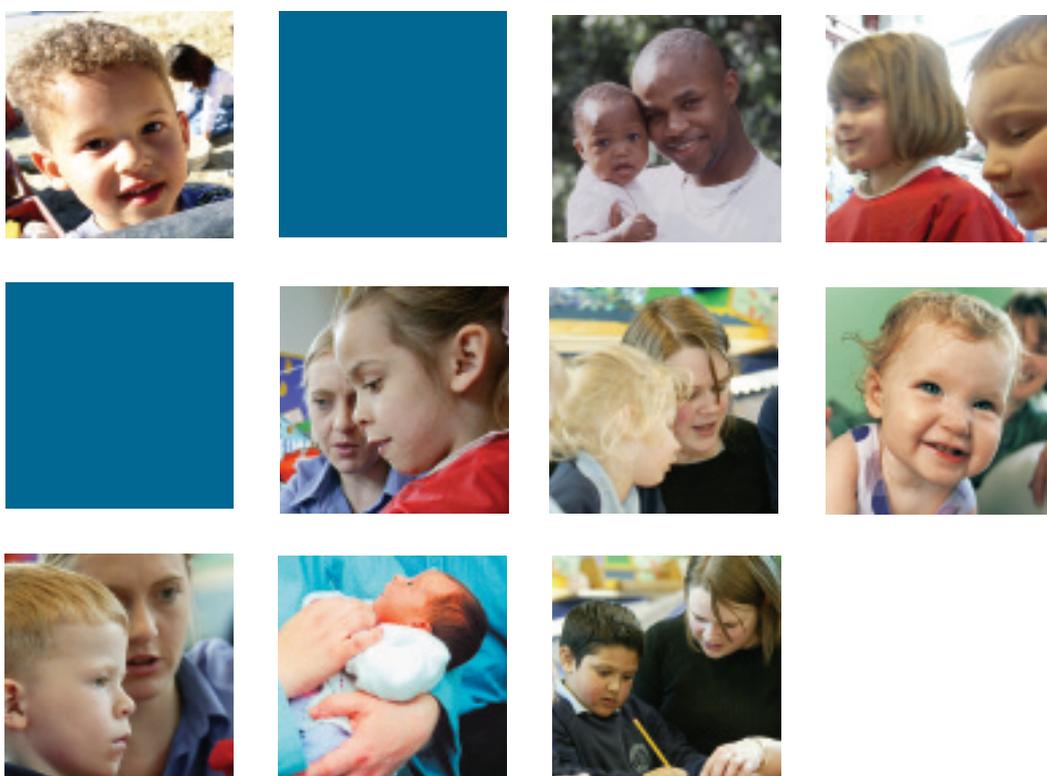


Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen

An action plan for the ten year strategy: Sure Start Children's Centres, extended schools and childcare



Every Child Matters
Change For Children

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Foreword



More parents than ever are facing difficult choices about how to balance work and family life. Since 1997 we have done much to help parents as they make those choices – subsidising childcare costs through tax credits, providing a core of free early education and care for every 3 and 4 year old. The public, private and voluntary sectors have grown to meet the need.

But I want to go further. Parents have a right to expect that high quality childcare will be available to meet their family's needs. We must break down the barriers between childcare and education so that hard pressed parents and their children do not miss out on activities, opportunities and practical help because of the demands of working life. That will help us to stop children's life chances being determined more by their background than by their abilities.

That is why I am proud that the Childcare Bill now before Parliament breaks new ground. It puts our expectations about childcare into law, in the way that the 1944 Education Act set the foundations for the school system. Parents' needs for childcare will, for the first time, be matched by duties on local authorities and their partners.

The Childcare Bill is the cornerstone of this action plan. It moves us on from policy development to implementation. Pilots and pathfinders are showing us that our ambitions are realistic, and can have a powerful and positive impact. We now need to focus on the practical steps needed to deliver on that ambition, across the country and in every community.

I hope this plan will help all involved understand those challenges, and work with us to meet them over the next few years. Parents and children deserve no less.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ruth Kelly'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Rt Hon Ruth Kelly
Secretary of State for Education and Skills

Executive Summary



Choice for parents, the best start for children: making it happen

An action plan for the ten year strategy: Sure Start Children's Centres, extended schools and childcare.

Choice with confidence for families

- 1.** Parents are the best judges of their family's needs. A loving home, freedom from poverty, good health and high quality education and care enable children to reach their full potential. Parents making important choices about how to balance work and family life need to be confident that whatever they choose will be right for their child.
- 2.** More parents than ever choose to work, not least because that will help them secure a better future for their children. We are supporting that choice by promoting flexibility in the world of work, and making it easier for parents to find and use high quality childcare. There is already a diverse market in childcare, in which the private, voluntary and community sectors play a major part. But gaps remain, and we need to develop in every area a thriving childcare market which will respond to parents' needs.
- 3.** While widening choice for parents, we want to help all children to do well, and reduce the difference between what the poorest children achieve and the rest. Good early learning can have a major impact on a child's achievement at age 5, and out of school activities can contribute to a more personalised curriculum for pupils, as well as helping parents to manage the demands of the working day. Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools will help parents to fit learning and development opportunities for their children into flexible childcare arrangements. Where children and families face particular problems, they will also provide simple and straightforward access to help – for example health advice, parenting support or help with finding a job.

Making it happen

4. The ten year strategy set out a long term vision and the detailed analysis which underpinned it. There has been significant progress since the strategy was published. A major milestone was the publication in 2005 of the Childcare Bill which, subject to Parliamentary approval, will set the framework of local responsibilities which will be fleshed out in detailed documents over the coming months.

5. This action plan builds on that progress, and marks an important shift from developing policy to working with our partners on delivery. We hope it will help all involved understand what will be expected of them by when; what they can be doing now to prepare for the challenges ahead; and the nature and timing of the help and support they can expect nationally, regionally and locally.

- Central government must continue to clarify essential requirements, through regulations and guidance, and also make clear the scope for local flexibility. We will fund pilot and pathfinder work to test out different approaches to delivery, and share good practice at every level.
- Local authorities will be working with schools and other partners, in PCTs, SHAs, the employment service and the private and voluntary sectors, to plan and lead change, and develop the childcare market; and commission accessible care, education and support to meet the needs of parents and children.
- Those working with children and families in childcare, Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools will plan and provide high quality, responsive services, drawing on the support available locally, regionally and nationally.

Progress and challenges

6. The Government's major investment in early learning and childcare, over £17 billion since 1997, has led to an unprecedented expansion in choice for parents. Tax credits have helped to make childcare more affordable for working families. Parents are increasingly confident about using childcare. The free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, introduced between 1998 and 2003, enables parents to choose the pre-school experience they think is best for their child.

7. Sure Start has pioneered the joining up of services, especially health and employment, around the needs of children and families. Over 800 Sure Start Children's Centres are now open, reaching over 650,000 children in the poorest wards in the country. And over 5,000 schools are already working to deliver extended out of school opportunities, and easier access to personal support, to children, parents and their local communities.

The vision: what parents and children can expect by 2010

8. By 2010 we will have built on the pioneering work now underway to transform expectations. In every area parents and children should find that:

- their local authority understands their needs, and has worked with local partners to ensure they have a choice of affordable childcare, and ready access to other opportunities and services;
- the local information service not only knows what is available but can help create a personalised package of care and education which meets the family's needs;
- 3 and 4 year olds have 15 hours of free early education and childcare which can be taken flexibly to fit into that package;
- they have a local Sure Start Children's Centre which will provide easy access to childcare and services for children from birth to 5, and in the most disadvantaged areas will provide those services on site and reach out to make sure they are used by those in most need; and
- schools offer easy access to childcare, out of school activities, parenting support, community access to school facilities and quick referral to specialist health and social care services when necessary.

Local partners delivering for parents and children

9. 2010 is only four years away. Early years and childcare need to be given the necessary priority by local partners. The Childcare Bill is the first ever legislation dedicated to early years and childcare. It places a series of important new duties on local authorities, together with SHAs, PCTs and the employment service. It builds on the Children Act 2004, and reinforces the local authority role as strategic leader of children's trusts, market manager and commissioner of services.

10. To meet the new duties, most of which will take effect in 2008, local authorities will need to:

- Carry out a detailed childcare sufficiency assessment and help the local childcare market to respond to local demand, especially from families on low incomes or with disabled children.

The plan sets out a framework for this, highlighting the key steps involved, which will be the subject of forthcoming statutory guidance.

- Provide parents with the information and advice they need to make choices for their families.

The plan describes the new functions local authorities will need to develop to meet the extended duty proposed in the Bill, such as brokerage support in finding childcare.

- Extend the free entitlement to early learning and care for 3 and 4 year olds to 15 hours, and make it more flexible.

The plan describes how the government proposes to work with pathfinders to extend the entitlement and to test ways of increasing flexibility.

- Work with a range of local partners to roll out Sure Start Children's Centres and support the extended schools programme.

The plan notes that all aspects of the vision, including Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools, should be built into the responsibilities of children's trusts and brought together within the Children and Young People's Plan.

Delivering quality

11. We want to focus local partners on the availability, accessibility and affordability of services. But to maintain the confidence of parents, and help all children do well, we also need to keep a firm eye on the quality of what is available, and the way it is reaching out to all families. That means:

- setting clear expectations for children's development at age 5;
- learning from what works, especially on narrowing the gap in achievement and reaching particular groups;
- improving leadership and management of Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools through better training, guidance and good practice; and
- using the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – a single framework for learning and development for children up to the age of 5 – to ensure consistently high standards and promote achievement.

The plan looks forward to early consultation on the EYFS, describing the latest thinking on what it will cover, how it will take into account the diversity of the sector and how we can support local authorities and providers in implementing it.

12. The quality of staff is the most important factor in securing high quality for children, and building parental confidence. Local authorities have recently received their allocations from the Transformation Fund of £250m over two years. This will support training and development, and the appointment of more highly qualified staff, mainly in the private, voluntary and independent sectors where levels of qualifications are currently lower than in the maintained sector.

13. The Children's Workforce Development Council has been asked to work with us to raise the level of skills across the sector, including:

- working with the Training and Development Agency for schools to draw together standards for a new Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) for those leading practice in full day care settings – on which consultation will start shortly;
- using some of the Transformation Fund to work with higher education institutions to provide EYPS training; and
- advising on how best to secure that a higher proportion of the workforce in all early years settings is qualified to at least Level 3 by 2008.

Delivering change and improvement

14. Through our national programmes and regional teams we will:

- Develop a national delivery partnership with key stakeholders to keep implementation on track and advise and challenge policy makers.

The plan announces a new stakeholder forum to be chaired by Dame Julie Mellor, former Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

- Support the early stages of delivery and share good practice quickly.

The plans shows how the Childcare Implementation Project and the roll out of extended schools are already demonstrating the effectiveness of this way of working, and how Directors for Children and Learners and their teams in each region plan to help local networks to build on what works.

- Agree targets and monitor progress in each local authority.

The plan highlights how we will negotiate these with local authorities and work to ensure that they are integrated with wider arrangements for supporting and challenging local performance.

- Ensure that performance management of Sure Start Children's Centres, and improvement conversations with schools, support new ways of working.

The plan describes the range of performance indicators that the government is considering for Sure Start Children's Centres and sets out the process which will support performance management, including the development of a self-evaluation tool for centres themselves and future consultation on the potential benefit of establishing a national network of Centre Improvement Partners.

- Reform inspection and regulation to reflect new approaches to delivery.

The plan describes the proposed integration of inspection systems under the Childcare Bill proposes and what this will mean for different parts of the system.

- Collect and use data to drive improvement at every level.

The plan explains the intention to create a spine of indicators which can be used to monitor performance and target future action, improving performance at every level.

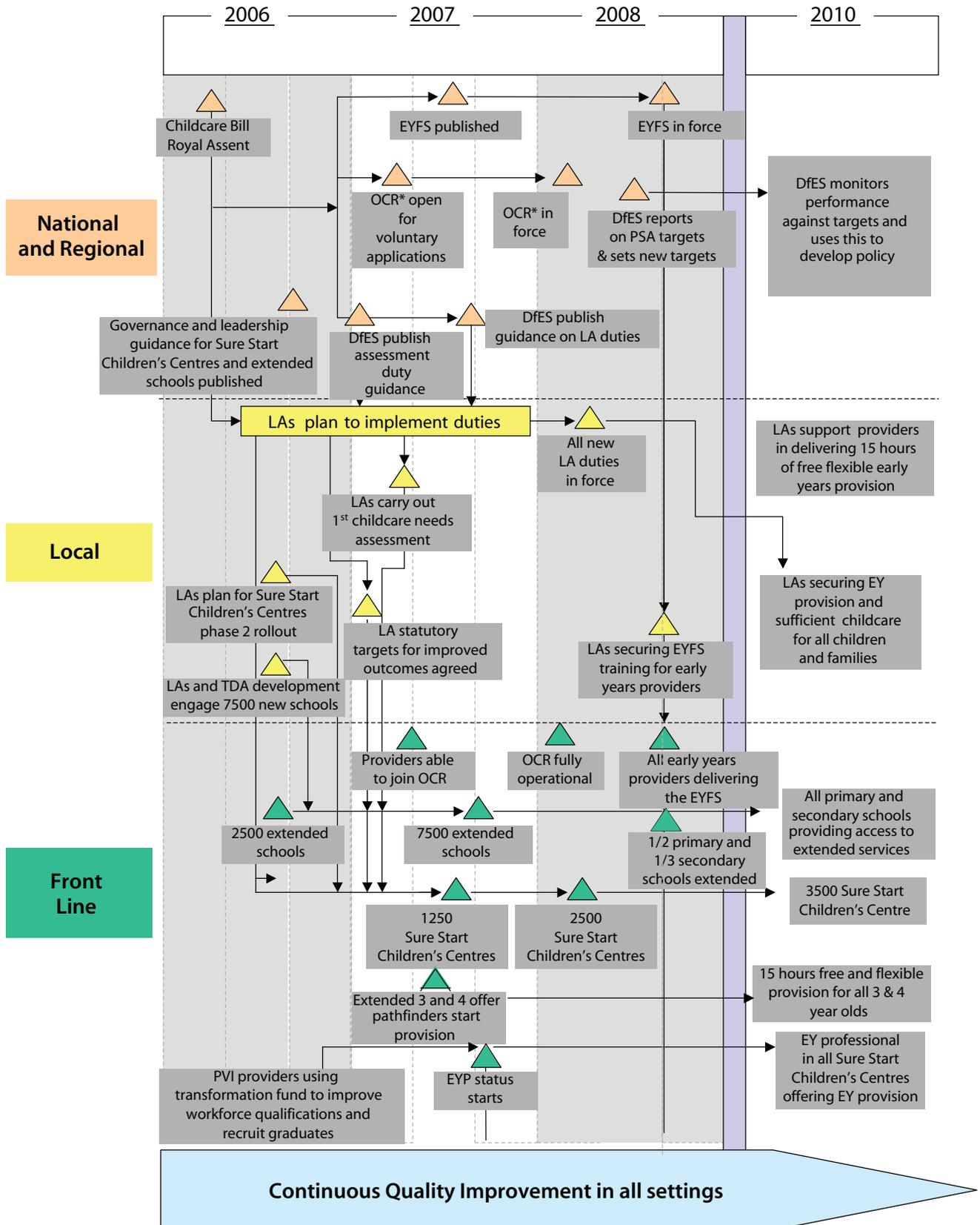
Summarising actions and expectations

15. This plan brings together a set of important change and delivery messages. Local authorities and their partners will be preparing and rolling forward their own plans. To help that process, we have summarised the way forward in the timeline below and in chapter 6, which looks forward year on year at who needs to do what, by when, in order to achieve the 2010 vision. This is split between central government, local partners and front line delivery. We have also summarised separately at Annex A the proposed phasing of the guidance and regulations under the Childcare Bill.

16. Many local authorities and partners are already well down this road. This plan owes much to their efforts, and we must continue to learn from the very best practice. But there is still much to do to ensure that every parent has real choice, and can be confident about all the options available. Making the vision for 2010 into a reality for all children and their families is our shared challenge for the next four years.

The Childcare Bill remains subject to Parliamentary approval. All references to the Bill in this document should be read in that context.

Ten year childcare strategy: Implementation timeline to 2010



* OCR: Ofsted Childcare Register

1. Choice for parents: progress and challenges



- The ten year strategy for childcare, published in December 2004, set out the Government's response to a fundamental challenge facing Britain in the 21st Century – the need to ensure available, affordable and high quality childcare.
- Good, reliable childcare is essential for millions of working families and for forging a fairer and more just society. The Government is committed to meeting parents' aspirations and helping them make difficult decisions about how to balance work and family life and improve life chances for their children.
- Enormous progress has already been made, but more remains to be achieved. If we are to provide the support that parents demand, and children need, then we must drive through the implementation of our reforms.
- The Childcare Bill – currently before Parliament – will provide the framework for delivering radical change for parents and children. Together central government, local authorities and the full range of providers have the opportunity to embed high quality universal childcare for all as part of a modern British welfare state.

Choice for parents: the case for reform

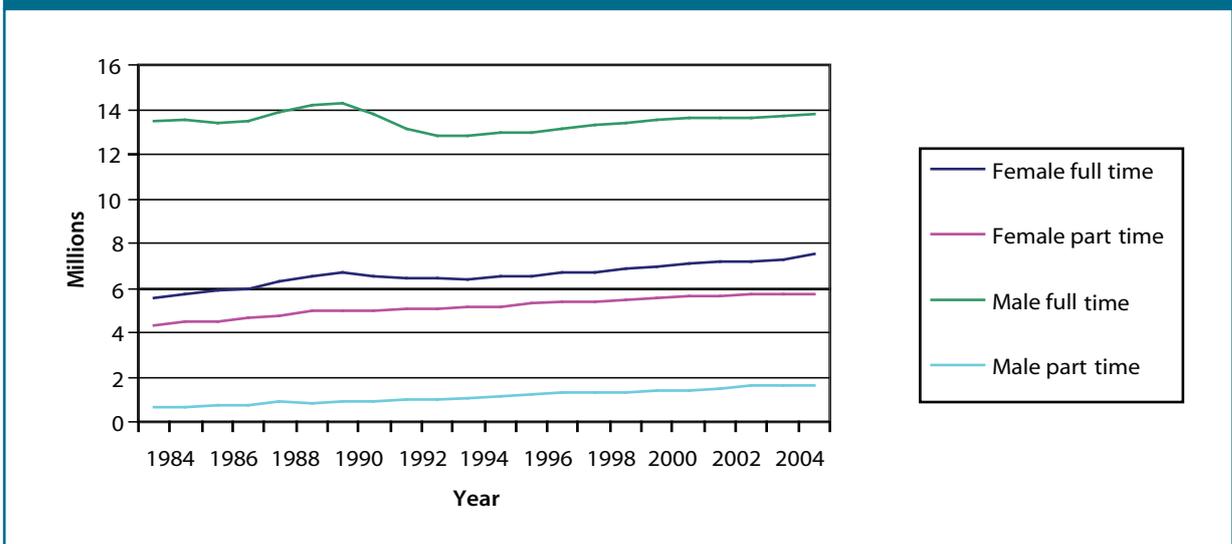
1.1 Some of the most difficult decisions that parents make are about how to balance work and family life. All parents want the best for their children. This is why the Government has always been clear that it is parents themselves who are the best judges of their family's needs. Our aim is not to make decisions for parents, but to give them the best support and maximum possible choice in providing their children with the best start in life.

