirth: policy issues beyond prenatal care
- reproductive health
- planning family health programmes
- child advocacy: skills for effective action

54 See www.healthychild.ucla.edu/ChildandFamilyHealthProgram.asp [accessed 7 Dec 2009].

Center for Public Leadership, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Established in 2000, the Center for Public Leadership (CPL)⁵⁵ at Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard University provides cutting-edge teaching and research as well as hands-on training in the practical skills of leadership for people in government, non-profit-making organisations and business. The CPL leadership development model identifies seven broad competencies that reflect the overlap between leadership and management:

- catalytic: identifying, analysing and judging complex collective challenges and opportunities; mobilising others to remain focused on addressing them
- social systems: reading and analysing dynamic social and political systems
- contextual: knowing the cultural, historical, institutional, intellectual and policy context in which one operates
- inter-personal: modulating one's behaviour in order to interact effectively in a variety of settings
- organisational: planning, organising, co-ordinating and executing collective action
- leadership theory: understanding the fundamental leadership concepts, constructs and research findings
- personal: being self-aware (ie able to reflect on one's own thinking, feeling and behaviour), and knowing one's strengths and weaknesses, predilections, dominant tendencies and values

CPL runs a number of leadership programmes, including:

- Strategy, Structure, and Leadership in Public Service Organisations
- Leading Cities
- Exercising Leadership: the Politics of Change

It has also developed a specific programme for school superintendents.

Center for Excellence in Public Leadership, Washington DC

The Centre for Excellence in Public Leadership⁵⁶ (CEPL) at George Washington University in Washington DC also offers cutting-edge leadership programmes for managers in the public sector. A range of courses is offered, incorporating interactive training sessions that combine academic research with real-world case studies and practical simulations. Programmes include:

- Senior Leader Programme, which is based on the Office of Personnel Management's executive core qualifications in:
 - leading people
 - leading change
 - results driven
 - business acumen
 - building coalitions
- Advanced Leadership Workshop
- Community Leader Programmes

⁵⁵ See www.hks.harvard.edu/leadership [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

⁵⁶ See www.gwu.edu/~cepl [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

Emerging Leaders Programme

This programme, run by the College of Management at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, is an executive leadership development programme for mid-career professionals (average age 35) in the Greater Boston area. The programme provides development opportunities for individuals from the private sector as well as those from the non-profit-making and government sectors and aims to:

- select emerging leaders who are diverse by race, gender and profession who will enhance their networking skills with other emerging leaders
- expose emerging leaders to a variety of Greater Boston's current leaders in order for them to experience a variety of leadership styles and become familiar with issues facing the region
- enhance the leadership skills of participants in areas such as teamwork, communication, project development and completion, negotiation, the political process, and dealing with the media
- increase understanding of the concept and practice of collaborative and inclusive leadership

Evaluation is seen as a central element in the programme to ensure that it is meeting the needs of participants and their sponsors. A recent evaluation of the programme (Quaglieri et al, 2007) found that its most innovative aspects were:

- involvement of the business community
- focus of the teamwork element of the programme on civic projects
- involvement of alumni in networks and in contributing to activities

Australia

While the commonwealth government contributes to school funding and policy development, education in Australia is primarily the responsibility of individual states and territories. The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) is a national forum for agreeing broad education policy across the country; its work has resulted in:

- a set of common national goals, benchmarks and standards for specific subjects and other aspects of schooling
- the establishment of a national approach to measuring and reporting student outcomes
- the promotion of joint working initiatives to address particular priorities and develop policy and strategies

One of these initiatives, launched by the MCEECDYA Improving Teacher and School Leadership Capacity Working Group, has developed an agreed common framework for teacher quality and standards. This is intended to strengthen the teaching profession at all stages, from recruitment through to pre-service education and life-long professional learning. It incorporates consideration of leadership development for school principals (Wildy et al, 2009).

Australian Leadership Development Centre

The Australian Leadership Development Centre⁵⁷ (ALDC) claims to be Australia's only educational organisation exclusively devoted to leadership, providing leadership development for executives and managers from the corporate, public and education sectors within Australia. ALDC defines leadership as 'the process of influencing the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of others, to bring about desired ends. This process includes yet goes beyond exerting influence through formal authority' (ALDC, undated).

A series of standard and bespoke executive education programmes is provided, including:

- Moving into Leadership
- Coaching for Leadership
- Executive Transitions
- Executive Renewal
- Management Teams that Work
- High Potential Leader

Public Sector Leadership Programme

Open Universities Australia runs a Public Sector Leadership Programme⁵⁸ for public sector middle managers in commonwealth, state and territory governments. This skill-based programme combines tertiary study with experiential learning, and leads towards the attainment of a Master's in public sector leadership for students who have completed the Graduate Certificate of Public Sector Management.

Although the federal government has launched a consultation on a proposed national child protection framework, the eight state and territory governments have primary responsibility for children's welfare policy and service provision (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009). They have appointed children's commissioners and introduced measures to secure workforce development. A number of workforce issues remain of concern (see, for example,

57 See www.leadershipdevelopment.edu.au/ [accessed 11 Feb 2010].

58 See www.open.edu.au/wps/portal/oua/home [accessed 11 Feb 2010].

Healey et al, 2009; Government of South Australia, 2005), including: an over-reliance on the number of inexperienced staff, in a workforce already comprising a wide range of professionals; problems of retention, especially in frontline welfare work; an increase in the use of para-professionals; the imposition of onerous accountability procedures; and a perceived emphasis on crisis-avoidance as opposed to service quality.