1.2 In recent decades, many families across Britain have decided to balance work and family life in ways that have been markedly different from more traditional patterns and choices. This has meant that one of the fundamental trends shaping our modern economy and society is the increased participation of women, and particularly mothers, in the labour market. This is not the consequence of Government policy but is the result of decisions

made by mothers and fathers themselves, who are choosing new ways in which to share the care of their children and balance family responsibilities with work.

1.3 Two million more people are in work now compared with 1997 and over 1.3 million additional jobs are expected over the next 8 years. And most of these new jobs will be taken up by women, continuing the trend of the last two decades in which female employment has increased from 60 per cent in the mid-1980s to just under 70 per cent in 2004. Part-time work plays an important role, as the chart below shows.

Chart 1.1 Trends in UK employment, part-time and full-time



Source: Labour Force Survey

1.4 Employment rates amongst mothers have shifted the most. The employment rate for women with dependent children rose from 57 per cent in 1992 to 66 per cent in 2004. Lone parent employment rates have increased from 54 per cent to 56.6 per cent since publication of the ten year strategy – on top of an 8 percentage point increase since 1997. This is consistent with trends across the developed world. Britain is not the only country grappling with how best to support parents in balancing work and family life.

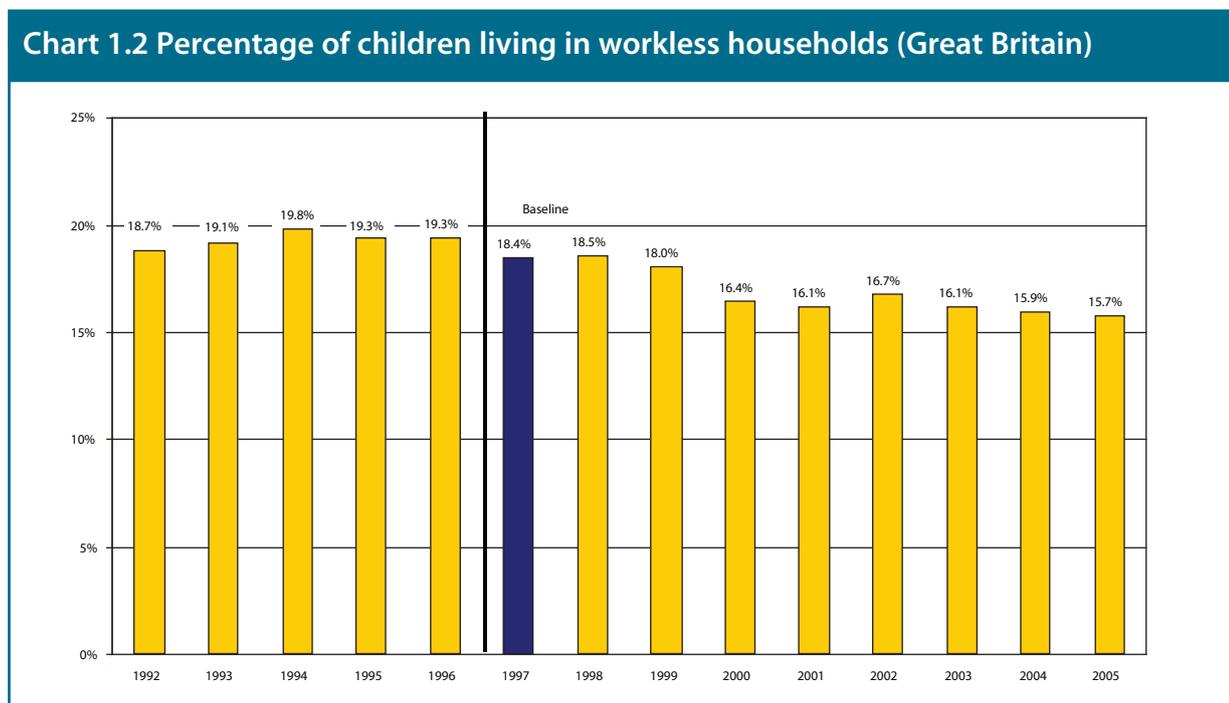
1.5 Clearly Government must respond to these trends. It remains an injustice that women, on average, earn significantly less over their lifetimes than men. The recent Women and Work Commission report *Shaping A Fairer Future** noted that women who work part time earn 32 per cent less than the median hourly earnings of women who work full time, and 41 per cent less per hour than men who work full time.

1.6 Many parents choose to work because the increased income can improve their children’s life chances. Work is the most important route out of poverty and children benefit in the short and long term from having at least one parent working. Since 1997 the

* DTI, 2006

number of children in absolute poverty has halved. From 1998-99 to 2004-05, the number of children in relative low income households has fallen by 700,000 on both a Before Housing Costs and After Housing Costs basis: from 3.1 million children, to 2.4m (BHC); and from 4.1m to 3.4m (AHC).

1.7 The increase in the availability of childcare since 1997, alongside wider workforce measures, has allowed far more parents to join or re-enter the workforce, leading to a significant decrease in the proportion of children living in working-age workless households. Before 1997, this proportion was broadly constant at around 19 per cent. By 2005, it had fallen to 15.7 per cent, with the proportion of children under 5 in workless households reducing broadly in line with the overall trend.



Note: Data from 1997 onwards have been revised in line with latest census population estimates, therefore they are not directly comparable with pre-1997 data.
Data source: Labour Force Survey, spring quarters.

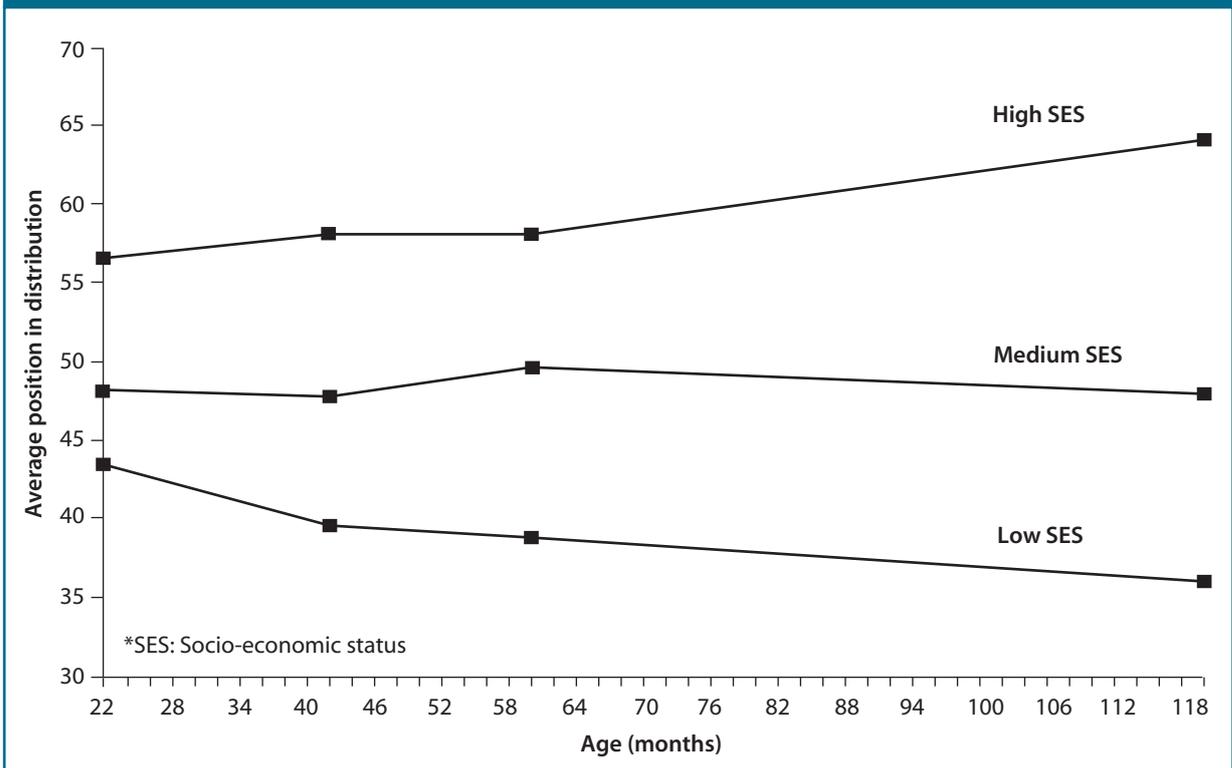
1.8 If the labour market is to continue to grow, parents will need to be able to find employment that helps them to balance work with caring for their children in the ways that they want. Flexible working and part-time working are attractive options for many parents, enabling them to fit work better around the time they want to spend with their children. The measures we have introduced around the right to flexible working (see para 1.17) have done a great deal to support this. Women are still more likely to work part time than men, but increasingly fathers are taking advantage of such choices, with the proportion of men working part time increasing steadily over the last two decades.

Social mobility: childcare and life-chances

1.9 It is a sobering fact that, according to the best data we have, rates of social mobility in Britain have stagnated over recent decades. At the same time the social class attainment gap in our schools and amongst young adults remains stubbornly high. This is something which we as a society should be concerned about because it means thousands of children are still not achieving their full potential. It wastes talent which could help drive economic growth.

1.10 Reducing this attainment gap requires concerted and sustained action across all parts of the education system: schools, further and higher education and lifelong learning. But crucially it means starting early. Chart 1.3 below shows that by the age of 2, poorer children are doing less well than more economically and socially advantaged children and the gap between them widens during the first years of school.

Chart 1.3 Average Rank of Test Scores for Children Aged 2 – 5 Years, by Parental SES*



Feinstein (2003). "Inequality in the Early Cognitive Development of British Children in the 1970 Cohort," *Economica*, p73-97.

1.11 Research has demonstrated the importance of early education and childcare in enhancing children's development and later outcomes. For example, children who have attended two years of quality early education can get a boost of up to 6 months in their development. For children from disadvantaged backgrounds, attending pre-school

education is particularly important as it raises development above the expected minimum level in literacy, language and numeracy at Key Stage 1, preparing them for Key Stage 2 education.

1.12 Without good early years experience, it may be harder for disadvantaged children to cope with the later demands of Key Stage 2. The early years offer an unrivalled opportunity for promoting social mobility and reducing the differences between the more disadvantaged children and their better off peers when they get to school.

1.13 No parent should see their child held back from achieving their potential by disadvantage or lack of opportunity. That is why our approach is about making sure *all* parents can choose accessible, affordable childcare that helps them balance work and family life. It is about ensuring high quality, which means integrated early education and care to make sure that their child has a real chance of doing as well as everyone else by the time they start school.

Progress

1.14 Since 1997 and particularly since the publication of the ten year childcare strategy, we have made significant progress. The strategy sets out a long term ambitious agenda for change and implementation which will take concerted effort over a number of years.

1.15 But improvements have already fed through into people's everyday lives. We have improved flexibility for parents, and significantly increased investment which, while protecting the diversity of provision, has led to more and better childcare. We have started to link childcare to a full range of services which support parents, in particular providing access to health and social care through Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools.

1.16 Health services play a vital role in the earliest years of children's lives, with health professionals often being the first point of contact with parents even before their child's birth. The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services published in 2004 sets national standards for children's health and social care and promotes strong partnerships between health and other local services. The recent health White Paper *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services* reinforces the importance of local services meeting the needs of children and families in an integrated way, and supports the future role of Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools in offering services which are accessible for local communities.

More flexibility in balancing work and family life

1.17 We have helped parents make the decisions which suit their circumstances in a number of ways. Maternity leave has been made more generous and we have for the first

time introduced the flexibility to share it with fathers. The Work and Families Bill, currently going through Parliament, will help parents who want to spend more time with their children when they are very young. We are:

- extending paid maternity leave from six to nine months from April 2007, towards the goal of a year's paid leave by the end of this Parliament; and
- giving fathers a right of up to six months additional paternity leave, some of which could be paid, if the mother returns to work.

1.18 This is in addition to the right for the parents of children under six and parents of disabled children to request flexible working arrangements. Employers have a responsibility to consider these requests seriously, and to provide good business reasons if they are turned down. The new flexibilities support parents who want to spend more time with their children, and parents who want to share the care, but not to leave work altogether. In the first year of the new right, almost a quarter of parents with children under six asked to be able to work flexibly. It costs £80 to handle a straightforward flexible working request, but £4,800 to recruit a new employee. That is why 90 per cent of flexible working requests are being accommodated, according to the CBI Employment Trends Survey, 2005.

Major investment in early learning and care

1.19 Investment by the DfES in early learning and childcare services since 1997 has totalled over £17 billion (excluding demand side investment through tax credits, which is currently running at over £2m a day and around £800m a year). Ring-fenced funding for Sure Start Children's Centres, extended schools and childcare alone will reach £1.8 billion in 2007-08, around double the 2004-05 figure.

1.20 Around £2.9 billion over the 2006-8 period will be delivered through the General Sure Start Grant (GSSG) to local authorities and will help them achieve the changes needed to meet their new duties in the Childcare Bill. Local authorities will be able to use the money flexibly – the number of ring-fenced elements of the grant has been greatly reduced.

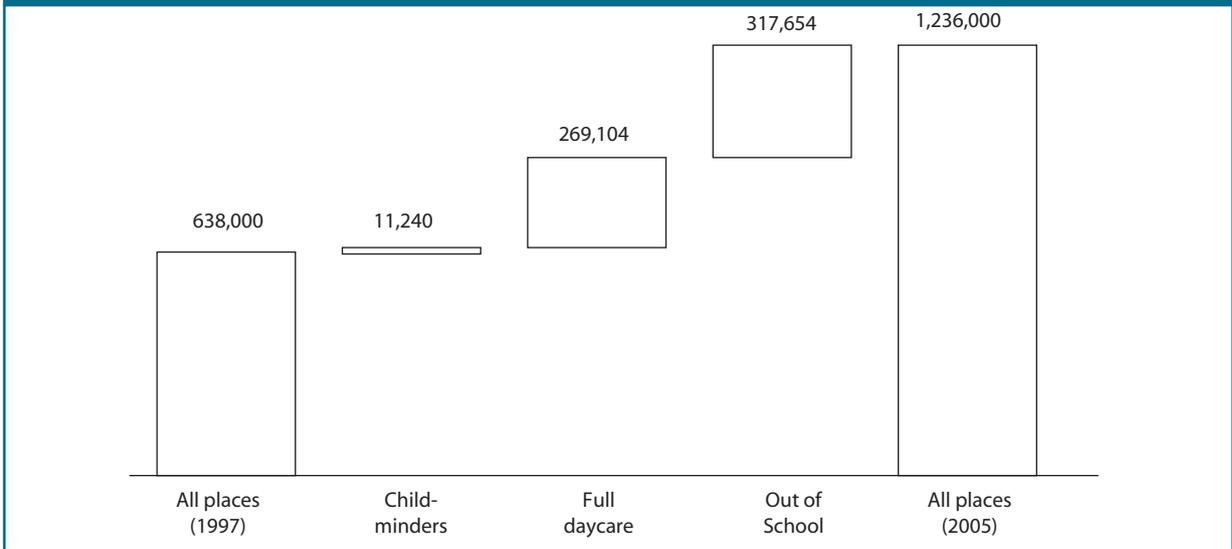
1.21 A significant proportion of public funding is demand led in that it follows the decisions that parents make. In 1998 we introduced a free entitlement for all 4 year olds of 12.5 hours a week of early learning and care for 33 weeks a year. Between 2000 and 2003 we extended the entitlement to all 3 year olds, and from April this year it is also extended to 38 weeks per year. Nearly all 3 and 4 year olds now take up at least some of this. They can do this in a wide range of settings, reflecting the choice available to parents. These include private and voluntary providers, as well as maintained nursery schools and classes. Funding is paid through local authorities, but is allocated on the basis of use and demand from parents.

1.22 Likewise tax credits, which increase affordability of childcare by paying a proportion of the cost for low and middle income families, allowing parents to choose the package of childcare they need. This is one reason why we have made tax credits increasingly generous. The limits increased in April 2005 from £135 per week for one child to £175 per week and from £200 to £300 for two or more children. The proportion of total costs that can be claimed will rise from 70 percent to 80 percent from April this year. Over 356,000 families benefit from the childcare element of the new Working Tax Credit (WTC). This includes families below the 60 per cent income median as well as those earning salaries of up to £58,000 a year. This is almost double the number helped under the Working Families Tax Credit and well over 7 times the number helped by the childcare disregard under the Family Credit. Of those families being helped, a third are couples and two thirds are lone parents.

1.23 This investment is having an impact, with unprecedented expansion of provision for young children and families. The number of registered childcare places – as shown in chart 1.4 below – has almost doubled since 1997 and now stands at 1.2 million.

1.24 The funding provided through GSSG, the Dedicated Schools Grant and Standards Fund monies for extended schools, together provide the resources local authorities and schools need to deliver on the ten year strategy agenda to 2008. Resources from 2008 onwards will be subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. It will also be important for authorities to join up the new investment they receive through the primary schools capital programme with funding streams for early years and extended schools, so that the primary capital funding contributes to broader strategic objectives – for example where a primary school is to be rebuilt or remodelled and a Sure Start Children's Centre or extended services are to be co-located on the same site.

Chart 1.4 Growth in number of registered childcare places by provider type, 1997-2005



Sources: DfES and Ofsted data

A diverse childcare market

1.25 A great strength of our early years and childcare sector is its diversity. The massive growth in childcare in recent years has been driven mainly by private, voluntary and independent providers. Good quality private, voluntary and community sector organisations, including social enterprises, have a vital role to play in providing children and families with the flexible, responsive services that they need, in partnership with Sure Start Children’s Centres and extended schools, and acting as a catalyst to improve value for money. Voluntary organisations can often establish relationships with service users more easily, particularly in areas of high social exclusion where users may have lost faith in statutory providers. That is why we are strengthening the quality of the private, voluntary and independent childcare and early years workforce, through a Transformation Fund of £250m over the period April 2006 to August 2008.

1.26 Parents are becoming more confident about using childcare. Findings from a recent survey show that*:

- There has been an 8 percentage point rise in the number of parents using early learning and childcare since 2001, reaching 64 per cent in 2004;
- Use of formal care (i.e. not care undertaken by family or friends) rose by 10 per cent to 41 per cent of parents over the same period;
- Among formal providers, families were most likely to have used a breakfast or after school club.

*Childcare and Early Years provision: a study of parents’ use, views and experiences (DfES, March 2006)

Sure Start and Extended Schools

1.27 Sure Start Children's Centres and schools offering extended services are already playing an important role in meeting parents' needs. In deprived areas Sure Start Children's Centres make a significant contribution to boosting the availability of childcare. Extended schools will offer access to childcare and before and after school activities for children up to the age of 14. And both Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools will play a key role in linking children and families to a wider range of local services, so meeting the commitment to greater integration and accessibility.

Sure Start Children's Centres

1.28 Sure Start is one of this Government's major successes. Since 1998, over 500 Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) have been opened and have offered a range of early learning, health and family services to parents and children in the most disadvantaged areas. These programmes have been in areas which cover almost a third of those children under the age of 4 who live in poverty, and they are playing an important role in tackling this. We know, for example, that there has been a significant reduction in SSLP areas in the proportion of young children living in households wholly dependent upon benefits; and that reduction is greater than the reduction in England as a whole.

1.29 Since the publication of the ten year childcare strategy, we have moved further towards enabling all communities to benefit from the Sure Start approach. This shift in emphasis from local programmes to developing a national infrastructure builds on what we learnt from the national evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes – which reported successes but also showed us where things could be improved. As we go forward we are ensuring that Sure Start Children's Centres are grounded in the evidence of what works. We know that we need both to ensure that all families – particularly the most disadvantaged – are reached by services, and also that once parents come through the front door, services keep them engaged.

1.30 These findings are informing the extension of the Sure Start approach into other areas of the country. Almost all of the early local programmes have now become Sure Start Children's Centres, offering a one-stop shop of help, advice, childcare and early education for children under 5 and their families. Over 800 Sure Start Children's Centres have now opened, reaching over 650,000 children.

Extended Schools

1.31 The Government's efforts to extend and integrate services do not stop at the age of five. By 2010 all schools will offer access to a range of out of school activities and extended services that we know make the most difference to child outcomes and help parents balance their work and family lives.

1.32 Many schools already offer access to extended services. For example, 12 per cent of primary schools and 10 per cent of secondary schools offer access to some term time childcare. The MORI/BMRB poll of study support in August 2000 found that 97 per cent of schools offered some out of hours activities for children because of the benefits for attainment, motivation, behaviour and wider well-being.

1.33 Extended schools are making a difference for children, families and communities in a range of ways. Good schools know that standards and well-being go hand in hand and there is convincing evidence about the impact of study support on the achievement of children and young people. For example, the Study Support National Evaluation and Development Programme, a three year longitudinal study, concluded that participation in study support can have the overall effect of:

- three and a half grades on "Best 5" score, or one more A-C pass at GCSE
- half a grade in Maths and English GCSE
- a third of a level in Maths SATs at KS3
- three quarters of a level in Science SATs at KS3

1.34 Since September 2005, over 5000 schools have agreed to take part in our extended schools programme which is supporting local authorities and schools to develop extended services in response to local need. Services will be developed following consultation with parents and the wider community. They will be designed to complement rather than duplicate existing local services, with schools working in partnership with the voluntary and private sectors to develop sustainable services such as childcare. Our aim is to have 2500 schools providing access to a core of extended services by September 2006.

1.35 The recently announced funding for personalisation will support schools in developing effective programmes of study support that suit the needs of their children. This is in addition to the £840 million we are investing over 2003-2008 in the development of extended services. Funding can be used flexibly by schools and local authorities to overcome any barriers they are facing, through small capital projects such as improved play areas, or to fund posts that work across clusters of schools to develop the extended services and hence ease the burden on school leadership teams.

Building on solid foundations

1.36 A great deal has been – and is being – achieved. In particular, implementation of the ten year strategy will build on two important current developments: the new Childcare Bill and wider reforms in local government.

The Childcare Bill

1.37 The Childcare Bill is the first legislation ever to be dedicated to childcare and early years. It will provide the framework for delivering on the objectives in the ten year strategy. It provides for:

- a new duty on local authorities to improve the outcomes of all children under 5, and close the gaps between groups with the poorest outcomes and the rest, by ensuring early years services are integrated, inclusive and accessible;
- a new duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare to meet the needs of their local communities, in particular those on low incomes or with disabled children;
- an extended duty on local authorities to ensure people have access to the full range of information they may need as a parent; and
- a reformed and simplified regulatory framework for early years and childcare to reduce bureaucracy and raise quality.

Local government

1.38 Early years and childcare are important local issues. Needs will differ from community to community with different levels and patterns of demand. Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools have the potential to be at the heart of their local communities, meeting local needs as part of a wider strategic approach for children and families. We must learn from the popularity of Sure Start Local Programmes as we move forward to build an infrastructure of universal services. Local government will play a vital role in delivering that vision.

1.39 Capacity and structures in local government are increasingly fit for this purpose. The Every Child Matters programme is bringing together local partners in children's trusts, under the leadership of Directors of Children's Services who have now been appointed in almost all local authorities. The 2004 Children Act set in place the legislative spine for these changes, which aim to ensure that all local partners – and in particular education, social care, childcare and health services – work together effectively to support children and their families. The recent White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services* reinforces this approach and sets out the Government's expectation that Sure Start Children's Centres will provide significant opportunities to improve the health of parents and young children.

1.40 A significant number of children are taken into care at a young age. Because of their unsettled childhoods the development of looked after children tends to be disrupted. It is essential that local authorities, as the corporate parent of looked after children, ensure that those children get equal access to the early learning and extended activities that they need. The DfES will be consulting shortly on wide-ranging proposals to transform the outcomes of looked after children.

1.41 The Childcare Bill builds on the local authority's strategic role in leading partnerships and commissioning services. Our schools reforms are similarly establishing the high level leadership and strategic role of the local authority. Children's trusts and school trusts have some common underpinnings, including the belief that a wider range of public, private and voluntary sector partners are likely to provide better and more responsive services than one sector working alone.

1.42 We will make sure that our commitments for the reform of early years and childcare remain at the heart of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme, and are not pushed to the margins by new challenges.

2. The vision: what parents and children can expect by 2010



A family-centred system

By 2010 parents and their children will benefit from a system that responds to their needs at every stage of family life. They will have:

- A local authority that understands their childcare and wider needs.
- A thriving market in childcare offering them a choice of high quality places.
- Easy access to information and advice about what is available.
- 15 hours of free early learning and care for 3 and 4 year olds, to be taken flexibly over 3 or more days.
- A Sure Start Children's Centre for their community, either providing or giving easy access to services for young children and their families, designed around their needs and including health and employment support.
- Their primary school offering easy access to childcare from 8 to 6, out of school activities, parenting support, access for the local community to school facilities and quick referral to specialist health and social care services when necessary.
- Their secondary school open from 8 to 6, offering childcare and a range of out of school activities for children, young people and the wider community, with parenting support and quick referral to specialist health and social care services, either on site or with easy access through the school.

Meeting the challenge – the vision for 2010

2.1 Just 4 years from now, in 2010, the choices available to parents will be transformed. Parents will have a choice of high quality childcare in a diverse and thriving market, supported by comprehensive information and advice about what is available. 3 and 4 year olds will be getting more free early learning and care. Sure Start Children's Centres and

extended schools will provide access to integrated services, helping and supporting all children and families and providing earlier intervention if problems start to emerge.

2.2 This chapter summarises each aspect of the vision for 2010. It includes case studies of good practice across the country which show us that our ambitions are not unrealistic. Later chapters explain how new legislation will set the framework for the changes, and how we will work with partners to roll them out across the country, improving quality as we do so.

2.3 These changes form part of, and will be supported by, the wider transformation we are seeking in children's services through the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme. Even so, building on the foundations set out in Chapter 1 to achieve the vision outlined here will be a challenging task, for Government, local authorities, strategic partners and providers.

2.4 Most of all we need to move from a world of separate policies, ambitions and activities to an integrated system that meets the needs of all children and families. For parents and children, Sure Start Children's Centres, extended schools and childcare will become the new universal front line services on which they depend and through which they reach expert help when they need it. In many cases all three will be on one site – and it will be immaterial to parents how we categorise provision. In planning and managing services, local authorities and their partners will need to maintain that user focus and break down internal barriers which get in the way.

A local authority that understands the childcare and wider needs of children and families

2.5 To ensure that the childcare market can respond to parents' needs, including through Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools, local authorities need a good understanding of local needs and of the demand for childcare and other services in their area. Demand can be very localised, and sensitive to small changes in price or opening hours. Many of the parents who could most benefit from childcare may not find it easy to make their views known, so local authorities should ensure they make efforts to identify the needs of all groups in the area.

Box 2.1: Kent Parents Consultation Project – leading the way in assessing local needs

The Kent Early Years and Childcare Unit have been conducting research to support the development and sustainability of early education and childcare since November 2005.

Kent's Parents Consultation Project (PCP) was set up to gain a detailed insight into the childcare needs of parents. Researchers carried out door-to-door interviews with parents around the county, asking about the childcare that was available and what they would like to use. The research helped the local authority to understand why some parents, especially communities who have traditionally found services hard to reach, were not taking full advantage of their entitlement to free provision for 3 and 4 year olds.

The research team can now use this information, with the MOSAIC database on household deprivation, to predict demand for childcare, including how much parents are likely to spend, the type of childcare they are likely to want and at what times of day.

This analysis will enable Kent to support the market, to increase take up of the free entitlement, and to develop sustainable childcare that better matches the pattern of local needs.

A thriving market in childcare offering a choice of high quality places

2.6 The strategic role of local authorities as facilitators of the childcare market is at the heart of our reforms. Parents and children need a range of high quality local options when selecting their package of learning and care.

2.7 The childcare market is currently very diverse, and we value and wish to sustain that diversity. Parents need to be able to choose from private, voluntary and community providers, as well as maintained provision in schools and nurseries. The Government provides financial support for childcare to those most in need.

2.8 To meet the needs of all parents and children, local authorities will have to help these different organisations work together to provide flexible and responsive services.

Box 2.2: Different providers working in partnership – Hunny Pots Day Nursery and Little Hill Primary School, Leicestershire

Hunny Pots Day Nursery has 36 out of school places (before and after school and during holidays) for children from 3-11 years old, on the Little Hill Primary School site. Hunny Pots rents space from the school for the nursery provision it provides for babies and young children and runs the out-of-school provision from the school hall, with access to the playground and the playing fields. This arrangement has the full support of the school staff and governors.

To increase affordability, Hunny Pots have registered with the Childcare Taster Pilot, enabling lone parents to try out childcare. They also promote tax credits to all parents through leaflets and posters supplied by the Inland Revenue.

Hunny Pots works in partnership with another local day nursery providing out-of-school childcare at a neighbouring school. They have a 'working together agreement', and termly meetings when they plan collaboration on activities such as Christmas parties, sports days and day trips. They also advertise and complement each other's services as far as possible.

Benefits of partnership working

- Strong working relationships between school staff and Hunny Pots staff allow for continuity of provision, and regular updates about children's progress and behaviour.
- Working with the school enables Hunny Pots to provide affordable childcare in an area of Leicestershire where there is a high percentage of lone parents and a recognised need for out-of-school childcare.
- Out-of-school provision has allowed several parents to access further education and university courses and others to work additional hours.

Easy access to information about what is available

2.9 To support a thriving market, and ensure they can get help quickly when they have a problem, parents need access to good information and advice on the full range of family and children's services in their area. Parents facing problems in finding suitable childcare need brokerage services offering advice and assistance to support them in their search, to introduce them to alternative providers and options and to advise them about the costs and quality of childcare.

2.10 Local authority information services should be accessible from a range of settings that best suit children and families, including Sure Start Children’s Centres and extended schools, and there needs to be extra support for those who find services unresponsive or particularly hard to access. Local information services will ensure local authorities are always in touch with the concerns and barriers that parents and children are facing, so that these can be fed back into their market-facilitation role, driving future change.

Box 2.3: Redcar and Cleveland Children’s Information Service – working in partnership with Sure Start Children’s Centres

The model

Redcar and Cleveland CIS has an outreach service based in each of the authority’s Sure Start Children’s Centres, offering confidential appointments with an outreach link worker. The link worker also promotes the recruitment of childminders. The CIS has installed a freephone hotline in one of the rural Centres, providing a direct line to the CIS.

Benefits for parents and professionals

- The outreach and hotline schemes encourage personal contact with the CIS, making the service more user-friendly for parents and professionals.
- The Sure Start Children’s Centre provides a comfortable and non-threatening environment where parents can develop relationships with CIS staff.
- Parents using the CIS through Sure Start Children’s Centres are also likely to use other Centre support services.
- The freephone hotline ensures that the CIS always has a presence in the Centre even when the outreach link worker is not available.

Box 2.4: Dorset Children's Information Service – a 'one-stop-shop' of information on family services in Dorset

Finding family and childrens activities, support services and registered childminders 03/31/2006 11:27 PM

Home | A-Z of services | Contact us | Help | Log in | News | Sitemap

dorsetforyou.com

About your councils | Caring | Enjoying | Learning | Living | Travelling | Working

Children and families | Disability | Environmental health | Mental health | Multicultural groups | Older people | Substance misuse

ASSIST

Adoption and fostering

Child protection

Children with disabilities

Dorset Children's Information Service

1. Family and Children's Activities
2. Dorset Children's Service Directory
3. Registered Childcare
4. Outdoor play directory

Aims and Objectives

Fact sheets

Help with Childcare Costs Helpline

Jobs in childcare

Outreach Service

Every Child Matters Board

What help is available?

Young carers

Youth Offending Teams

You are here: Home > Caring > Children and families > Dorset Children's Information Service > **Search menu**

Dorset Children's Information Service

Choose facility:

Registered Childcare Search

Find details of childcare provision in your local or surrounding area

Dorset Children's Service Directory

Find details of services, both local and national, to support children, families and young people aged 0 - 19

Family & Children's Activity Search

Find out what's available in your area for you and your children eg parent and toddler groups

Outdoor Play Directory Search

For details of play equipment manufacturers, funding contacts, play support organisations, play inspectors and play parks in your area.

Search:

enter search here

Advanced search

Related Articles:

Information, Sharing and Assessment (ISA)
Dorset Community Action

Useful Websites:

National Day Nurseries Association
Pre-school Learning Alliance

National Childminding Association
Daycare Trust

Sure Start - Children's Information Service
Bournemouth Borough Council: Children and families
Borough of Poole: Family support directory
ChildcareLink



The model

In 2004, Dorset CIS added information about family services into its existing database of childcare services and, more recently, has also included information on play opportunities in the county. This approach has created a single point of access for details of all services for children and families in Dorset. As a result, the total number of enquiries has increased by over 500% in one year; enquires on family support have increased by 20%.

Benefits for parents and professionals:

- Parents can make more informed choices for their children.
- Professionals can more easily signpost families to services.
- Partnerships between professionals develop more easily in the community.

15 hours of free early learning and childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, to be taken flexibly over 3 or more days

2.11 By 2010 all 3 and 4 year olds will be entitled to 15 hours of free early learning and care each week for 38 weeks of the year (an increase of 2.5 hours from the current position). The entitlement will also become more flexible, which means families facing difficult choices about balancing work and home life will be able to use their entitlement to help make those decisions. This flexibility will be driven by the needs of families and children, and different approaches will be tested from next year to make sure that expectations are clear and providers are able to deliver.

A Sure Start Children's Centre for every community

2.12 Over 800 Sure Start Children's Centres are now open, reaching more than 650,000 children. By 2010 all communities will have access to a Sure Start Children's Centre. Centres will be a hub of information and advice for families, on childcare, early learning, health and other family support, from parenting to job-seeking.

2.13 The importance of enabling parents to access antenatal and postnatal care in community-based settings, such as Sure Start Children's Centres, was emphasised in the recent health White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services*. Centre support to parents will include advice on healthy lifestyles, and such issues as breast feeding, child nutrition and prevention of accidents. Sure Start Children's Centres will also provide access for parents to the Child Health Promotion Programme, a system of health care encouraging immunisation, childhood screening, assessment of children's physical, developmental and emotional needs, and early intervention to address any identified needs. Sure Start Children's Centres will work in partnership with midwives, local health visitors, General Practitioners and specialist services.

2.14 Centres will be set up in different ways to meet local needs. In the most deprived parts of the country, the Sure Start Children's Centre will offer full day integrated childcare and early learning on or very near the site. They will actively reach out to families who are disadvantaged and excluded and ensure that services reflect the needs and backgrounds of all groups in the community. Many Sure Start Children's Centres will be located on school sites, but there will also be centres based in different places that best suit the community, such as private or voluntary provision, local colleges or health centres.

Box 2.5: Flexibility in practice – SEACROFT Children’s Centre, Leeds

Seacroft Children’s Centre provides inclusive and seamless early years provision for 60 children aged 0 to 5 from 8am to 5.30pm, 52 weeks a year. One site delivers full day care provision which is fully integrated with education provision from the local nursery education class and from the local Special Inclusive Learning Centre. Provision is made for a number of children with profound and complex needs in the centre and specialist services are brought to the child from the Special Inclusive Learning Centre.

The centre manager has a vision to transform services for children and families and ensure the centre is a beacon in the neighbourhood, the city and nationally.

Parents of children over the age of 3 have been able to take their early education entitlement flexibly over three days since the centre opened in 2000. Parents pay for additional provision that is beyond the twelve and a half hours and are supported in accessing tax credits.

The benefits to children and families:

- The children’s services are fully integrated and seamless. The children share the same spaces, staff and resources. The child is placed firmly at the centre of delivery and services are planned around their needs and best interests.
- Curriculum planning and assessment for the centre involves all workers and encourages the participation of parents and children in shaping the provision.
- The flexibility offered by the centre has enabled many parents, especially lone parents, to benefit from opportunities to access training, job placements, volunteer work or employment in Leeds. The centre has provided support services that have helped more than 150 parents back into employment and have enabled families to remain in employment. All services are aimed at promoting self-esteem, and confidence and providing parents with choices that will improve life chances for themselves and their children.

Parents say: *“The flexibility of the services offered at Seacroft Centre has supported us as working parents”*

“My daughter’s all round development has benefited from attending the centre, not only intellectually but emotionally and socially.”

“I feel listened to as a parent and support is always on offer when needed.”

“Staff are so committed, passionate and enthusiastic that you trust your child implicitly to them. The relationship that we have built with staff was something beyond our expectations.”

Box 2.6: Warren Park Children's Centre – Sure Start Children's Centre on a school site

Warren Park Primary School and the Warren Sure Start Children's Centre share a site. The head teacher and the head of the Sure Start Children's Centre share a commitment to delivering services in a fully integrated, seamless way to respond to the needs of the local community. This has been reflected in the design of the new centre by Hampshire County architects.