Towards Strategic Leadership Programme

The Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) is a consortium of Australian and New Zealand governments, universities and business schools delivering education and research programmes designed to make practical improvements in public management and policy and the provision of services. Working through its partner universities, ANZSOG runs a senior executive programme, a Master's programme in public administration and other specialised programmes for emerging leaders in the public sector, including the Towards Strategic Leadership Programme. This latter programme is designed to help managers who have recently assumed senior executive roles (or are about to do so) to make the transition from their former operational or tactical position to strategic leadership roles. It comprises three, five-day sessions (Table 5).

Table 5: ANZSOG's Towards Strategic Leadership Programme

<p>Session 1: Managing inter-dependence</p> <hr/> <p>Content focus: strategic leadership in complex, shared-power settings</p> <hr/> <p>Development focus: doing leadership differently</p>	<p>Session 2: Managing risks and crises</p> <hr/> <p>Content focus: challenges, opportunities and practices of governing unscheduled events</p> <hr/> <p>Development focus: emotion, power and diversity in leadership</p>	<p>Session 3: Managing change</p> <hr/> <p>Content focus: accommodating, instigating and embedding change in public sector organisations</p> <hr/> <p>Development focus: understanding and managing resistance, change and transition</p>
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International

International Leadership Association

The International Leadership Association (ILA)⁵⁹ is a global network of organisations and individuals engaged in the practice, study and teaching of leadership. ILA aims to encourage leadership initiatives, building on the shared interests and complementary talents of members and ensuring effective and ethical leadership practices and sound scholarship. This is achieved through ILA's work in:

- strengthening ties between leadership students and practitioners
- promoting the sharing of ideas, research and practices about leadership
- fostering effective and ethical leadership in individuals, groups, organisations and governments in the global community
- generating and disseminating interdisciplinary research

ILA has recently been awarded a \$20,000 grant to create the Leadership Education Programme Directory, an online searchable directory of leadership education programmes, which it is anticipated will launch before the end of 2010.

⁵⁹ See www.ila-net.org/ [accessed 10 Feb 2010].

Summary and discussion of evidence

Availability of information

Relying solely on printed material for an exercise of this nature has proved somewhat limiting, given the need to achieve a relatively sophisticated understanding of the policy context of leadership development within children's services in a range of countries, especially where English is not the principal language. Even in countries where materials produced in English are more readily available, the lack of a consistent terminology and the variations in political and administrative arrangements have presented the researcher with often insurmountable challenges. As a consequence, there is evident variation in the quantity and quality of material presented in this report.

However, through repeated revision of the search strategy, the use of deep-search methodologies and the involvement of individuals from some of the countries under investigation, it has proved possible to collate a range of materials that provide a valuable insight into the configuration of children's services in a number of other countries. Additionally, it has been possible to identify a range of training and development opportunities available to leaders of children's services in these countries, with which comparisons can be drawn for the context in England.

The following discussion of the findings from the review is organised under three main headings:

- children's services policy and configuration
- children's services leadership
- leadership development

Children's services policy and configuration

It is evident from the materials accessed in this research that changes in children's services policy have been driven by broadly similar political imperatives across all the countries examined. Shifts in the focus of children's services policy have, typically, come about as a result of identified failings in existing or previous systems; for example:

- the need to improve specific outcomes (as articulated in government policy for children's services in Denmark, The Netherlands, Canada, Ireland and Scotland)
- evidence of specific policy or service failures (for example, the death of Savanna in The Netherlands)
- rationalisation of services (such as Danish local government reorganisation)

Even the use of terminology in central government initiatives to reform children's services draws on similar notions (in many cases with explicit reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child), placing the child at the centre of all policy considerations (eg Every Child Matters, Getting it Right for Every Child and Every Opportunity for Every Child). Likewise, policy initiatives are – as in England – intended to achieve more positive outcomes across a range of broad indicators of the wellbeing of children and young people, such as:

- All children are entitled to a healthy and safe upbringing, and should be able to contribute to society, develop talents and have fun and be properly prepared for the future (The Netherlands).
- Every child should have access to: sufficient resources, support and services; childcare services; health, personal social services and suitable accommodation; [good] quality play, sport, recreation and cultural activities; and appropriate participation in local and national decision-making (Ireland).
- Children have the right to be healthy (physically and emotionally), safe and secure and successful at learning, and should be able to be socially engaged and responsible (Canada).

Arrangements for the provision of children's services at the local level vary between countries included in the study, reflecting two key differences: the extent to which central government remains engaged in service delivery; and the nature of local government administrative and governance arrangements. For example, agencies of the Irish government remain centrally involved in leading local delivery of its children's services reform programme, whereas responsibility for delivery of similar reforms in Scotland rests with senior managers in local authorities. Likewise, the complexity of three-tier governance systems (such as those in The Netherlands and Denmark) brings about equivalent complexity in attempts to achieve greater integration of planning and delivery of local children's services. However, the drive for greater integration of service planning and delivery, which features as a central tenet of the reconfiguration of services in England, is reflected in all countries included in this review, most obviously through the establishment of facilities providing a wide range of services to children and families (eg in The Netherlands, Ireland and Scotland).