The model

A service level agreement between the school and the Sure Start Children's Centre covers use of shared spaces; for example, the school uses the Centre's multi-purpose community room (for after-school clubs etc) and the medical room, while Sure Start activities are delivered from the school hall and IT room.

The 3-4 year olds' playroom is linked by a corridor to the school's reception class maximising opportunities for staff to work together and share resources across the Foundation Stage.

Families have been keen to be actively involved and parents and carers have been consulted from the early stages; for example, over the briefing for the new building. They are very happy with the facilities and range of services – even wanting more.

What children and parents can expect:

- child and family health services;
- early learning integrated with daycare – after school and breakfast clubs;
- family support and outreach services – a multi-skilled outreach team;
- drop-ins, play and exercise, antenatal and postnatal sessions, basic skills and NVQs in Childcare; and
- full daycare for under fives.

Extended services through primary and secondary schools

2.15 School age children and their parents will have access to extended services from 8am to 6pm and will be consulted about what their local schools will offer. Childcare will only be one aspect of this. In addition, children will be able to get involved in lots of different activities from homework and sports clubs to museum visits and volunteering. Extended services will also include support for parents, family learning opportunities and easy referral to specialist support services. All of these activities and services will contribute to children's progress, either directly or by removing personal or family barriers to achievement.

2.16 Extended schools will continue the pattern of integrated services for children over the age of 5. The Warren Park case study is an example of a primary school offering extended services through links with a Sure Start Children's Centre. Box 2.6 shows the model working in a secondary school.

2.17 By 2010, when all these building blocks are in place across the country, families will have access to the range of services that they need to give their children the best start in life and that will help them balance work and family – from better access to antenatal support for expectant parents and early learning and care for toddlers, right through to out of school activities for their teenage children.

2.18 Chapter 3 explains the new legal framework and sets out in more detail the new expectations we are placing on local authorities.

2.19 Chapter 4 describes our plans to improve quality and consistency through setting clear expectations for parents and providers, and improving the skills of the workforce.

2.20 Chapter 5 sets out the action needed throughout the system to drive change and support continuous improvement.

Box 2.6: Extended services in Tenbury High School, Worcestershire

Extended services have opened all sorts of doors for us ... By interacting with the community we've now become an integral part of it

Stuart Cooke, Headteacher

The Model:

- Tenbury High School serves a mixed area including isolated villages and council estates with high levels of social deprivation. The Extended Schools Co-ordinator talks to the local community regularly to assess the need and demand for extended services, as well as brokering and enabling partnership arrangements to deliver those services.
- The school offers after school clubs from 3.30pm to 6.00pm. In partnership with a private company, the school is in the process of setting up an after school club for primary school pupils over the age of 8, with the local primary offering provision for younger children.

The benefits for children and families

- Parents and children can learn together through parental education programmes including "Keeping up with the children" which is a family literacy and numeracy programme.
- Access to exciting activities for those not inspired by the conventional curriculum – including the Forest School programme, which involves conservation and forestry management in surrounding wooded areas.
- An improved atmosphere in the school. Stuart Cooke says: "By putting in projects that are educational and fun – such as arts and music events in the community – we find there's a knock-on effect on motivation, pupils are better inclined towards the school, which leads to them generally doing better. All our work with pupils and families has a huge positive effect on the quality of the work the children do in school."

3. Local partners delivering for parents and children



The statutory framework will change to support this new vision

- New statutory roles for local authorities and their health and employment service partners will raise the profile of childcare and early learning in local planning and commissioning.
- Supporting choice; improving children's well-being and reducing inequalities and integrating services around the needs of children and families, will be driving principles.
- Local authorities will work with their partners to:
 - understand the full range of childcare and wider needs in their area;
 - develop a diverse market in childcare which meets those needs and offers increasing choice and affordability;
 - ensure parents have ready access to useful information;
 - make sure 15 hours of free early education and childcare is available for all 3 and 4 year olds, to be taken flexibly over 3 or more days;
 - establish a Sure Start Children's Centre for every community, either providing or giving easy access to integrated services for young children and their families; and
 - help every school to become an extended school, offering access to childcare from 8 to 6, out of school activities, parenting support, health promotion and quick referral to specialist services when necessary.

3.1 The previous chapter set out a challenging vision for 2010, and the case studies showed how specific elements are already working in practice. This chapter describes the action that will be needed by all local partners in order to deliver changes across the whole system. This will involve a wide range of partners, in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

New statutory roles: choice, well-being and integration

3.2 The framework proposed in the Childcare Bill, and the specific duties it contains, significantly raise the profile of early learning and childcare within the wider local authority role and that of health services. There are significant new duties on local authorities, SHAs and PCTs, and the employment service and this chapter describes in more detail how we will be expecting local authorities to work with their partners to deliver.

3.3 There are three principles which underpin the new duties:

- **supporting parental choice:** new specific duties to seek parents' views and involvement; to secure sufficient childcare; to provide information and advice to parents; and to identify those who might not use early childhood services and encourage them to do so will help ensure parents can make the right choices for their children;
- **focusing on children's well-being and narrowing gaps in achievement:** the new general duty on local authorities to improve the well-being of young children in their area, and to reduce inequalities, must drive all of their activities – including their efforts to increase parental involvement, choice and take-up of services;
- **integrating services:** local authorities will be **required** to work with SHAs, PCTs and the employment service in carrying out the duty to improve well-being and narrow gaps. They also have a duty to provide services in an integrated way, which makes them easier to access and of more use to parents and children. The key partners are under a reciprocal duty to work with the local authority and each other. Local authorities will in practice continue to work with a much wider range of public, private and voluntary sector partners.

3.4 The Childcare Bill builds on the wider context of joint working and integration at local level, established by the Children Act 2004, including:

- the lead role for local authorities in working with partners in children's trusts, to promote the well-being of children of all ages;
- the local authority's role in preparing a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) to bring together joint planning for children's services; and
- the inclusion in the Education and Inspections Bill of a proposed duty on schools to have regard to the CYPP, for example in the planning of extended services.

Understanding the full range of needs and developing the market

3.5 Local authorities will have a new duty to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare for children up to and including age 14 (16 for disabled children) to enable parents to work or undertake education or training. Local authorities will have to have particular regard to the need for childcare for which tax credits can be claimed (to

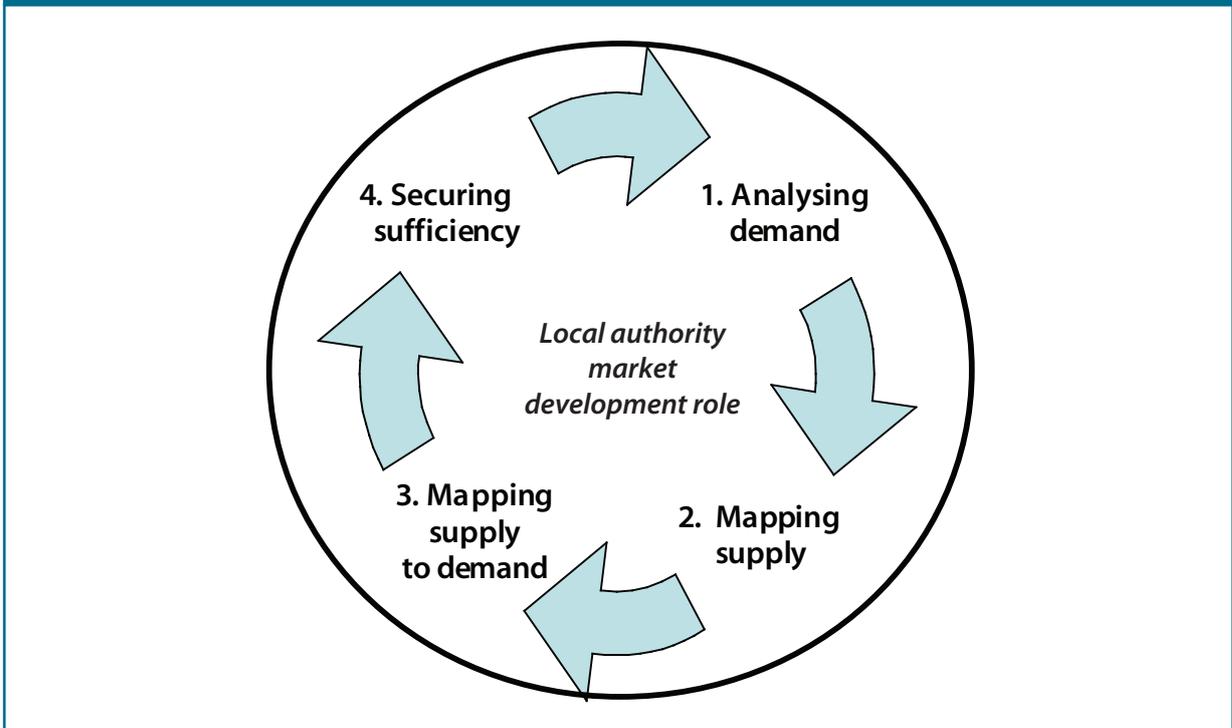
help parents on low incomes), and to the need for childcare suitable for disabled children. Until now local authorities have had to review local childcare but there has not been any requirement to ensure that it was sufficient to meet needs. The new duty will put the needs of parents at the heart of the system, and require a detailed assessment of parental demand for childcare to drive what is available.

3.6 To meet the duty, local authorities will have to play an active role in understanding the way the local childcare market is working, identifying gaps in provision and finding ways to fill them. The Government expects them to do this in partnership not just with existing providers in the private, voluntary and community sectors, but also with those who might be able to enter the market given the right support.

3.7 It is intended that the new duties on local authorities will come into effect in April 2008, with some elements coming on stream earlier to make sure that local authorities will have had time to prepare for the challenge. The Government will issue guidance to support local authorities in fulfilling their duty, but in the meantime this action plan sets out four key, practical steps that local authorities will need to take to develop the market and deliver sufficiency.

Four key steps to sufficiency

Figure 1: Market development framework



3.8 The first step will be for local authorities to understand local demand. They must understand in detail what parents and children in their area need and want. This childcare sufficiency assessment – the ‘duty to assess local childcare and publish the results’ – will come in to force in April 2007. Work is already underway through the Childcare Implementation Project (see Chapter 5 for more details) to develop and share best practice and build capacity in local authorities. An example of good practice from the project is set out in box 3.1.

Box 3.1: Childcare Needs Assessment in Rochdale – Engaging employers to understand parents’ needs

Assessing the childcare needs of working parents:

Rochdale are using their links with employers to support their planning of provision. The authority establishes links with employers through outreach and mail shots – their best advertisement is employers who are already benefiting from the scheme. Staff then assess employee demand for provision through questionnaires.

More effective market development:

- This has given Rochdale clearer information about parental demand, enabling them to set up schemes which better meet need, including a pilot to provide weekend childcare in two nurseries and a pilot to provide funding for childminders to offer extended hours that match with parental shift patterns.
- The information underpins Rochdale’s childcare market strategy: enabling them to match up existing providers with employers and highlighting gaps in the market so that they can provide start-up funding for providers who might fill them.
- The work does not only meet individual childcare needs, but also promotes the extended role that employers have in the development and implementation of family-friendly policies – an employer representative is currently chairing the Children, Schools and Families partnership.

How employers benefit:

- Good publicity and recognition as a “family-friendly” employer leading to improvements in staff morale
- Improvements in staff recruitment and retention
- Reduction in staff absence

3.9 The childcare sufficiency assessment will need to:

- be detailed enough to reflect the very local nature of childcare demand;
- identify specific needs of parents who find services hard to access – for example parents on low incomes and parents with disabled children;
- be carried out actively (for example by using telephone surveys and home visiting) rather than relying on busy parents to fill in forms;
- be sensitive to the cultural and other issues which may be obstacles that require different responses from providers;
- engage local employers; and
- encourage parents to look beyond the current pattern of provision to identify what would really meet their needs.

3.10 The second stage of assessing the market will be to map supply. Local authorities will map out what is on offer in their area so that they can identify any gaps in light of the childcare sufficiency assessment. This should look at where provision is on offer and what is available, including at different times of the day and for different age groups. The mapping should also consider how easy it is for parents to combine different providers to meet their needs. This mapping should include consultation with providers on their capacity and plans, which will help the local authority with future planning.

3.11 The third step will be for local authorities to map supply to demand. There is a range of software available to local authorities to support this stage of the process, and good practice in a number of leading local authorities.

3.12 The Government will support local authorities in performing these crucial first three steps by:

- publishing guidance on the childcare sufficiency assessment process, to be finalised by January 2007, including advice on the best ways to collect, measure and read the information on demand and supply that is collected; and
- developing web-based tools to help with data analysis.

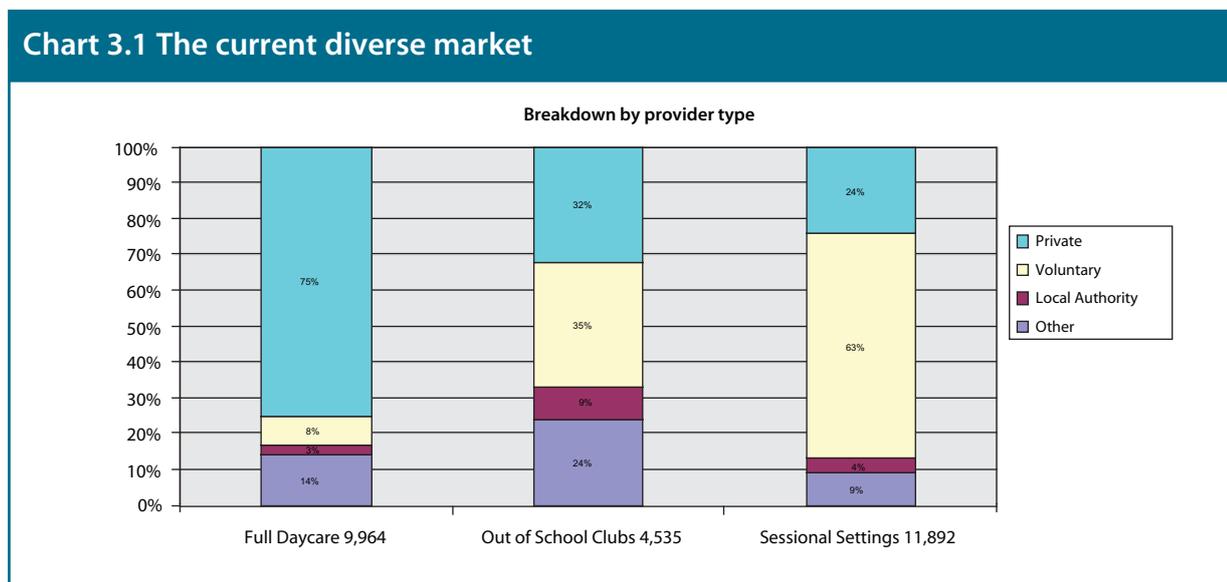
Delivery through the market

3.13 The fourth step will be to secure the delivery of sufficient childcare to fulfil the new duty by helping the market work more effectively. Local authorities will need to set out a vision for the market that parents and providers can understand and comment on. Working out what needs to be done to fill gaps or reduce overlaps and how this can be achieved will draw heavily on the previous steps in the process with parents and providers. This could include:

- **Steering** existing or new providers: giving market information and needs analysis data to existing and potential new entrants to the market to enable them to plan to fill the gaps that have been identified;
- **Match-making:** linking different providers to each other to meet demand or alerting existing or new providers to local development plans that they could get involved in e.g. development of school sites;
- **Contracting** to fill particular gaps in the market e.g. provision for children with special needs;
- **Supporting** providers to build capacity e.g. staff training, business strategy or partnership working to enable them to fill gaps, as part of the local authority duty to provide information, advice and training to providers; and
- **Marketing:** providing information to parents on what is available, especially where mis-matches have been identified in the local market, so that their needs can drive the system.

Maintaining diversity

3.14 Local authorities will be starting from very different bases, but the current childcare market is very diverse and we want to maintain this mixed economy. We also want to ensure that it is sustainable.



Source: Workforce Survey, 2002/3

3.15 To support continued diversity, the Childcare Bill proposes that:

- local authorities should only provide new childcare places themselves if they can demonstrate that it is appropriate for them to do so, including where there is no other provider in their area willing and able to do so;

- local authorities will need to publish clear and transparent criteria and processes for determining whether it is appropriate for them to provide childcare directly; and
- local authorities must take steps to involve providers from the private and voluntary sectors in the planning and delivery of early childhood services, for example, when considering the site of any new or replacement Sure Start Children's Centres.

3.16 The Sure Start Children's Centres planning and delivery guidance to be published this Spring will reinforce these delivery principles, putting in place a system to regularly review the involvement of private, voluntary and community providers.

Box 3.2: Practical government support for diversity and sustainability

- The National Day Nurseries Association is setting up working groups and networks to broker relationship between local authorities and providers in 25 local authorities. NDNA will produce a support kit including guidance, action plans and best practice.
- £250m over 2006-08 in the Transformation Fund will be dedicated to supporting staff quality and leadership in private, voluntary and community settings.
- £8.4 million of new capital grants in both 06-07 and 07-08 will be available to help small and medium sized employers establish workplace nurseries.
- We are enabling local authorities to open Sure Start Children Centres on (nearby) split sites to support and enable partnership between existing providers, where this works to reach out to disadvantaged families.
- Extended schools are encouraged to work in partnership with established private and voluntary sector providers enabling them to co-locate with schools or devise transfer arrangements, making the most of their skills in business planning and delivering childcare.
- It is a condition of the General Sure Start Grant (GSSG) funding that local authorities consult and consider using private, voluntary and community sector providers in their area.
- GSSG funding and web-based tools for business support will help childcare businesses become more sustainable.

Increasing affordability

3.17 Parents have become more positive about affordability over recent years, but for some families cost is still a major barrier to use.

3.18 Nationally, the Government is offering a growing core of free early learning and care for all 3 and 4 year olds, increasing to 15 hours by 2010. Tax credits also support working parents with the cost of childcare in line with their income.

Box 3.3: Tax credits to increase the affordability of childcare

Tax credits and childcare costs

- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit support families with children and working people on low incomes. They give support to families' specific circumstances, and respond to their changing needs, by helping when they need it most. Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit do not affect Child Benefit payments.

The childcare element of the Working Tax Credit

- Lone parents can claim the childcare element if they work at least 16 hours a week. For couples the conditions are that both partners are aged 16 or over and either both work at least 16 hours a week or one partner works at least 16 hours a week and the other is incapacitated, in hospital or in prison.
- The childcare element can help with up to 80% of eligible childcare costs. Families can claim for assistance with childcare costs of up to £175 per week for one child or £300 per week for two or more children. This means that they will receive up to a maximum of £140 per week and families with two children can claim up to £240 per week.
- So, a one-child family on an annual income of £30,000 could claim up to £4,435 through the childcare element of the WTC.
- To claim the childcare element of Working Tax Credit claimants must fill in the relevant details in Part 3 of the tax credit claim form. The form (which is used for both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit claims) can be obtained from the Tax Credits Helpline on 0845 300 3900 or from any HM Revenue and Customs Enquiry Centre.