Children's services leadership

There are two main areas in which differences exist in the roles and responsibilities of leaders of children's services in the countries included in this review. The first is the location of three key leadership roles:

- **Policy and strategic development:** Political leadership is provided via a range of ministries of state or government departments, and in many instances more than one has responsibility for different aspects of children's services policy. For example, the fact that Danish policy for children's services is located within various legislative streams is reflected in local government structures. This has an impact on the leadership functions of the different services for children and families: for example, education and social affairs, although located within municipalities, remain separate.
- **Service delivery:** This situation is further complicated in situations in which the national government involves itself in service provision as well as in setting a policy framework. Hence, in Ireland, while children's services committees address local issues, they are led by practitioners from central government.
- **Scrutiny and accountability:** Little information on scrutiny functions in different countries has been included in this review. However, there is evidence that there has been some streamlining of scrutiny functions, which inevitably affects the flexibility with which local leaders can reconfigure their services in response to local circumstances.

The second area of difference is the degree of integration between different aspects of children's services. The division between education and social care represents the most common split in responsibilities. Hence, whereas the arrangements for children's services in England provide for one individual to be accountable for and provide leadership to the full range of universal and targeted services in each local authority area, this is not the case in any of the countries included in the study. For example, the demarcation between education and social services remains in Scotland, with each service area headed by a director, although there is evidence of more effective collaboration between these service leaders, and lower levels of management within the services. In the Irish context, the local authority may not employ a senior manager for any of these services, as central government agencies take more of a lead in service delivery than elsewhere.

There is a high degree of convergence, with most countries attempting to spell out a universal set of high-level outcomes for children and young people, not entirely dissimilar to the Every Child Matters outcomes. Where information has been available, it also appears that visionary leadership is required in order to help partners translate policy ambitions into practical actions at a local level that make an impact on individual children's outcomes.

This review of the literature has failed to identify any evidence of a systematic approach to the assessment of skill needs among leaders of children's services in any of the countries included in the study. That is not to say that there is no work in this important area, simply that information on related activities has not been collated and reported in the public domain.

Leadership development

This review has highlighted a number of issues of relevance to skill needs and leadership development provision for leaders of children's services. First, it is clear that the role of leader of children's services is becoming increasingly complex as a result of the development of more integrated services and the more complex and holistic outcomes that are sought from interventions. This has significant implications for the future of leadership development, as leaders of children's services are expected to be effective generic leaders and managers of public services, including those that are not directly provided but commissioned from a wide range of providers. They are also expected to demonstrate professional leadership to an increasingly wide range of professional groups delivering children's services, only some of which will be planned and delivered as integrated services. This will necessarily have implications for the nature of leadership development programmes; the emphasis will increasingly be on generic leadership and management skills that can be applied in work with professionals who have a variety of specialisms.

This conclusion is reinforced by a critique of the impact on leaders of public services that recent reorganisation of local government in the UK and Denmark has had. Pedersen and Hartley (2008:334) claim this has created 'multiple layers of re-regulation and self-governing, inspection and self-formation' and complexity in the shape of the 'multiplicity of steering rationales, and in the variety of stakeholders that must be included in deliberations, networks and games of regulation'. They conclude that these changes are likely to require 'continual innovation and change in public services and governance to keep pace with the ongoing changes in society', to which end it is suggested that leadership development should, instead of reinforcing disciplinary silos, be designed to respond to the following three 'contemporary dynamics' (ibid, 335):

- self-creation
- strategising
- networking and negotiation

This review has identified a wide range of programmes available to leaders of children's services in all countries included in the study (with the possible exception of The Netherlands). In most cases, however, the training is not context specific, and it appears that leaders of children's services of necessity participate in generic public sector leadership development programmes. There are some notable exceptions to this (for example, the programmes provided by the Annie E Casey Foundation in the US), but these provide only a small number of opportunities for children's services leaders.

As in the case of educational leadership provision, many countries locate leadership training in university departments, allowing for their provision to link closely with academic research and teaching programmes (Brundrett & Dering, 2006). In relation to children's services, it appears that there are no public sector institutions dedicated to this endeavour (ie along the lines of the National College) in the countries included in the study. Denmark offers one example of a non-university-based public sector leadership institution, while there are several examples of leadership training initiatives devised by independent organisations elsewhere, such as the Annie E Casey Foundation and the Ontario Principals' Council. While the location of these leadership programmes may vary, there appears to be a trend internationally (ie within the countries included in this study) to focus on this area of continuing professional and service development, drawing on a range of not-dissimilar conceptual frameworks.

Much of the existing research on the impact of leadership programmes comes from the education sector. For example, evidence collated on the impact of school leaders on outcomes (Barber & Mourshed, 2009) asserts that instructional leaders (ie those who promote and participate in teacher learning and development, and those who take an active part in planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum) have a positive impact on the educational outcomes of pupils. Similarly, those who develop and articulate the school's vision, establish goals and expectations and foster a culture of co-operation while at the same time providing a supportive environment for staff also contribute directly to the attainment of positive outcomes by pupils.

Likewise, research into the characteristics of high-performing schools (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) identifies effective school leadership as one of the key components of success, suggesting that selecting and developing effective instructional leaders is one of four approaches to engendering high performance within schools. This analysis emphasises the need for leaders to remain focused on the occupation of their subordinates, and not to rely simply on establishing and managing structures around their work. Drawing evidence from schools across the world, this research also identifies initiatives such as coaching and instructional leadership, succession training (to ensure the right people become future leaders) and monitoring and evaluation as key to ensuring consistency and continued improvement in performance.

An evaluation of one of the Annie E Casey Foundation programmes (RLCA, 2007) suggests that the positive impact on children's outcomes that could be attributed to leadership development arose as a result of four parallel processes:

- Leaders internalised a results-accountability framework and picked up their leadership in authentic ways in their everyday lives, at work and in their communities.
- The power of focusing on a single result is acknowledged: collaborative relationships were changed by focusing on a single result, providing a means of letting go of individual goals and accepting a collaborative commitment to agreed outcomes. This refocused attention from looking solely at what leaders do to examining whether their work was getting the desired results.
- Disaggregating data made issues regarding inequalities transparent and provided a context for authentic conversations about diversity, power and disparity. On the other hand, this did not provide leaders with the impetus to move from talk to action.
- The development of specific competencies for collaborative leadership affected and influenced leaders' capacities at different levels.

Children's services leadership development in England

The results of the literature review present a number of findings of particular relevance to the National College in relation to the provision of support to leaders of children's services in England. Reflecting the findings of earlier work (Purcell, 2009), this review has highlighted the contextualised nature of leadership, but has found few examples of leadership development programmes that address situations reflecting the context within which English directors of children's services (DCSs) find themselves. However, there are several conclusions to be drawn from analysis of the literature, allowing us to consider how these can be applied to children's services in England.

Lessons for leadership development practice in England

Commentaries on developments in other countries included in this review suggest that the difficulties encountered by leaders of children's services in England – both in overseeing the delivery of more effective, joined-up services, and in accessing the kind of development support they need to be better equipped to do their jobs – are not uncommon. However, England appears to be ahead of most other countries (at least those included in this review) in two main aspects: first, in relation to the (re)configuration of children's services, going further than other countries in bringing together universal and targeted provision of the full range of services for children under the leadership of a DCS; and second, in the development of leadership programmes for practitioners in a senior management role in all-encompassing (ie integrated) children's services.

The findings from this research allow a distinction to be made between different approaches to leadership development. For example, many of the countries included in the study are moving towards introducing common standards for school leaders. However, there is some variation in the extent to which the application of programmes to develop leaders' skills in relation to these standards is co-ordinated nationally. The countries included in this study appear to allow for a high degree of local flexibility in approach, perhaps reflecting the way in which their education systems devolve responsibility for school management to the local level. This model (ie the combination

of a national framework and localised delivery) is consistent with the approach being taken increasingly by the National College in the delivery of its programmes, and there is evidence that schools engaging on these programmes improve faster than others.

While none of the countries included in the study has put in place any kind of national framework or programme for the development of leadership of children's services, there may be merit in considering allowing a more locally determined programme of DCS leadership development to evolve. This could draw for example on some of the network learning models for school leaders in Denmark and The Netherlands, as well as the National College's existing work in supporting peer networks. The fact that the constituency for this work is far smaller than for other professional groups with which the National College works (there are 388 local authorities in England, not all of which employ a DCS, whereas there are approximately 25,000 schools) is likely to require a more tailored approach to any network development in order to ensure its relevance to potential participants. It may, therefore, be appropriate to extend coaching opportunities, allowing more experienced DCSs to support their more recently appointed colleagues and to develop regional networks of current and aspiring DCSs and to focus the work of networks on succession planning and support.

Several examples of generic public sector leadership development programmes have been identified, many of which are based on broad themes that reflect those contained in the National College's leadership development programmes. Some countries (especially Denmark and Ireland) are investing in leadership development for all senior management roles in the public sector, thereby promoting a shared understanding of a common set of standards; this may be a way of working suited to adoption by the National College as it looks to broaden the range of options it makes available and strengthens its connections with partner organisations.

Other relevant lessons from the literature

The fact that leaders have pursued different career paths (eg school leaders in The Netherlands are not required to have a teaching background) illustrates the potential merit of opening the route into children's services leadership to a wider cohort than is currently the case, for example to educationalists and local authority social services workers. Some of the challenges of securing more effective integrated working between organisations and sectors in the provision of children's services may be overcome by supporting individuals with experience from these different sectors to take up new leadership roles (for example, by extending the reach of the Accelerated Leadership Development Programme). The provision of tailored leadership development training to such individuals, for example, might help them to overcome barriers borne of their lack of experience of the local authority sector, and enable them to draw on their own experience to enrich children's services policies and the working practices of their colleagues.