3.19 Local authorities can seek to complement the funds that are available through the tax credit system by re-deploying and targeting their own support on families facing very high costs e.g. families with disabled children. They can also help parents find out about what financial support is available to them. We know from some pilot extended schools that workshops with parents about the tax credit system and what they can claim have led to significant increases in take up.

3.20 With the London Development Agency, the Government is testing an approach to increasing affordability in London, where costs of provision are particularly high. This pilot, due to complete in 2008, will inform wider thinking about how best to improve affordability for low income parents, in London and elsewhere. Chapter 5 gives more information about the pilot.

3.21 Schools and their partners also need to develop a sustainable model for charging for childcare and out of school activities, while securing access for disadvantaged groups.

Local authorities have a role to play in working with schools and their partners in developing charging regimes, and in ensuring that disadvantaged groups can also access childcare to suit their needs. To support this the Government:

- will issue guidance for local authorities, schools and their partners on sustainability strategies for extended services, including for school based childcare;
- has announced in the budget £220m in 2006-07 and £365m in 2007-08 for personalisation, which can be used to ensure that disadvantaged children can access activities before and after school free of charge; and
- will open the Ofsted Childcare Register to all childcare provision and short term holiday schemes for children over the age of 7, so that parents can claim financial support through tax credits (see chapter 4).

Information and advice for families

3.22 Parents need to know what is available and have good information on quality, cost and their children's entitlements if they are to exercise real choice and have confidence in what they are choosing. Research shows that parents want better information (see Box 3.4). Parents sometimes think that there is not enough childcare or they can't afford it because they don't know what is available or how they can claim financial support.

3.23 The Government is strengthening the duty on local authorities to provide information to parents on childcare and other related services. Building on the existing duty, the Childcare Bill requires local authorities to provide additional advice and assistance to parents or prospective parents who are looking for childcare.

3.24 Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools can be effective outlets for providing information to parents, but the local authority will also need to be active in helping those who do not come into schools and centres.

3.25 Local authorities will need to extend their local information services in a number of ways. Local authorities will be required to:

- ensure their information services provide parents with appropriate information to help them take decisions on the suitability of childcare providers;
- provide information on services for disabled children and young people available locally and nationally;
- help parents access information on quality, including informing them whether provision is registered with Ofsted and how to obtain Ofsted reports; and
- provide a "brokerage service", targeted at parents who have attempted to find suitable childcare without success and at those groups who might otherwise find it hard to access the help they need.

Box 3.4: Childcare and Early Years Provision: A Study of Parents' Use, Views and Experiences (DfES, March 2006)

- The survey shows an encouraging 10% growth in the proportion of families using formal childcare and early education since 2001.
- Parents use childcare for a number of different reasons – a third had used it in order to work, study or job search; a quarter had used it for their child's educational development; 19% had used it for both economic and educational reasons whilst just over a fifth had used childcare for other reasons (e.g. to care for other children or a relative).
- Flexibility is also very important to families, with a significant minority of parents saying there were not enough childcare places in the local area, particularly at weekends, evenings and in the school holidays.
- Clearer information and signposting is also needed – four in ten parents said they would have liked more information about what was available in their local area.
- Trust, reliability and the child's educational development were all common reasons for choosing a childcare provider.
- Taking into account other factors – such as family working status – children of Indian, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi origin were less likely to have received childcare than those from white backgrounds.
- Although there has been an improvement in perceptions of affordability, with over half of parents finding meeting the costs of childcare easy or very easy, some problems remain. 23% of parents still find it difficult or very difficult to meet the cost. Whilst this is an encouraging drop from 35% in 2001, the 2004 data confirms that more needs to be done to help the most disadvantaged families fully reap the benefits of childcare.

3.26 In planning for the delivery of these changes, local authorities will need to consult with parents on their satisfaction with the service. They will need to review service delivery and the content of information to ensure it remains appropriate and effective. It will also be important that feedback from the brokerage service is used to inform the local authority's market facilitation role.

3.27 Subject to Parliamentary approval of the Childcare Bill, the Government will publish statutory guidance for consultation in the Autumn. The National Association of Children's Information Services has also been commissioned by the Government to collate and disseminate good practice in local information services that is already happening on the ground. This will be made available online in due course.

15 hours of free and more flexible early education and care for 3 and 4 year olds

3.28 The ten year childcare strategy made a commitment to increasing the length and flexibility of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds, which will deliver more learning and development opportunities for young children and better meet the needs of working families. The entitlement will increase from 12.5 hours to 15 hours per week (for 38 weeks of the year) by 2010. We will start to roll out both the additional hours and increased flexibility at the same time, starting in 2007.

3.29 The demand for flexibility will vary depending on parents' working patterns and on how the free entitlement can best fit into the full package of care and education which is necessary for each child. The main changes will probably be:

- extending the hours between which the free entitlement is available across the day;
- providing access to longer sessions, for example, going across breakfast and lunchtime; and
- integrating the services of different providers – which will help maintain the diverse market while giving children continuity of care and families a seamless service.

3.30 It will be important to ensure that local capacity is maintained and that children's learning and parent's employment choices are well served. At present there are no formal limits on when the free entitlement can be taken as long as it is spread over at least three days. We do not intend to introduce any new limits. But in practice the market determines what is available, and at present that is mainly sessional provision during school hours. Flexibility will be delivered by setting new expectations of local authorities so that they work with providers to extend what is available. If the free entitlement is not enough to match their working hours, parents will, as now, pay for additional childcare, and can claim tax credit to support this if they are eligible.

Finding out what families need and how to meet demand

3.31 Given the scale of the challenge, the Government has decided to introduce the new entitlement gradually between 2007 and 2010. We plan to start with a limited number of pathfinder areas. This will allow us to test both the demand for different kinds of flexibility, and ways of working with providers to make sure demand can be met, without driving smaller settings out of business.

3.32 We expect that all the pathfinders will work toward expanding the **range of hours** so that free provision is available to those who want it between 8am and 4pm. In addition, half of the pathfinder areas will explore parental demand for free provision between 8am and 6pm. This does not mean that all providers would need to be open for all of these hours; in some cases local authorities will need to support partnerships between different providers so that parents who want to can access their free place within these times.

3.33 The pathfinders will also explore increasing the **length of sessions** beyond the current 2.5 hours. We would not expect local authorities to work towards very long sessions of free provision in a single day, but as with other aspects of increased flexibility we will not rule that out if there is parental demand and the market is able to provide it.

3.34 A key contribution of the pathfinders will be to provide best practice models for how local authorities can broker local partnerships in a way that prioritises and maintains **continuity of care** for the child, and a seamless service for the parent.

Box 3.5: the long term role of local authorities in delivering the flexible free entitlement

Local authorities will continue to play a central role in securing the entitlement. The experience of the pathfinders will inform a more detailed model of their role, but we expect that there will be a need for local authorities to:

- assess demand for flexibility, through the local childcare sufficiency assessment and have an understanding of local labour market patterns, especially amongst disadvantaged and low income groups;
- consider this demand in the context of take-up of the free provision, prioritising those groups who do not currently use all of their free entitlement and for whom increased flexibility could make a real difference;
- understand what is already available and how it is used, including the mix of providers and the extent of spare capacity – as part of the local mapping process set out at paragraph 3.10 above;
- identify the pattern of provision that would best meet the demand for flexibility;
- assess the scale of change needed and the tools and models that could help providers become more flexible; and
- consider in particular the scope for partnership working and clustering between providers to secure a broader offer for parents.

3.35 We will invite expressions of interest from a number of local authorities to become pathfinders later this year. Delivery of the extended entitlement in these areas will begin in 2007. The pathfinders will produce a range of good practice models and material. Statutory guidance setting out the Government's expectations on delivery of the free offer, replacing the existing Code of Practice, will be consulted on well in advance of the new entitlement becoming law in 2010. Local authorities will have time to plan for delivery.

Integrating childcare with wider children's services

3.36 The actions outlined above will move us towards a system in which local authorities will facilitate the childcare market so that there is enough good quality childcare to meet local and special needs and families can access more free early years provision in a flexible way. Local authorities have another role – to change the way that childcare is delivered so that it becomes more integrated with other services for children and families. Our aim is for services to provide a seamless experience for families and maximise the well-being of young children.

Box 3.6: Delivering for children with special needs: Willows Children's Centre, Portsmouth

The model

Willows Nursery school was built in 1974 for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Willows became an Early Excellence Centre in 1999 and Beacon School in 2000. The development of additional service provision has led on very naturally to Sure Start Children's Centre status. Social Care, a Health Clinic, and a Moderate Learning Difficulties School are sited adjacent to the centre, enabling close partnership working to support families. SEN expertise remains at the heart of service delivery, and services are developed through consultation with families and delivery partners.

The benefits for children and families:

- Full Day Care for children 0-5 with and without SEN
- Playdays on alternate Saturdays and during the holidays for 3-8 year olds
- Baby Massage and Breastfeeding Clinics run by health visitors
- Advice and guidance on training, development and employment opportunities
- A home visiting service to children with SEN and families not engaging with services
- Outreach visits to community Pre-Schools to advise on SEN and support transitions to school
- "Get Smart" training for practitioners working with pupils with SEN
- Access to a Community Doctor and a range of therapists

The Impact

"67% of our pupils with special needs access mainstream education and 93% of these have remained in mainstream. Early intervention, and the strong links with a multi-agency team have been a powerful factor in this. We are now able to offer this support to a younger age group and to work even more collaboratively with families to meet their individual needs."
(Anne Swann Head teacher)

3.37 The proposals in the Childcare Bill will, for the first time, provide statutory underpinning for the delivery of early childhood services through the Sure Start Children's Centre way of working. The proposals will require:

- local authorities and their NHS and Jobcentre Plus partners to plan and deliver early childhood services in an integrated way which maximises benefits of services for young children, their parents and prospective parents;
- action to enable families to access services that may be of benefit to them;
- services to include integrated early learning and care, family and parenting support, health services, employment services and the enhanced information service; and
- local authorities taking all reasonable steps to encourage involvement in the planning and delivery of services by parents, providers from the private and voluntary sectors and others engaged in improving the well-being of young children.

3.38 The recent health White Paper, *Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services* has emphasised the importance of using commissioning as a tool to drive improvement in services. Children's trusts will provide a mechanism for local authorities, PCTs, practice-based commissioners and other partners to work together to commission, plan and deliver services that are easy for families to access and which are responsive to their needs.

3.39 Sure Start Children's Centres and the principles underpinning extended schools are an expression of this vision. The local authority role in commissioning the roll out of Sure Start Children's Centres and supporting primary and secondary schools to extend their services will be key to fulfilling their duties.

Box 3.7: Integrating services – Valley Road Community Primary School, Sunderland

- The re-organisation and merger of the previously separate Valley Road Infant and Junior schools in 2002 was an ideal opportunity to create a school that embraced the concept of providing a ‘one stop shop’ of education, health, childcare and social services for the community.
- A whole wing of the school is dedicated to community resources including a community ICT suite, a nursery delivering provision to children aged 3 months to 3 years all year round, a community café, two training rooms for adult learning, provision for an early years behaviour team and a CAMHS mental health team.
- The school is committed to building on this success – planned projects include establishing a branch of the local credit union, a community gallery to display children and families work, a community garden and new sports facilities.

The benefits to children and families

- Pupil behaviour, motivation and achievement have all improved.
- The community perception of the school has improved, with services welcomed and the environment considered to be friendly and supportive.
- Jobs created through the provision of the new services have been taken by local residents and parents.
- Staff have benefited from access to the nursery.

3.40 As set out in previous planning and practice guidance on the delivery of Sure Start Children’s Centres (published in July and November 2005 respectively, available at www.surestart.gov.uk) local authorities have a crucial role in leading the roll out of Sure Start Children’s Centres. They will need to continue to perform this role, bringing together multi-agency partnerships in centres and ensuring that the views of parents and children are taken into account in the planning, evaluation and the delivery of services. These functions will be underpinned by statutory guidance to be published in the Spring (see chart 2.2 below).

3.41 Local authorities will need to join up their planning for Sure Start Children’s Centres with their role in relation to extended schools, using the strategic umbrella of the Children and Young People’s Plan. The proposed new duty on schools in the Education and Inspections Bill, to have regard to the Children and Young People’s Plan should facilitate this. Local authorities will need to work with schools, including governing bodies to help explain and facilitate the development of the extended schools agenda in the context of the local market of childcare that already exists. It will also be important for local authorities

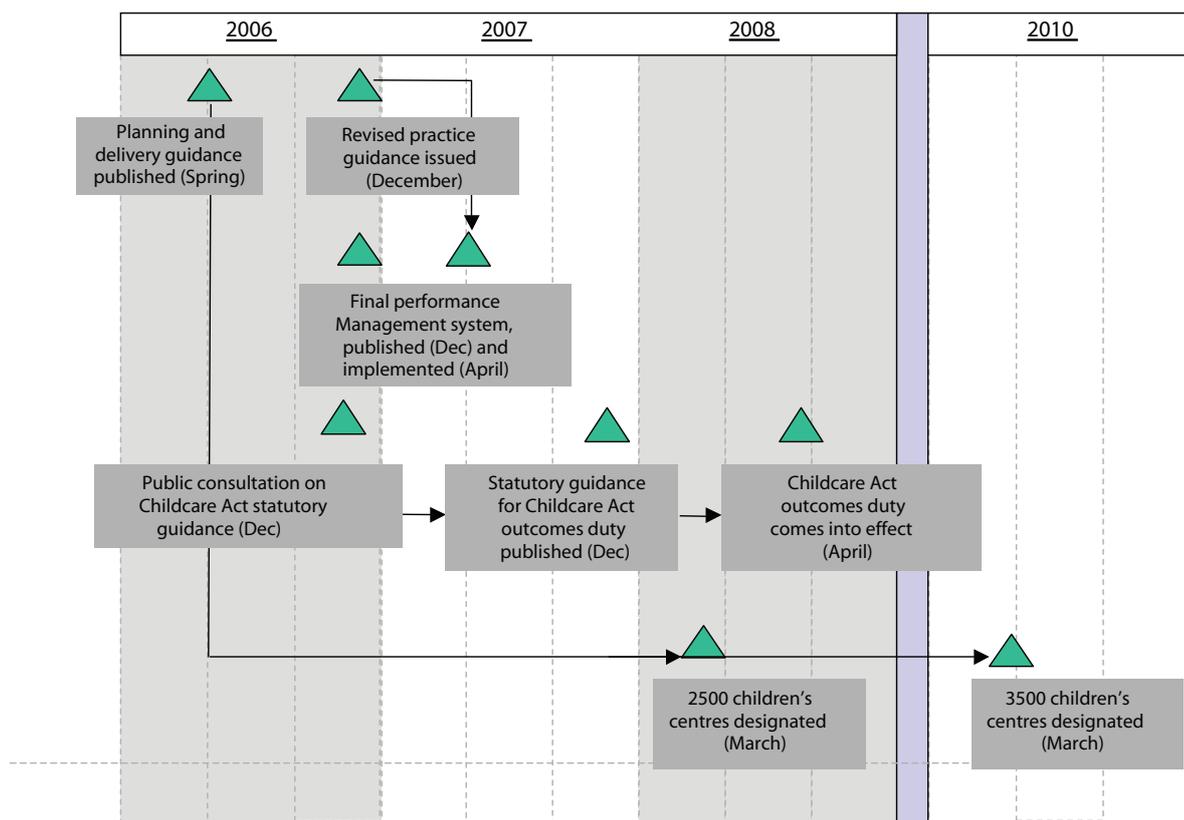
to encourage schools to fulfil their duty to consult parents on their offer in a way that is consistent with the wider local authority assessment of needs outlined above.

3.42 Further detail on how change and quality will be driven through out this new system of childcare, Sure Start Children’s Centres and extended schools is set out in chapters 4 and 5.

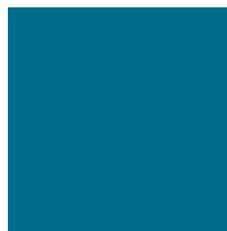
Conclusion

3.43 This chapter has set out a complex and demanding role for local authorities and their partners. Success will require effort on all sides and the government will do all it can to support local authorities, health and employment services and other partners so that the vision for 2010 becomes a reality.

Sure Start Children’s Centres – roll out to 2010



4. Delivering quality



We will improve the quality of what is on offer by:

- setting clear expectations for every local authority on children's development;
- using a new framework, the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure consistently high standards and promote achievement at age 5;
- enhancing the skills of the workforce by developing a new Early Years Professional status and increasing the skill levels of other staff; and
- improving leadership and management through training leaders and getting governance right.

4.1 For parents to have real choice for their children, they need to have confidence in the quality of provision and services. Ensuring consistent high standards, in terms of what is delivered and the skills and experience of staff, will provide this reassurance. The quality of early education and of childcare has improved significantly in recent years. This chapter explains how we will underpin further improvement, especially through setting a clear framework for early learning and development, and building the skills of workforce.

Setting clear expectations for children's development

4.2 The Childcare Bill will allow us to agree targets with each local authority for the overall achievement of children at age 5, and for narrowing the gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers. This is designed to ensure a clear focus on children's learning and development at every level.

4.3 The Department has a provisional target of 50% of children reaching a good level of personal, social and emotional development and good communication skills at age 5 by 2008. We also want to reduce the inequality gap between children in disadvantaged areas reaching this level and those in the rest of England. In 2005, 48% of children reached this

level and the inequality gap was around 16%. To reflect our ambitions for improving children's achievement, and tackling the inequality gap, we will shortly be setting revised targets. These targets will underpin the statutory targets to be set in each local area in April 2007. They also need to be reflected in the ambition of those who work on a daily basis with young children. Chapter 5 explains how they will inform performance management arrangements.

Learning from the national evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes

4.4 Improving quality relies on understanding what works best for families. The national evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes (SSLPs) reported successes but also showed us where things could be improved. Overall, Sure Start areas showed improvements in parenting. For the majority of children there were also positive effects of living in a Sure Start area, such as fewer behaviour problems and better social skills.

4.5 However, a minority of children living in Sure Start areas – though not necessarily using Sure Start services – were doing less well in some respects than their peers at age 3. This applied especially to children of teenage parents, but also to children of lone parents and children living in workless households. There is clearly potential for programmes to reach out better to these families and to others, such as fathers and minority communities.

4.6 The evaluation showed variations in performance between different local programmes and, even though there was a large variation in how SSLPs were set up and run, the evaluation found that the best programmes had clear objectives, effective leadership, good systems for identifying eligible families and a welcoming ethos.