As indicated above, there is ample evidence that the provision of children's services in other countries is increasingly incorporating integrated working practices. In some cases, there is a clear demarcation between service planning and delivery (as is the case in Dundee, where separate structures are in place to oversee these different functions). Other cases (such as the South Dublin committee structure) allow for practitioners and service planners to work closely together. In both scenarios, evidence is beginning to emerge of the effectiveness of integrated working in bringing about improvements in outcomes for children, and it is clear that, whether structures are streamlined or separate, benefits accrue from the experiences of practitioners being fed directly to service planners, to ensure policy is informed by practice at the local level. There would appear to be merit, then, in ensuring that experienced leaders not only incorporate the views of their subordinates in devising local policy, but that they are also provided with the opportunity – through leadership development programmes or their professional body – to feed their views into national policy-making processes. Recent evaluations of the integrated working pathfinder by Highland Council have emphasised the importance of effective leadership in ensuring that all service managers and personnel are clear about what the process aims to achieve, and to encouraging their commitment to the process. These echo the findings of a recent review of integrated working in local authorities in England (Lord et al, 2008), which identified effective leadership as a precursor to enhanced outcomes.

The literature does not contain significant detail from the countries included in the study on other issues addressed by the research questions, including succession planning, public perception of DCS-equivalent roles or approaches to change management. Other considerations that did emerge, although beyond the initial scope of the review, suggest that there is a multiplicity of variables which interact to contribute to positive outcomes for children and young people, of which leadership is only one, albeit important, component. These include the impact of different approaches to the provision of universal and targeted services (such as the employment of pedagogic practitioners in all areas of children's services provision in Denmark) and cultural variables (such as the emphasis on local control of services in The Netherlands and the teaching of democratic values to schoolchildren in Denmark).

Further research

There remains a number of questions that this research has not been able to address fully, and which it is suggested may merit further enquiry, including the following:

- The research discovered very little material presenting the findings of evaluations of the effectiveness of leadership development programmes: there would appear, therefore, to be a need to secure concrete evidence of the impact of leadership development and training in relation to both academic and wider outcomes for children, young people and families.
- The literature does not appear to include details of how management theories have been validated or tested across cultures, suggesting there may be merit in exploring in more detail how different leadership models apply in the specific context of children's services.
- Considering school leadership development, a report (Davies et al, 2005) identified four areas requiring further enquiry:
 - What knowledge and skills should be developed to create effective leaders?
 - What programme features are essential in the development of effective leaders?
 - What standards should institutions follow?
 - With a broad array of pre- and in-service programmes, how can effective programme design be identified?
 - What policy and fiscal structures and strategies are most likely to support effective preparation and in-service programmes?
 - Are there models of excellence that can be replicated?

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Annex 1: Rationale for selection of countries

Introduction

Careful attention needs to be given to the selection of countries for inclusion in the study, as it is likely to have a significant impact on the outcome of the study in a number of ways, all of which are inter-related.

Socio-economic conditions

While comparisons between arrangements in England and the UK and other countries with different prevailing socio-economic conditions may be of interest, they are unlikely to contribute towards an enhanced understanding of the impact of leadership arrangements on outcomes for children. Hence, it is more likely to benefit the study if countries with similar socio-economic characteristics are included.

Research on related areas

Significant work has been undertaken by researchers concerned with themes that – while consistent with the concerns of leaders of children’s services in England – do not reflect the focus of this study. For example, comparative international studies have been carried out into child poverty, children’s wellbeing and early childhood education and care, all of which provide an impression of the effectiveness of children’s services in different countries in addressing issues of key concern. For the purposes of this study, selecting as case studies countries that perform well in these areas is likely to be beneficial, as they might provide an illustration of how leadership has contributed to these positive outcomes.

Leadership arrangements

There may be some merit in securing information from countries with structures and leadership arrangements for the delivery of children’s services that are different from those used in England. This would allow for comparisons of the variations in outcomes that can be ascribed to the different infrastructure arrangements, the findings of which might be of interest to practitioners and policy-makers. However, it is likely to be more useful for data to be collated from countries with similar arrangements to those in place in England, allowing for more of a focus on the impact on children’s outcomes of those arrangements and on the relative merits of support and development practices in place in those countries.

Accessibility of data

Two key issues relating to the accessibility of data have emerged during our initial trawl of the literature. First, there appears to be a dearth of literature that might be deemed to be specifically or closely correlated to the aims of this study, for any individual country or in the form of comparative studies. Second, it must be acknowledged that the availability of literature written in the English language is more limited in countries where English is not one of the country’s official languages. On both these counts, a more pragmatic approach is indicated, especially given the time constraints, meaning that it may be necessary to follow the data, and include countries deemed to be more information-rich than others, even though they may appear less well matched on consideration of the thematic priorities of the research.

Analysis

In order to address the aims of this study in the agreed timescale, we have identified a range of sources of information which we believe address these concerns appropriately. Our assessment of these sources has resulted in the generation of the following approach to identifying countries for inclusion as case studies.

Comparable economies

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is proposed as a suitable starting point for the identification of case study countries, as it brings together the governments of countries 'committed to democracy and the market economy from around the world' in order to 'foster prosperity and fight poverty through economic growth and financial stability'⁶⁰. This is achieved through continued monitoring of events in member countries as well as outside the OECD area, and includes consideration of themes wider than economic developments; hence, the existence of a Network on Early Childhood Education and Care, which aims to 'assist countries to develop effective and efficient policies for education and learning to meet individual, social, cultural and economic objectives'⁶¹.

The countries currently in membership of OECD are listed in Table A1; those highlighted (*) are deemed to exhibit socio-economic characteristics similar to those prevailing in the UK. This provides a pool of 18 potential case study countries.

Table A1: Membership of OECD, with potential case study countries

Australia*
Austria*
Belgium*
Canada*
Czech Republic
Denmark*
Finland*
France*
Germany*
Greece
Hungary
Iceland*
Ireland*
Italy
Japan
Korea
Luxembourg*
Mexico
The Netherlands*
New Zealand*
Norway*
Poland
Portugal
Slovak Republic
Spain*
Sweden*
Switzerland*
Turkey
United Kingdom
United States*

60 http://www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_36734052_36761681_1_1_1_1_1_1,00.html [accessed 10 Sep 2009]

61 See http://www.oecd.org/document/43/0,3343,en_2649_39263231_39485867_1_1_1_1_1_1,00.html [accessed 10 Sep 2009]

Data on early childhood education and care

OECD has undertaken extensive research on the approach taken by the world's most advanced economies to early childhood education and care. The review of national early childhood policies and organisation was initiated by the OECD Education Committee in 1996, and ran from 1998 to 2004, resulting in the publication of two major reports, *Starting Strong* (2001) and *Starting Strong II* (2006), along with a series of country notes describing current policy and practice in each of the 20 participating countries⁶².

A summary of some of the key findings from this research describes how several countries have begun to combine the infrastructure provision for early childhood education (eg planning and provision of infant schools) and children's social care. It is suggested that: 'in split systems, responsibility for services is divided among several ministries. This fragmentation of responsibility seems to be based more on traditional divisions of government than on the actual needs of families and young children', and (citing the Nordic countries as examples) asserts that 'countries that integrate their services under one ministry or agency generally achieve more co-ordinated and goal-oriented services of a higher quality' (Bennett, 2008:2-3).

The OECD research identifies the following countries as taking an approach to early childhood education and care which is similar to that of the UK, in that it is co-ordinated to some extent:

- early adopters: the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden)
- more recent developers: Iceland, New Zealand, The Netherlands and some states in the USA (eg Georgia, Massachusetts and Washington)

More recent research (OECD, 2009) compares public spending and policies for children with key indicators of child wellbeing (including education, health, housing, family incomes and quality of school life) in OECD countries. This research has identified a number of countries as spending relatively more on their youngest children (Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland and Norway) and others (Ireland, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States) that spend relatively little on young children.

The same research concludes that investing more in early years provision, especially to children in disadvantaged families, can promote wellbeing for all children. While it appears that most OECD countries concentrate child spending on compulsory education, it is asserted that school systems are not necessarily designed to address the problems of disadvantaged children, strengthening the case for increasing the joined-up nature of service planning and provision.

Data on childhood wellbeing and rights

Research into the performance of 'economically advanced nations'⁶³ in relation to six dimensions of childhood wellbeing (UNICEF, 2007) places the UK at the bottom of the international league table: last for three of the dimensions, in the bottom third of countries for two more, and in the middle third for only one dimension (health and safety). There are some helpful parallels to be drawn between the dimensions included in this research and the ECM outcomes (Table A2), suggesting that this analysis offers a useful basis on which to draw comparisons with other countries in relation to the outcomes associated with children's services.

62 These were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Mexico, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States

63 Defined as OECD members, excluding those for which sufficient data could not be located.

Table A2: Comparison of UNICEF wellbeing dimensions and ECM outcomes

UNICEF wellbeing dimensions	ECM outcomes
Material wellbeing	Achieve economic wellbeing
Health and safety	Be healthy
Behaviour and risks	Stay safe
Educational wellbeing	Enjoy and achieve
Family and peer relationships	Make a positive contribution
Subjective wellbeing	Enjoy and achieve

The top third of the UNICEF wellbeing table is dominated by northern European countries, specifically The Netherlands (in first position) and the Nordic countries (Sweden – 2nd, Denmark – 3rd, Finland – 4th, and Norway – 7th). Examples of middle-third countries include Ireland (9th) and Canada (12th), both of which feature in the top third in two or more dimensions (and in Ireland’s case, four dimensions).