4.7 The Government is committed to building on the experience and evaluation of SSLPs in developing Sure Start Children's Centres. Our Practice Guidance, published in November 2005, set out more on what we know from this research and has been used to highlight the core elements of what 'good' Sure Start Children's Centre provision should involve. All Sure Start Children's Centres should:

- identify families that may be excluded, and tailor services to their needs;
- track patterns of engagement and use outreach and home visiting to increase access for families who are unlikely to visit a centre;
- use good practice to improve children's development and monitor the progress of each child;
- keep parents up to date with how their child is doing and encourage them to be actively involved; and
- develop strong multi-agency partnerships, particularly with health services.

4.8 We need to address the challenges of how best to support disadvantaged families with early years provision. Evidence shows improved life chances are linked to the duration and quality of pre-school provision, and that disadvantaged children in particular benefit from an early start between the ages of 2 and 3 years. To support better outcomes for this group we will be piloting free early years provision for 12 000 disadvantaged 2 year olds across a number of local authorities beginning in April 2006, and will feed the evaluation into our future plans.

Box 4.1: Trailblazing a free entitlement for 2 year olds in Sandwell

- The Sandwell model, known locally as “Free for 2”, is driven by a long term vision to increase uptake of the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds through early access to provision. Sandwell has high levels of deprivation across the local authority and so is making a universal offer to families across all wards.
- Within this, they are particularly seeking to target workless households and black and minority ethnic groups, particularly Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Yemeni families. This builds on the existing Childcare Taster Pilot targeting lone parents and low-income families.
- A partnership with Social Care will link “Free for 2” into services for Sandwell’s most vulnerable children to include those on the Child Protection Register, as part of their Child Protection Plan, and those at high risk.

The benefits for children and families

- Children will have earlier access to provision, helping to improve their cognitive, emotional and social development.
- Parents and carers will have improved awareness of the range of support and services open to them.
- Sandwell hopes to gain more robust information about why particular families may not take up the free entitlement at age 3, helping them to develop more appropriate and responsive services.
- Head of Sandwell Early Years and Childcare Unit, Lynn Beckett says: “If children are able to enjoy high quality learning experiences at an early age they will go on to achieve better outcomes all through their lives. The pilot will make a real difference to children and families in Sandwell”.

Setting clear standards through the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.9 Parents will have more confidence in provision if there are clear standards across different settings about what they can expect for their children. The current regulations governing early learning and childcare from birth to age 5 have a number of different legal starting points, are complex for those providing care and development, and difficult for parents to understand. They do not help people work together for the good of the children in their care.

4.10 The Childcare Bill allows us to bring these together into a single, statutory framework for all those working with children from birth to age 5. It will apply to schools and settings registered with Ofsted that provide care and education for children from birth to age 5, outside the child's own home. This includes day nurseries, childminders, playgroups, children's centres, pre-schools and maintained and independent schools. Mother and toddler groups, nannies and short term occasional care such as that offered by crèches will not be covered.

4.11 The statutory framework, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), will set out requirements to promote the well-being of every child and provide high quality experiences covering six areas of learning and development.

4.12 The framework will build on the existing guidance, "Birth to Three Matters", the "Foundation Stage" and the National Standards for Childcare, but with changes designed to:

- incorporate elements of the national standards for under 8s daycare and childminding;
- help staff to manage increased flexibility – for example children who start at different times of day, or who attend more than one provider;
- have a more consistent approach to staffing requirements for those working with children aged 3 and 4, where ratios are currently different depending on the setting; and
- reflect more recent research findings on effective learning and development, such as the recommendations of the Rose review (more detail on this independent review of the teaching of reading in early years settings and primary schools can be found at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/rosereview/finalreport/).

Box 4.2: The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS will be a single statutory framework for care, learning and development for children from birth to age 5. EYFS will be delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, with children learning through planned, purposeful play.

The EYFS will cover:

- what providers need to do in order to register and begin to deliver early years provision;
- welfare requirements including the suitability of staff and premises; staff:child ratios and qualifications; health, food and medicine; safeguarding and child protection; and the documentation and information that providers are expected to record and hold.

The EYFS will describe how providers are expected to plan for effective care, learning and development and ensure a consistent approach from birth to the end of the Foundation Stage. This will raise quality and reduce the number of changes that children and families experience. EYFS will show children's progression across six areas of learning and development:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- communication, language and literacy;
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development; and,
- creative development.

Flexibility

4.13 A single framework is important to support choice. Parents can rely on consistent standards whatever package of learning and care they choose for their child. And, crucially, it helps providers to work together. Many children will attend more than one setting, and staff will need to work in partnership to promote each child's development. The EYFS will help to identify and meet these personal learning and development needs. This will be especially important for the most disadvantaged children, and those facing particular barriers to getting the best from services, such as disabled children.

4.14 Within a single framework, to maintain the essential diversity of provision, the specific requirements on providers must be flexible enough to take account of their different approaches; the particular needs of each child; the length of time the child spends in each setting; and, the rhythm of the child's day.

4.15 We will support the diverse range of early years settings to implement the EYFS effectively. This will include publishing a specific document to support childminders, building on the existing *Thinking about Childminding* leaflet. Childminders will often have a primary childcare role for children between birth and 3, and will continue to be key in delivering the EYFS. As children reach the age of 3 interaction with their peers becomes increasingly important, and most children should have access to learning and development in group settings. Childminders will continue to have a crucial role to play in partnership with those settings. Just as good parents do, they will be able to pick up on the themes covered during the day, offering one to one support and a chance for quieter reflection.

4.16 In some rural areas, childminders can be the sole providers of care and education for 3 and 4 year olds. In these cases it will be especially important for local authorities to support childminders to work together in local networks, and to offer them opportunities for learning and development, to ensure that children have a rounded and high quality experience in the run-up to compulsory education.

Staffing requirements

4.17 The staffing requirements set out in the EYFS will:

- ensure safe, high quality provision and good outcomes for children;
- support the continued raising of standards;
- be even-handed; and
- be achievable, affordable and sustainable.

4.18 Getting the ratios right for over 3s in all settings will be a challenge. There is a wide range of factors to take into account including the types of settings, the qualifications, skills and experience of staff and the activities being undertaken in a setting over the course of the session or the day.

4.19 Taking all this into account, we propose to consult on new rules that would:

- Retain existing requirements up to age 3 – currently one staff member for every three children under 2, and one for every four 2 year olds. These ratios ensure a high level of safety and personal interaction for the youngest children.
- Introduce a single approach for older children in all settings other than reception classes (which are subject to class size legislation):

- One adult to eight children when one staff member is qualified to Level 3 and half of all other staff qualified to Level 2.
- One adult to thirteen children for a limited period in each day, when a qualified teacher or other graduate level professional is present together with a staff member at Level 3. This is the ratio which currently applies in maintained nursery classes.

Consultation and support for implementation of EYFS

4.20 We will consult on the EYFS in May 2006. The consultation will include the proposed requirements and will set out best practice in observation, assessment, planning and teaching.

4.21 Delivery of the EYFS will not be a statutory requirement until September 2008, but elements of the framework (specifically, the sections mirroring the literacy and mathematics frameworks for 3-5 year olds) will be finalised and available to practitioners from September 2006.

4.22 The long lead time is to allow for essential training and development activity. In partnership with the Primary National Strategy we will develop and consult on training materials during 2006-07. These will focus on improving specialist knowledge of early childhood development, and understanding how to work with other practitioners and professionals to identify and meet each individual child's needs. We expect the core materials to cover:

- relationships with children and adults;
- understanding the different ways that children develop and learn;
- knowledge and understanding to support and extend all areas and aspects of children's learning;
- meeting all children's needs, learning styles and interests;
- work with parents, carers and the wider community; and
- work with other professionals within and beyond the setting.

4.23 We are working closely with the Primary National Strategy to develop a comprehensive plan to enable all settings to implement the EYFS successfully. The National Director for the Foundation Stage and team of regional advisers will support local authorities in providing high quality training and development – disseminating the key elements of effective early years practice. This will link through to the duty on local authorities in the Childcare Bill to provide information, advice and training to providers and as such will rely on the effective use of local authority advisory staff including early years advisory teachers and Area SENCOs (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators).

Getting parents involved

4.24 Good practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage will mean getting parents involved in their children's development when they are in early learning and childcare settings. Evidence shows the importance of parental involvement for children's development, and it will help parents feel more confident about the provision they are choosing for their child.

4.25 All childcare providers, not just Sure Start Children's Centres, will need to seek the active involvement of parents. The Parents, Early Years and Learning (PEAL) project is developing a national model of effective practice in working with parents to support the learning of their young children. The Government will also be funding Early Learning Partnerships between parents and practitioners. These will be developed over the next two years and will promote positive home learning environments for very young children. We will be evaluating these programmes to judge how successful they have been at improving children's life chances.

Box 4.3: The PEAL Project

The Parents, Early Years and Learning (PEAL) Project, formerly known as the Community Parental Support Project, is developing a national model of effective practice in working with parents to support the learning of their very young children. The project is being run by a consortium – the National Children's Bureau, Coram Family and the London Borough of Camden. The main aims of the project are to:

- identify and disseminate effective practice;
- use this as a basis to develop a core model of training and materials to support practitioners.
- deliver training to practitioners in 500 designated Sure Start Children's Centres;
- map the learning outcomes from the training against national occupational standards and identify routes to accreditation; and
- provide protocols which can establish links between Sure Start Children's Centres, voluntary sector schemes and primary and nursery schools.

Reassurance on the standards of provision for older children

4.26 As well as bringing together the regulatory framework for those caring for children from 0 to 5, the Childcare Bill creates a new regulatory framework for childcare for older children – the Ofsted Childcare Register.

4.27 The Bill requires Ofsted to allow those who look after children over the age of 7, and nannies and crèches, to register voluntarily. That will involve showing that they meet the

standards of the Ofsted Childcare Register, and so provide reassurance to parents. The creation of the Ofsted Childcare Register will, for the first time, provide parents with access to tax credits to fund childcare for children aged 8 and over, through a single, respected system.

4.28 To encourage voluntary registration, we will advise schools developing extended services to work only with registered providers, or those willing to be registered. Local information services will tell parents about the benefits of using registered provision, and make clear which providers are registered and which are not. (See chapter 3 for more detail on their role).

Developing the skills of the early years workforce

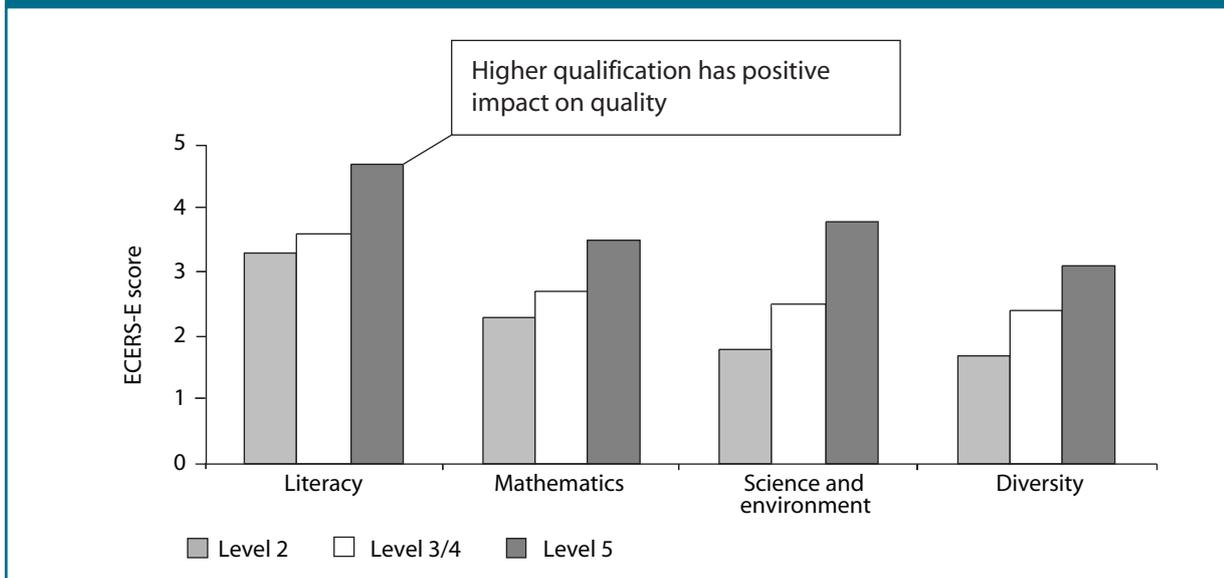
4.29 A well qualified, skilled and motivated workforce will be key to improving quality in early education and care. Evidence (see Chart 4.1) shows that the quality of children's early experiences is improved by:

- leaders with higher qualifications;
- trained teachers working alongside and supporting other staff; and
- practitioners having a good understanding of child development and learning.

4.30 Despite the progress that has been made over recent years, we know there is still a long way to go. The number of graduate-level leaders in early years settings, outside schools, is very low. Around two fifths of the workforce is not qualified to Level 2. This is true in particular in the private and voluntary sectors.

4.31 Following consultation on the Children's Workforce Strategy, published in April 2005, we have now set out our priorities for action and announced the first phase of investment to support it. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) will be leading the necessary development work.

Chart 4.1: Impact of manager qualifications on the quality of the setting



Source: EPPE Technical paper 5 (2000) pg 67.

Note: ECHERS – Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – is a quality rating which reflects pedagogy, resources and early learning goals

Box 4.4: The role of the Children’s Workforce Development Council

The aim of the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is to improve the lives of children and young people by ensuring that all those working with children have the best available training, qualifications, support and advice. It was established in 2005 to raise skill levels across the children’s workforce as one of five bodies forming the UK Skills For Care and Development Sector Skills Council.

It will:

- act as a partner and critical friend of the Government in carrying forward the Every Child Matters agenda;
- work closely with the DfES to determine the direction of workforce reforms and to identify skill shortages;
- work in the interests of a range of sectors including early years and childcare, education welfare and social care for children and young people (a total of about 500,000 workers);
- be led by employers through a board of 25 representatives from organisations across its range of sectors; and
- co-ordinate the Children’s Workforce Network , a grouping of sector skills councils, regulatory and other bodies with an interest in the children’s workforce, including Skills for Health, Skills for Justice, the Training and Development Agency for Schools and others.

Early Years Professional

4.32 The Children's Workforce Strategy consultation showed widespread support for a new role, the Early Years Professional, for those leading professional practice in early education and care in Sure Start Children's Centres and full day care settings. We hope to have an expert practitioner at graduate level in all Sure Start Children's Centres offering early years provision by 2010 and in every full day care setting by 2015.

4.33 We have asked the CWDC and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) to work together to draw up an initial set of standards for the new role, with a view starting to give Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) to those who can demonstrate the required standard by January 2007.

4.34 Further work is now in hand to:

- define the skills, knowledge and experience required for the EYP role;
- clarify the extent to which those requirements are met already by those most likely to want to take on the EYP role (including teachers, community nurses, social workers and those with early years, childhood development and play qualifications); and
- develop proposals for training those whose skills, knowledge and experience do not meet the EYP standard.

4.35 CWDC has published a web-based briefing on the first phase of this work. This is available at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/earlyyears. Specific proposals for further consultation will be published very shortly, also on this site.

4.36 CWDC and the TDA will work closely with existing early years practitioners and employers, and higher education institutions, to define in more detail the core skills, knowledge and experience required to lead early years settings. These requirements, along with the initial range of accreditation and training options available to acquire them, will be confirmed in a prospectus to be published in June.

4.37 The CWDC has been allocated £52 million from the Transformation Fund to cover the costs of:

- developing and delivering appropriate training routes to EYP status, both for those currently working in the sector and those wishing to join it in the future; and,
- the costs of fees, bursaries, supply cover and mentoring for those working in full day care settings and Sure Start Children's Centres who wish to reach EYP status.

4.38 It is important that this work proceeds in parallel with a wider debate about the longer term relationship between the Early Years Professional and qualified teacher roles.

Training and development: the Transformation Fund

4.39 The CWDC investment forms part of the Transformation Fund of £250m over 2 years, which was announced alongside the response to the Workforce Strategy consultation in March. The Fund represents a major investment in improving the quality of the workforce in non-maintained, full day care settings. From September 2006, support under the Transformation Fund will be available through local authorities for:

- a Recruitment Incentive of £3,000 each year (and more in London) for full day care settings in the private and voluntary sector to employ graduate professional leaders for the first time who are aspiring to achieve EYP status within 2 years; and,
- a Quality Premium of £5,000 each year (and more in London) for those full day care providers in the private and voluntary sectors with a graduate employee who will reach the EYP standard within 2 years.

4.40 We also aim to have a higher proportion of the workforce in all early years settings qualified to at least Level 3 by 2008. We have asked the CWDC to advise us, by summer 2006, on appropriate strategies and targets. We will work with the CWDC and others in the sector to make the most of the recent budget announcement that all 19-25 year olds will be entitled to Government funding for a first full Level 3 qualification from 2007. In the meantime, from April 2006, the Transformation Fund will also support training for those working in the private, voluntary and independent sector in full day care settings, sessional provision and as childminders for the under 5s to:

- achieve relevant qualifications at Levels 3 – 5; and
- work with disabled children and those with Special Educational Needs.

4.41 Detailed guidance on the use of the Transformation Fund was published last month and is available on our website at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk.

Box 4.5: Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and the Transformation Fund

What is EYPS?

- This status will be achieved by graduate level staff taking a leading professional role in the delivery of high quality early years provision within a setting.
- Existing staff trained at Levels 5 and 6 are likely to require some additional training to receive this status.
- EYPS will signal that staff have expertise in improving outcomes for children in early years settings; that they have management and leadership skills relevant to working in the multi-agency environment; and that they are equipped to deliver the EYFS.
- The first accreditations will be conferred in 2007, following detailed work to establish training pathways and pilot the programme.

The strategic priorities of the **Transformation Fund** 2006-08 are:

- establishing, and providing financial support for training routes towards the new graduate-level status of Early Years Professional;
- supporting progress towards the Government's objective of ensuring that **by 2015 all full day care settings employ a graduate with Early Years Professional status** to lead work with children and parents;
- investing in training and development to increase the skills and qualifications of staff employed in private, voluntary and independent settings, in particular by increasing the numbers qualified to at least Level 3; and
- training more staff in the private, voluntary and independent sector to work with disabled children and those with SEN.

4.42 Local authorities will have developed their initial thinking on workforce challenges as part of their first Children and Young People's Plan. It will be important for local authorities to ensure that those responsible for the development of staff across a range of sectors, including health professionals through Primary Care Trusts, are engaged in this. Now they have their allocations from the Transformation Fund, alongside other General Sure Start Grant funding for workforce development, local authorities will want to review their early years workforce plans and make sure they are working with private and voluntary sector providers in particular to gain the maximum benefit from this additional investment.

Leadership and governance

4.43 Developing workforce skills in leadership and management will need to be a key priority in local workforce development plans. High quality leadership and effective models of governance are essential to increasing the focus on quality and managing and developing staff more effectively.

Leadership in Sure Start Children's Centres and schools

4.44 Staff in Sure Start Children's Centres will have differing needs for supervision and management – for example, health professionals are likely to require clinical supervision to ensure that they get the support and advice they need on complex cases. And joint planning of staffing arrangements will be key to better team working and getting the right mix of skills. There are good models of joint supervision and management in multi-agency teams, for example in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Behaviour and Education Support teams.

4.45 We need to ensure that staff have the right skills to take on this management challenge. We have worked with the National College for School Leadership to develop the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership to strengthen leadership of early years settings. We expect this qualification to become the established leadership programme for the early years sector. Forty people qualified on the pilot course in July 2005, and in September 2005 around four hundred new students started. We expect to deliver a further six hundred places in Autumn 2006. The application round for 2006 is open to 28th April. Applications can be made online at www.ncsl.org.uk/npqicl.

4.46 In response to a recommendation from the School Teachers' Review Body we have commissioned an independent study into the emerging roles and responsibilities of the school leadership group, particularly in the light of the development of extended services, including co-located Sure Start Children's Centres, and the need to ensure that they support the essential focus on children's educational achievement. The fieldwork will involve around 50 schools and will take place in the Summer term. The review will report on possible models of leadership and the different roles and responsibilities of staff by December this year.

Governance of Sure Start Children's Centres and schools

4.47 As Sure Start Local Programmes become Sure Start Children's Centres, and a new generation of Centres comes on stream, it is important that all partners – including local health services and Jobcentre Plus, as well as local communities themselves – have confidence in the governance arrangements. Those putting in major capital investment or pooling budgets will be especially concerned to see that this happens. And we also need to be sure that parents have an effective say, whether through representation on the governing body or in other formal ways.

Box 4.6: The benefits of the Integrated Centre Leadership qualification

For Sure Start Children Centre leaders the NPQICL:

- builds on participants' own experiences to deepen their understanding of learning about leadership;
- increases their awareness of practical challenges faced in leading an integrated setting;
- creates an opportunity to relate theories about leadership to their own practice;
- builds greater self-awareness, personal and professional integration in a setting which requires complex management of diverse roles and responsibilities; and
- enables leaders to help increase self confidence of all staff and build an effective leadership environment and professional learning community within the centre.

4.48 The increasing number of Sure Start Children's Centres being opened on primary school sites, and so forming part of an extended school campus, means that we need to look at extended school governance alongside that of Sure Start Children's Centres. School governing bodies are increasingly looking for guidance about governance models which can reflect their shared responsibility for services offered on the school site, even though the services themselves are formally accountable to the local authority or PCT. They also need to be reassured that they can continue to drive the improvement of school standards.

4.49 *Extended Schools – a Guide for Governors* a joint publication from TDA Development (formerly NRT), ContinYou, the National Governors' Association and the Co-ordinators of Governor Services was published in March. This guidance is a practical resource for school governors in developing extended services. Case studies on leadership and governance will be available shortly on the TDA site at: www.tda.gov.uk/remodelling.

4.50 We plan to offer more examples of good practice which draw together Sure Start Children's Centre and schools issues and to provide guidance for governing bodies, and headteachers on models of leadership and governance. Co-ordinated guidance on these issues for schools and Sure Start Children's Centres will be issued in the Spring.

4.51 The Government will also produce guidance for local authorities on ways of managing leadership, governance and accountability issues as they support the roll out of Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools.

5. Delivering change and improvement



Through our national programmes and regional partners we shall:

- Develop a national delivery partnership with key stakeholders to keep us on track and help tackle tricky issues.
- Support delivery on the ground and share best practice.
- Agree targets and monitor progress in each local authority.
- Ensure that performance management of Sure Start Children's Centres, and improvement conversations with schools, support new approaches.
- Reform inspection and regulation.
- Collect and use data to drive improvement.

5.1 Delivering the vision set out in this plan, and increasing the quality, availability and integration of services, will require effort and focus at every level. It is local authorities and their partners who will drive change and improvement, and staff at the front line who will make sure it results in better life chances for children. Early years, extended schools and childcare need to sit at the heart of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children reform programme in every local authority. This chapter explains how we are helping this process.

A national delivery partnership

5.2 A strength of the Change for Children programme has been the early and continued engagement with a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors, and from health, as well as education and social care. But there is no current forum bringing together at a national level those with a particular interest in the Sure Start, extended schools and childcare agendas.

5.3 To support the development and delivery of this action plan, the Secretary of State has asked Dame Julie Mellor, former chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, to chair a 10 Year Strategy Stakeholder Group. This will act as a forum for discussion of the implementation issues arising from the strategy; feed back to Ministers and policy makers on the impact of the strategy; act as a sounding board for emerging plans, guidance and regulations; and advise on the best way the Department and others can support delivery. Membership of the group will be drawn from practitioners and leaders in early years, schools and childcare; from health and other partners; from local authorities; and from the private, voluntary and community sectors. We will make sure that the group also draws on the views of parents and children.

5.4 The Government will also continue to build on the programmes of work being taken forward by key strategic partners including the National Childminding Association, the National Day Nurseries Association, the Pre-School Learning Alliance, the Daycare Trust and 4 Children.

Support delivery on the ground and share best practice

5.5 Previous chapters have noted the regulations and guidance which will define requirements and help those planning to deliver change in practice. These are summarised in the chart at Annex A. But many of these policies are breaking new ground and there is no established body of good practice on which to draw. We are therefore working in active partnership with pioneering local authorities to support aspects of local delivery, drawing out early lessons as quickly as possible to share more widely. This will help other local authorities as they make their own plans, and also feed into national policy development and guidance publications.

5.6 This is the approach we are using in the Childcare Implementation Project; to support extended schools roll-out; and also in testing out ways of improving the affordability of childcare in London.

Box 5.1: The Childcare Implementation Project

Run jointly by DfES, the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency, this project is working with twelve local authorities on the implementation and delivery of the new duties provided for in the Childcare Bill, in order to:

- test different approaches to implementing the childcare agenda in a systematic way;
- identify and push best practice around the system; and
- use practice on the ground to inform policy development, statutory guidance and practice guidance.

These authorities are working up material on four key themes central to implementation of the ten year strategy:

- facilitating the childcare market;
- the role of Sure Start Children's Centres;
- the flexible entitlement to early years provision; and
- developing the childcare workforce.

Materials are being made available as they emerge to all authorities through the ECM website, and we are also running conferences and looking for other ways to share key messages.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/earlyyears/implementation/>

5.7 We will use a similar approach in our piloting to test out the flexible offer for 3 and 4 year olds (see chapter 3) and the pilot work with 2 year olds (see chapter 4). We are reviewing our arrangements to support the delivery of Sure Start Children's Centres to ensure that proper support is in place to test innovative approaches to difficult issues, build capacity and create a source of leading practice on which others can draw.

5.8 The Every Child Matters website (www.everychildmatters.gov.uk) provides a link to all our nationally supported pilot and good practice work. But we know that good practice is not only to be found in centrally supported pilots. The site also includes examples of good practice developed locally and we expect it to be used increasingly to share what works.

5.9 Good practice is also shared through regular publications (such as the Sure Start magazine, Monthly Sure Start Newsletter) and through national events such as Sure Start Month in June each year.

Box 5.3: Support for extended schools

The development of the extended schools programme is supported by a delivery partnership of TDA Development, ContinYou and 4 Children.

This partnership is bringing expertise in change management, practical help in planning and delivering extended services and advice on setting up sustainable childcare.

Following a pilot phase, the partnership is now supporting Extended Schools Remodelling Advisers in all local authorities, backed by £840 million of investment. Over 5000 volunteer schools are involved to date, and 2500 are committed to providing the core of extended services this September.

The delivery partnership provides:

- a training programme for local authority teams;
- a strong regional network of advisors;
- national and local conferences to launch the agenda and to give support on more difficult challenges such as sustainability; and
- written guidance and tools, which inform DfES guidance.

Recently a pack has been developed to give schools practical ideas for how to consult with harder to reach parents and families. Further information on the delivery partners can be found at www.remodelling.org; www.ContinYou.org.uk/tesss and www.4children.org.uk

Box 5.4: The Childcare Affordability Pilot

The London Development Agency is providing £22m and the Government is contributing £11m to a pilot project tackling the barriers to employment caused by the high costs of childcare places in London.

The project aims:

- to provide 10,000 affordable childcare places in London for lower income families, to supplement the support available through the childcare element in working tax credit; and
- to test ways of increasing affordability by providing direct subsidies to providers, and so help local authorities to make the best use of their funding.

The first phase was launched in November 2004, and is subsidising childcare places in all London boroughs. Second phase bids have been invited, for a May 2006 start. There will be particular focus on disabled children and those with special needs and helping parents with the transition from welfare into work.

5.10 The Secretary of State's Chief Adviser on Children's Services, Naomi Eisenstadt, has a specific remit to support the sharing and use of evidence about effective practice.

Box 5.5: Sharing Effective Practice

There is a range of models for sharing effective practice in use in schools and in the NHS. We aim to build similar systematic approaches in children's services. The challenges are significant: a diverse workforce; diversity of delivery models and a less mature evidence base of effective practice on which to build.

As a first step the Chief Adviser plans to identify particular practice areas for investigation and gather data on effective practice. In parallel she will identify and develop ways to enable services to adopt effective practice and improve outcomes for children.

5.11 We have recently appointed nine Directors for Children and Learners (DCLs), one in each regional Government Office, to work with local authorities and their partners as they implement the full range of their responsibilities for children and education. They will be supported by Children's Services Advisers, three based in each region, who started work on 1 April. The Directors and Advisers come from education, health, social care and early years backgrounds and will work across all agencies to support delivery, with a small team of regionally based staff. They will work closely with the Chief Adviser.

5.12 Sharing good practice on a regional basis, using existing networks and creating new ones as necessary, will be part of the DCL's role. Networks can be helpful at every level: for managers of Sure Start Children's Centres, leaders in extended schools, and childcare providers as well as for local authority staff planning and managing the changes. They allow partners from different backgrounds to come together to make links, share their experiences, and learn from each other's mistakes as well as build on best practice.

Agree targets and monitor progress

5.13 As well as supporting regional networks and discussion, the role of the DCL and advisers is also to challenge local authority Directors of Children's Services and their partners as they implement the whole range of their new responsibilities. This will include putting the ten year strategy at the heart of their Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs).

5.14 The statutory targets on development at age 5, and for narrowing the gaps in development, will be set annually following negotiations with local authorities and will take account of local factors. The targets will be included in the CYPP and should focus all partners on what needs to be done to secure their achievement. The targets will also underpin the Local Area Agreements which Government Offices will be negotiating with local authorities each year.

5.15 DCL and adviser discussions with local authorities, performance data, Annual Performance Assessments of children's services and the reports of Joint Area Reviews of children's services led by Ofsted, will identify areas of excellent practice to be shared, and also areas where progress is at risk. We will ensure that these processes give due weight to the new duties in the Childcare Bill and to the targets.

5.16 Where progress is not being made, or where local authorities have their own concerns, DCLs will be able to broker peer support from regional colleagues, or more intensive support from delivery partners such as the TDA. In cases where the local authority seems to be failing in its statutory duty there are fallback powers to allow more direct intervention if necessary.

Performance management of Sure Start Children's Centres and improvement conversations with schools

5.17 Local authorities will be responsible for managing the performance of Sure Start Children's Centres in their area, working with their health services and Jobcentre Plus partners.

5.18 We plan to set out national performance indicators so that everyone is clear about the impact we expect Sure Start Children's Centres to have on children and families. Centres and their local authorities will be able to monitor year on year progress and plan for improvement.

Box 5.6: Possible Sure Start Children's Centre performance indicators

- Children's development, as measured by the Foundation Stage Profile.
- Reach of the centre to the most vulnerable, including teenage parents, workless households and lone parents.
- Parental satisfaction.
- Health indicators such as obesity, breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy.
- Child poverty indicators, such as the percentage of children living in workless households.

We will set out further details in guidance to be published this Spring and will finalise indicators by the end of 2006.

5.19 The local authority will need to identify someone to support and challenge each Sure Start Children's Centre, and to hold (at the very least) an annual conversation with the centre manager when past performance will be reviewed and plans agreed for the future. This would be followed up as necessary. A key issue, to be planned for and reviewed

regularly, is how to reach the most vulnerable in the local area, and to make sure that services are accessible to them.

5.20 The annual conversation will draw on information from a self-evaluation, including data on performance against the indicators, and from Ofsted inspection reports where available. This role is similar to the one carried out by School Improvement Partners, that is now being rolled out across the country. We shall consult on how we might develop the approach in relation to Sure Start Children's Centres, and test whether a cadre of nationally supported Centre Improvement Partners would add further value. Whatever approach we adopt, we will ensure that for a Sure Start Children's Centre co-located with a school, there will be co-ordination with the role of School Improvement Partners.

5.21 The benefits and challenges of partnership working, and the impact and potential of extended services on pupil achievement will frequently feature in the discussions that School Improvement Partners hold with schools. School Improvement Partners will be able to draw on data which shows the different progress made by various groups of children within the school. This will help to identify where barriers to achievement might be lifted by (for example) access to reliable and good quality care before and after school, or early support for young people with mental health problems. Extended Schools Remodelling Advisers, drawing on support from TDA Development, will help schools respond to these challenges.

5.22 Local authorities also have a role in supporting early education and childcare settings outside Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools. They have a duty to provide information, training and advice to local providers, which includes pre-registration support, and support to meet the forthcoming EYFS requirements. They also provide support on meeting quality standards to settings receiving funding for the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds.

5.23. Many local authorities have developed good local quality assurance schemes, building on Ofsted registration and inspection, to support development and on-going quality improvement. We strongly encourage this approach and we will support it further by identifying and disseminating good practice.

Reform of inspection and regulation

5.24 Inspection is an important driver for improvement. It prompts regular self-evaluation, and offers those providing services an independent assessment of their strengths and weaknesses so they can target their improvement efforts. It also allows parents to make informed choices, which is good for their children and also helps encourage the market to deliver high quality.

5.25 Nursery education and childcare have been subject to different inspection regimes, reflecting the different regulatory regimes under which they have operated. The simplified requirements in the Childcare Bill, and the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage, will allow a single inspection and regulation regime. This will reduce bureaucracy, and also strengthen the focus on outcomes and quality.

5.26 Ofsted are developing the new early years inspection framework to reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage, and to link it with the school inspection framework so that all school provision is judged against the same standard. This will mean that where a nursery class, a Sure Start Children's Centre, or other childcare, is on a school site, and forms part of the school's extended services, it can be inspected at the same time and against the same expectations. A single report, every three years, will cover all relevant activities and show how partners work together to improve children's achievement and provide services to their parents and the local community.

Collect and use data to drive improvement

5.27 Good information and data are essential to drive improvement. Our aim is a system in which information and data are used to maximum effect at every level to:

- help professionals assess progress and personalise learning for individual children.
- give parents information about their child's progress, so that they can develop a shared picture of their child's development;
- enable local authorities to monitor and benchmark their own performance and that of the services they deliver and support, and to target their efforts to improve performance; and
- allow national monitoring of performance against targets, to review how individual authorities are doing, to focus national and regional support and to inform guidance and policy development.

5.28 A new power in the Childcare Bill will allow us to collect accurate data from all registered early years providers. We will also add to and develop existing data sources, to achieve a rich mix of information from surveys and evaluations. That will help us make sure we are delivering against our plans, meeting parents' aspirations and helping children achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

5.29 This chapter has described the ways in which change and improvement will be driven throughout the system. Chapter 6 builds on this by setting out who will need to be doing what by when.

6. Who will need to be doing what, by when



The previous chapters have set out a challenging array of actions needed by national, regional and local partners and providers. The boxes below look forward year on year at how each will need to play their part in delivering the 2010 vision.

Where we are now

- The ten year strategy was published in December 2004.
- The Work and Families Bill was introduced into Parliament in October 2005 and completed the House of Commons stages in January 2006.
- The Childcare Bill was introduced to Parliament in November 2005 and completed the House of Commons stages in March 2006.
- 1.2 million childcare places available (a net increase of 600 000 since 1997).
- All 3 and 4 year olds have a minimum free entitlement to nursery education of 12.5 hours a week for 38 weeks a year and virtually all are benefiting from at least some of this free provision.
- Over 800 Sure Start Children's Centres providing a range of early learning, health and family services.
- 5000 schools engaged in the extended schools programme.
- Providers complying with various regulatory requirements for care and education for children under 8.
- £250m Transformation Fund available to raise quality of early years workforce particularly in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector.

Key partners:

Front line – Sure Start Children’s Centres, extended schools, playgroups, nurseries, childminders, out of school clubs and approved home child carers.

Local – local authorities, health trusts, Jobcentre Plus, local Learning and Skills Councils, TDA Development (formerly National Remodelling Team).

National & Regional – Department for Education and Skills (DfES), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Government Offices, Ofsted, Training and Development Agency, Children’s Workforce Development Council, National College for School Leadership.

BY THE END OF 2006

FRONT LINE

1000 Sure Start Children’s Centres established

2500 **schools** offering access to core extended services

PVI settings using Transformation Fund to improve the quality of provision, mainly through workforce development; PVI full day care providers able to use Transformation Fund to recruit and retain graduates

LOCAL

Local authorities planning phase 2 of Sure Start Centres roll out

London affordability pilot fully commenced in **London local authorities**

Negotiation started between **local and central government** on statutory outcomes targets based on Foundation Stage Profile results

Local authorities planning future work coming out of the Childcare Act 2006 draft guidance on:

- improving children's well-being;
- securing sufficient childcare; and
- providing information to parents.