Developed as a means of assessing countries’ progress towards achieving some of the goals of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children’s Rights Index ‘attempts to assess civil, social and participation rights ascribed to children across the globe’ (Gran et al, 2004:7). The assessment of those countries already identified above is summarised below (where those countries assessed as performing best in relation to children’s rights have a score of 12):

- 2: Canada and Finland
- 11: Denmark, Ireland, Spain, Iceland
- 10: The Netherlands, Sweden, Portugal
- 9: New Zealand, Australia
- 7: Norway, UK, USA

European data on child poverty

Analysis of child poverty rates in European countries (EU, 2008) identified the UK as being on a par with the worst-performing countries in Europe (22-24 per cent), and Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Germany as having the lowest child poverty rates (12 per cent or less). Further analysis of EU member states' national strategy reports on social inclusion (Eurochild, 2008) identifies a range of ways in which distinctions may be made between countries in relation to child poverty:

- Denmark and Portugal are countries whose reports are cited as good examples in relation to their governments' strategic approach to tackling child poverty.
- Ireland, Portugal and the UK are countries that acknowledge the multi-dimensional nature of child poverty, and in which there is 'effective co-ordination across different policy domains and between different levels of governance' and that 'countries that achieve the best results on child poverty are those that are performing well on all fronts' (Eurochild, 2008:10).
- Finland and Ireland are countries with better governance practices (in terms of 'civil dialogue, children's participation, mainstreaming and co-ordination' (ibid:16), including specifically 'the mainstreaming of a child-centred approach' (ibid:18).

Proposals

The foregoing analysis of data on the performance of countries in relation to a range of themes has been used to generate a longlist of countries offering the potential for inclusion as case studies in the research (Table A3).

Table A3: Alphabetical list of countries offering potential as case study material

Australia	Ireland	Portugal
Canada	The Netherlands	Sweden
Denmark	New Zealand	USA (some states)
Finland	Norway	

Taking into account further considerations on the availability of accessible data (including issues around the use of English in publications and access to grey literature), the following countries are suggested as those on which efforts should be focused to secure data that might be converted into useable material for inclusion in a case study. These are listed in order of priority, and accompanied by explanatory text outlining the rationale for their inclusion in the shortlist.

Denmark

Denmark exhibits similar socio-economic conditions to the UK, and performs consistently well in selected reviews. It ranks highly in assessments of early adopters of joined-up services, childhood wellbeing, children's rights and child poverty.

There is likely to be some literature written in English, and a small number of comparative studies have been sourced already.

Additionally, members of the research team have some contacts working in children's services in Denmark, and it is hoped that these can be exploited to secure more specific grey literature on the issues under consideration.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands exhibits similar socio-economic conditions to the UK, and performs well in most of the selected reviews. It ranks highly in assessments of wellbeing (first) and children's rights, and has recently adopted a joined-up approach to children's services.

There is likely to be some literature written in English, and a small number of comparative studies have been sourced already.

Ireland

The UK's closest neighbour, Ireland exhibits very similar socio-economic conditions to the UK, and has undergone a similar transformation of children's services over the past 10 years. Indeed, the Irish approach has been lauded for its recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of child poverty, and for the governance arrangements applied to its children's services. Ireland performs moderately well in the selected reviews and ranks highly in assessments of childhood wellbeing and children's rights.

There is likely to be a substantial literature written in English, and a small number of comparative studies have been sourced already.

Additionally, members of the research team have some contacts working in children's services in Ireland, and it is hoped that these can be exploited to secure more specific grey literature on the issues under consideration.

Canada and USA

Canada's form of governance is based on the Westminster model, suggesting there may be some similarities in the departmental approach to governing children's services (albeit with the additional state layer). Canada also exhibits similar socio-economic conditions as the UK, and performs well in the assessment of children's rights and moderately well in relation to childhood wellbeing.

There is likely to be an extensive literature written in English, and a small number of comparative studies (mainly linked to services in the USA) have been sourced already.

While the USA does not perform particularly well in any of the assessments included in this process, there is evidence to suggest that some states have adopted similar children's services structures, and may merit closer consideration.

There is likely to be an extensive literature written in English. A small number of comparative studies, along with details of leadership development programmes linked directly to children's services, have been sourced already.

Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand both base their form of governance on the Westminster model, suggesting there may be some similarities in the departmental approach to governing children's services (albeit with an additional state layer). Although the two countries perform less well in the selected assessments (both do moderately well in relation to children's rights), they both exhibit similar socio-economic conditions as the UK, and New Zealand has adopted a joined-up approach to children's services provision.

There is likely to be an extensive literature written in English, and a small number of comparative studies (mainly including both countries) have been sourced already.

Additionally, members of the research team have some contacts working in children's services in New Zealand, and it is hoped that these can be exploited to secure more specific grey literature on the issues under consideration.

It is also proposed that one additional comparator be included, for the reasons detailed below.

Scotland

Since the National College's Leadership Programme is focused on meeting the needs of DCSs in England, and different structures apply in Scotland, it is felt that there may be merit in exploring provision in this nearest of neighbours. While education and social care remain under separate jurisdiction in most parts of Scotland, there is a tradition of collaborative working between these areas, and a learning culture that has drawn from the experience of the Nordic countries.

There is likely to be an extensive literature (particularly grey literature) written in English, and a small number of studies have been sourced already.

Additionally, members of the research team have some contacts working in children's services in Scotland, and offers of assistance have already been received, providing encouragement that Scotland offers the potential for a rich source of information for the purposes of this study.

Annex 2: Search strategy

Introduction

The approach adopted for the review has been devised to be sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency and quality, to instil confidence in the client and stakeholders, and to be sufficiently flexible to be developed and tailored as the review progresses. Our approach will be:

- comprehensive: drawing on a wide range of sources to identify research relevant to the topic
- focused: clearly addressing the aims and objectives identified above
- rigorous: identifying and critically appraising the evidence using explicit and agreed criteria
- transparent: documenting the review process

Sources

Our proposed approach to the literature search will use multiple overlapping strategies to ensure all relevant documents are identified. The key databases to be searched will include:

- Social Sciences Citation Index
- International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
- Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (incorporating Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Sociological Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts and Worldwide Political Science Abstracts)
- IDOX Information Service Database

All these databases will be searched for articles, books and other literature published between 1980 and 2009. Relevant material published before 1980 and to which we are guided will also be included. Literature from and relating to the UK will be given priority, although it is acknowledged that there will be much to be learned from other parts of the world (particularly Western European countries), so all searches will be undertaken in such a way that international sources are incorporated.

Extensive searches of the internet will also be undertaken, using a number of user-friendly search engines (including Google, Google-Scholar and Yahoo), and deep-search technologies (such as T-10), as these have been found on previous occasions to be useful in filling gaps, particularly in the grey literature.

Discussions with key stakeholders (including contacts at the National College, Association of Directors of Children's Services, I&DeA and other public sector support agencies with which we are in contact) will also be initiated as a means of identifying key documents, especially grey literature.

Search terms

A range of approaches to interrogating the databases will be adopted, utilising differing combinations of search terms, both as MeSH headings and free text. Different combinations of search terms will be used to address each of the key areas of investigation, as detailed below. All searches will be conducted in such a way as to enable references from as wide a field as possible to be identified, either by searching in international indices generically or by identifying specific countries (suggested in discussion with partners or in reading as the research progresses) for searches.

Service configuration

This covered:

- how services are being reconfigured to improve children's wellbeing and provide increased joint or inter-agency working in these countries
- how senior children's services leadership roles are configured and supported
- how these roles are organised in the context of local and national government and funding
- roles and responsibilities of different leaders
- organisational infrastructure and governance framework and the implications for the leaders involved

The following combination of terms will be used to expose literature relating to the foregoing areas of investigation:

- leadership + public sector
- leadership + children's services
- leadership + children's social care
- leadership + education
- management + public sector
- management + children's services
- management + children's social care
- management + education
- structures + public sector
- structures + children's services
- structures + children's social care
- structures + education
- funding + public sector
- funding + children's services
- funding + children's social care
- funding + education
- local government + children's services
- local government + children's social care
- roles + responsibilities + leader children's services
- roles + responsibilities + leader + children's social care
- service + development + children's services
- service + development + children's social care
- service + configuration + children's services
- service + configuration + children's social care
- organisation + infrastructure + governance + children's services
- organisation + infrastructure + governance + children's social care
- leadership + integrated working + children's services
- leadership + integrated working + children's social care

Outcomes, performance and accountability

The following combination of terms will be used to expose literature relating to the outcomes for which children's services leaders are responsible and evidence of their effectiveness in achieving these; how their performance is measured; and the external accountability mechanisms:

- outcomes + performance + accountability + impact + director + leader + manager + children's services
- outcomes + performance + accountability + impact + director + leader + manager + children's social care

Leadership skills development

The following combination of terms will be used to expose literature relating to the skills which DCSs should exhibit in order to fulfil the requirements of their role:

- skills + analysis + director + leader + manager + children's services
- skills + analysis + director + leader + manager + children's social care
- qualifications + director + leader + manager + children's services
- qualifications + director + leader + manager + children's social care

The following combination of terms will be used to expose literature relating to the training and development needs of DCSs:

- director + leader + manager + children's services + training needs / development needs / training & development
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + training needs / development needs / training & development

The following combination of terms will be used to expose literature relating to the type of support (including courses, advice service and mentoring schemes) available to public sector managers and DCSs, and to the impact of leadership development programmes:

- leadership + courses
- public sector leadership + courses
- local government leadership + courses
- director + leader + manager + children's services + courses
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + courses
- leadership + support + mentoring + peer support
- public sector leadership + support + mentoring + peer support
- local government leadership + support + mentoring + peer support
- director + leader + manager + children's services + support + mentoring + peer support
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + support + mentoring + peer support
- leadership development programme + content
- leadership development programme + impact
- director + leader + manager + children's social care leadership development programme + content + impact
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + leadership development programme + content + impact

Other considerations

Other related evidence and analysis to be considered (eg succession planning, demographic and career paths of leaders, public perceptions of these roles, extent of integrated working, approaches to change management etc) used the following search terms:

- director + leader + manager + children's social care + succession planning
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + demograph*
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + career paths
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + public + perception
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + integrated working
- director + leader + manager + children's social care + change + management
- director + leader + manager + children's services + succession planning
- director + leader + manager + children's services + demograph*
- director + leader + manager + children's services + career paths
- director + leader + manager + children's services + public + perception
- director + leader + manager + children's services + integrated working
- director + leader + manager + children's services + change + management

As the study progresses, more specific search terms will be used, particularly on internet searches, to reflect issues emerging from the analysis of references obtained and accessed already.

The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services is committed to excellence and dedicated to inclusiveness. We exist to develop and inspire great leaders of schools, early years settings and children's services. We share the same ambition – to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people.

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