Pilots to deliver free early years provision for disadvantaged 2 year olds launched in selected **local authorities**

Pathfinder local authorities begin planning for delivery of the extended, flexible free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

Local authorities working with TDA Development to engage a further 7500 schools to join the extended schools programme

TDA Development supporting extended schools programme

Local authorities working with PVI providers to allocate Transformation Fund and monitor its impact

Training providers begin piloting top-up training needed to acquire Early Years Professional Status

Local authorities working with local LSCs and training providers to ensure sufficient Level 3-5 training courses are available to make full use of the Transformation Fund.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

DfES issues guidance on leadership and governance in Sure Start Children's Centres and extended schools

(June) **CWDC** publishes prospectus on the Early Years Professional role, standards and training

(June) **CWDC** advises DfES on strategies and targets to increase the number of Level 3 qualified staff in early years settings

(July) Childcare Bill completes Parliamentary stages and receives Royal Assent – Childcare Act 2006

(July) **DfES** selects pathfinders for 3 and 4 year old entitlement

(October) **DfES** completes public consultation on the Early Years Foundation Stage

(October) **DfES** completes public consultation on the childcare sufficiency assessment regulations and guidance

(October) **DfES** completes public consultation on the Ofsted Childcare Register

(October) **DfES (with DWP)** finalises PSA target levels on take up of childcare and child outcomes at the end of the Foundation Stage

(November) **DfES** confirms 2007-08 Transformation Fund allocations

(November) **DfES** lays regulations on statutory target setting for new outcomes duty
CWDC works with **TDA** and training providers to pilot delivery of EYP status

BY THE END OF 2007

FRONT LINE

Sure Start Children's Centres – reaching around 1250 communities

PVI providers offering care and other activities for children over 8 will be able to voluntarily register on the Ofsted Childcare Register

Schools – over 7500 schools delivering core extended services

3 and 4 year olds in pathfinder local authorities able to access 15 hours of free early years provision flexibly

Some 2 year olds in pilot areas receiving free early years provision

PVI full day care providers able to use Transformation Fund to recruit Early Years Professionals

LOCAL

(April) **All local authorities** will have begun to carry out their first childcare sufficiency needs assessment

(April) **All local authorities** have statutory targets (for the 2007/08 academic year) agreed for improving outcomes for children under five and reducing inequalities between them

All local authorities supporting schools to develop extended services, with **TDA Development**

Pathfinder local authorities producing best practice material on delivery of extended free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

EYP training pilots completed

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

(January) **DfES** publishes childcare sufficiency assessment guidance

(January) **CWDC** establishes and starts conferring on practitioners Early Years Professional Status

(April) **DfES** publishes the Early Years Foundation Stage

(April) **DfES** publishes statutory guidance on provision of information for parents on local and national services, including childcare (to support the duty to provide information)

(April) **Ofsted** Childcare Register is established and providers are able to register voluntarily

(September) **DfES/Ofsted** oversee transfer from Childcare Approval Scheme to Ofsted Childcare Register and set fees for new regulatory arrangements

(December) **DfES** publishes statutory guidance on:

- improving children's well-being, reducing inequalities and working in partnership (to support the duty on local authorities to improve outcomes)
- securing provision of childcare and provision of information, advice and training for childcare providers (to the support duty to secure childcare)

DfES develop training materials to support providers to deliver the EYFS

DfES CSR 2007 settlement announced indicating future direction of investment

BY THE END OF 2008

FRONT LINE

(March) **Sure Start Children's Centres** established for 2500 communities (including designation of all existing Sure Start Local Programmes)

(September) **All childcare providers** for children up to age 8 registered on early years register or Ofsted Childcare Register

(September) **All childcare providers and schools** co-operating with local authorities on assessing and planning childcare places

Half of all **primary schools** and a third of all **secondary schools** delivering access to core extended school services

All early years providers and schools delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage

Full day providers able to use Transformation Fund monies to recruit graduates to become Early Years Professionals

Private and voluntary sessional providers and childminders for the under 5s using Transformation Fund monies to support training – a higher proportion qualified to at least Level 3; more trained to work with disabled children; more qualified to deliver the EYFS

Increasing numbers of **3 and 4 year olds** able to access 15 hours a week free and flexible early years provision for a minimum of 38 weeks a year

LOCAL

All local authorities securing sufficient childcare for working parents – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006

All local authorities keeping assessment of childcare sufficiency current – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006

All local authorities improving outcomes for all children under 5 and reducing inequalities between those with the poorest outcomes and the rest – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006

All local partners (NHS, Jobcentre Plus) planning and delivering integrated early childhood services for young children, their parents and prospective parents – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006

All local authorities providing an enhanced information service to parents and reaching out to the most vulnerable groups – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006

All local authorities supporting registered providers by securing information, advice and training – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006

All local authorities developing their local workforce in line with the Children and Young People's Plan and their local workforce strategies

All local authorities securing EYFS training for providers – statutory duty under the Childcare Act 2006 regulations

All local authorities supporting schools to develop extended services, with **TDA Development**

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

(September) **DfES** ensures new regulation and inspection arrangements take force – early years register for all providers for children under 5 and Ofsted Childcare Register

DfES reports on performance against 2005-08 PSA targets and announces 2008-10 targets

Government offices supporting, challenging and monitoring local authorities on new duties

Ofsted ensure new inspection frameworks in place and Ofsted inspecting providers against them

DfES ensure strategy in place to increase the proportion of the workforce with at least Level 3 qualifications

BY THE END OF 2010

FRONT LINE

3500 **Sure Start Children's Centres** – one for every community

Early Years Professionals leading practice in all Sure Start Children's Centres offering early years provision

All **primary and secondary schools** will be offering access to a range of extended services – childcare and activities from 8am to 6pm, 48 weeks a year. These will be based in school or at a nearby PVI provider (including childminders) with suitable, supervised transfer arrangements

All **3 and 4 year olds** will be able to access flexible free early years provision for 15 hours a week, over a minimum of 38 weeks a year

All **early years childminders** will be part of a network linked to a school or to a Sure Start Centre

LOCAL

Local authorities continuing to fulfil their duties under the Childcare Act 2006

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL

DfES with **DWP** monitoring performance against targets and regional partners supporting change and improvement

THIS MEANS IN 2015

All working parents able to access affordable childcare to enable them to make decisions with confidence about balancing work and family life.

3500 Sure Start Children's Centres across the country – one for every community – delivering or signposting a range of integrated early childhood services, ensuring those families who most need support have access to relevant services.

All primary and secondary schools offering access – either directly or in partnership with other schools or PVI partners – to a range of extended activities and services before and after the school day and during holidays.

All children aged 3-14 have access to wide-ranging activities and services from 8am to 6pm which are stimulating, support their development and keep them safe.

All children under 5 and their families will have access locally to integrated early childhood services – those families who need services most (especially those who do not normally access services) receive particular support.

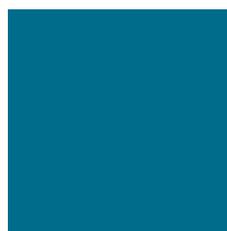
All registered early years providers and schools delivering a high quality learning and development framework – the EYFS – to improve children's development.

All PVI providers who care for children after Key Stage 1 able to register on the Ofsted Childcare Register to confirm they are safe, high quality, and eligible for tax credits.

Professional practice in all registered full day settings and Sure Start Children's Centres which offer early years provision led by an Early Years Professional.

All parents benefiting from increases to length and flexibility of parental leave following the birth of their children.

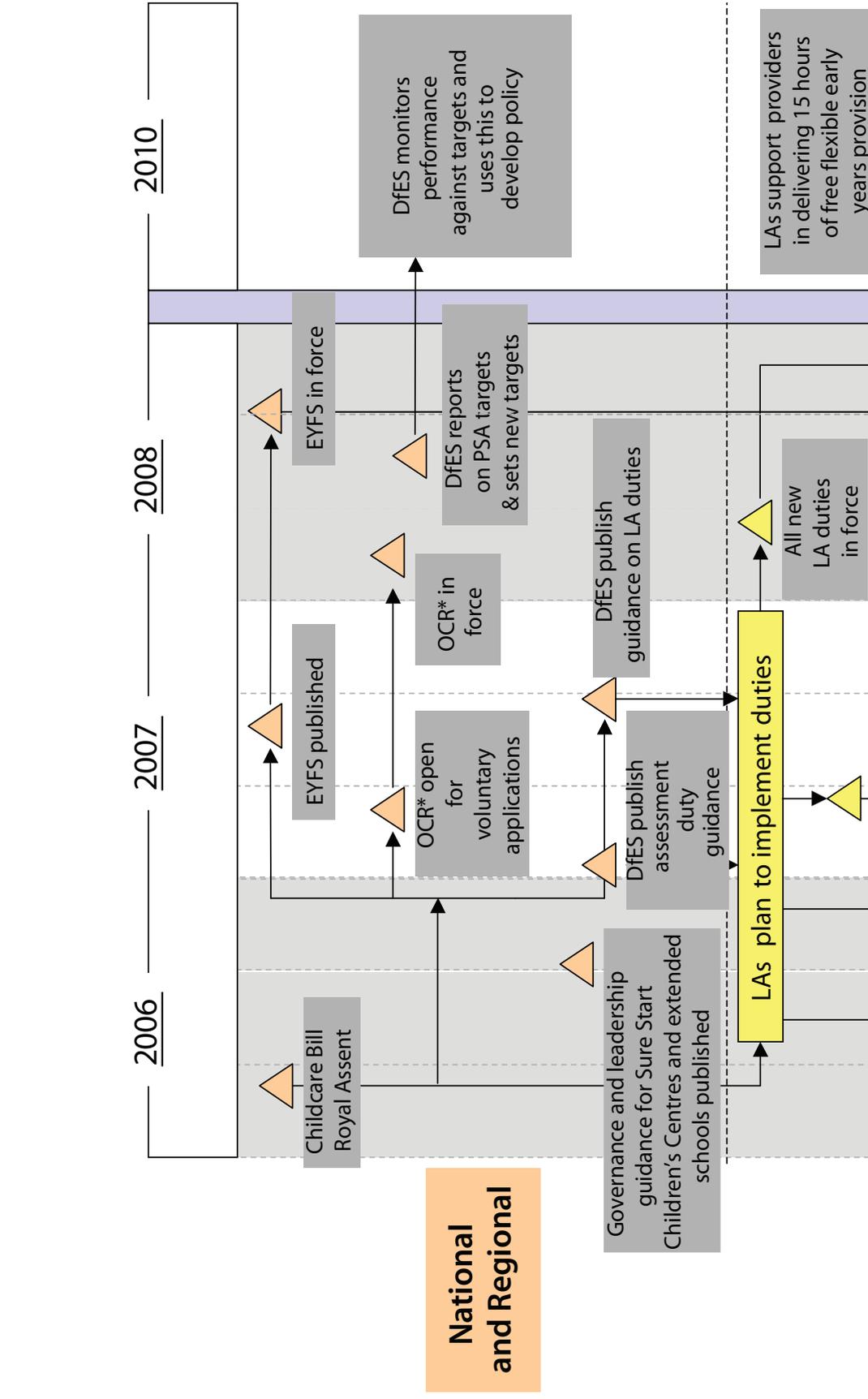
Annex A: Regulations and Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities



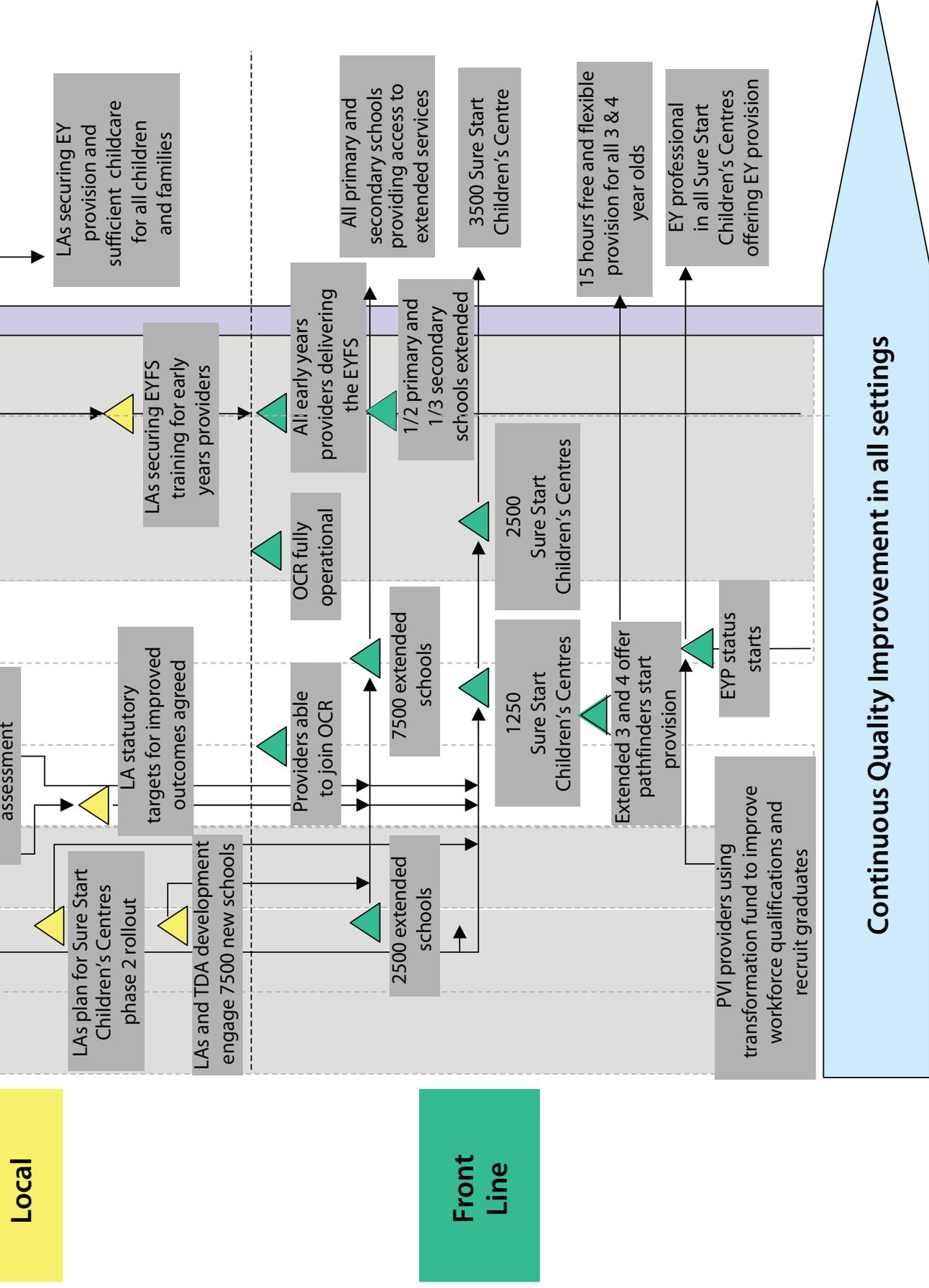
The legislative framework for early years and childcare, as set out in the Childcare Bill, will be supported by a series of regulations and statutory guidance. These will serve to give key partners and the front line a greater understanding of policy priorities and areas for action. All will be subject to formal public consultation after the Childcare Bill receives Royal Assent and secondary legislation will also be subject to impact assessments .

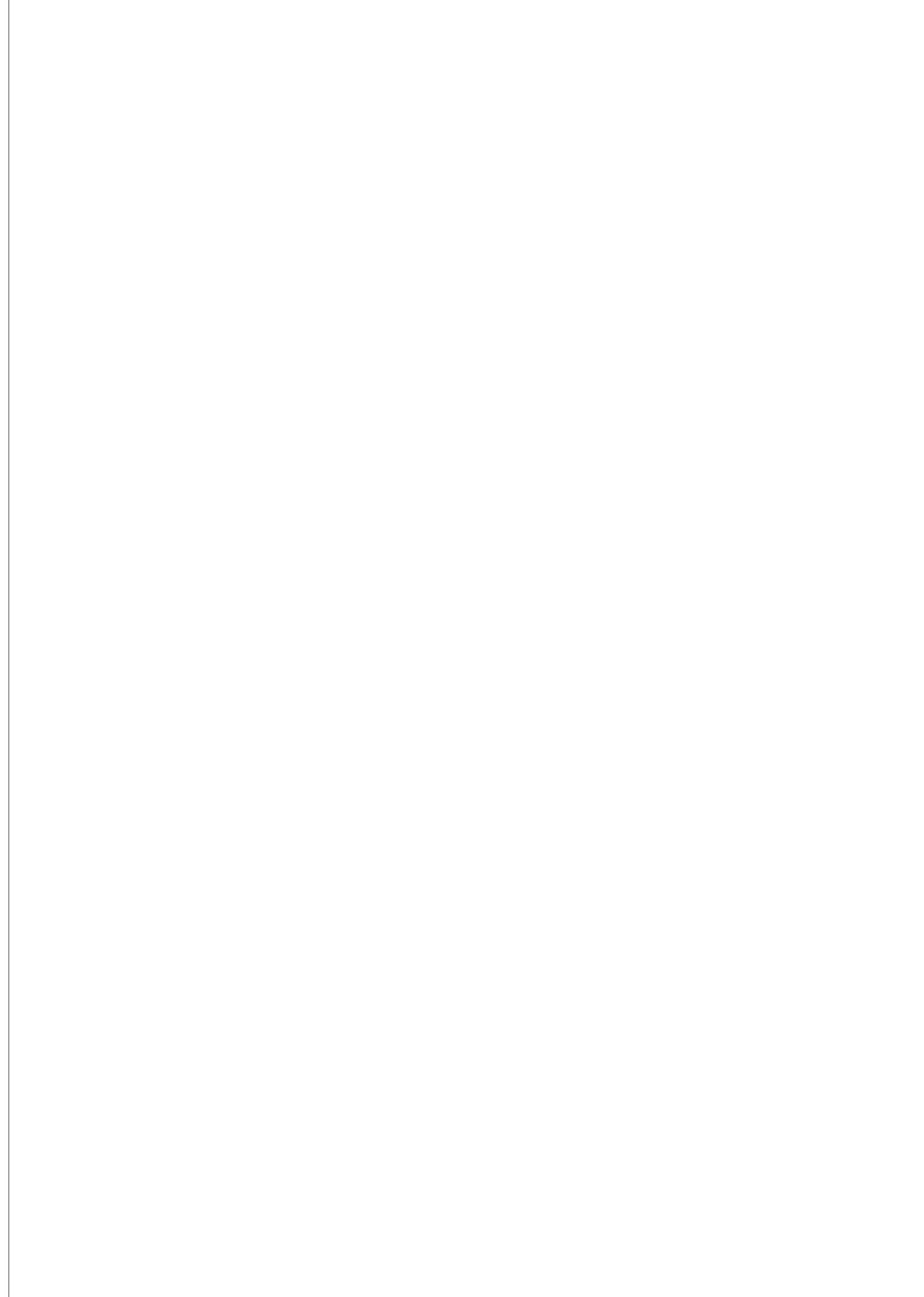
What	Planned publication date
Regulations on the procedures for setting statutory targets for local authorities to improve the well-being and reduce the inequalities of young children	November 2006
Assessment of childcare sufficiency statutory guidance and regulations	January 2007
Information for parents duty statutory guidance	April 2007
Regulations for voluntary registration on the Ofsted Childcare Register	April 2007
Early Years Foundation Stage document	April 2007
Statutory guidance on improving children's well-being, reducing inequalities, and working in partnership	December 2007
Statutory guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of sufficient childcare • free entitlement to early years provision • provision of information, advice, and training for childcare providers 	December 2007
Regulations for registration of early years childminders and other providers; later years childminders and other providers	January 2008
Regulations for inspection of early year providers, and later years providers.	January 2008

Annex B: Ten year strategy: Implementation timeline to 2010



Local





Glossary



AHC	After Housing Costs
APA	Annual Performance Assessment
BHC	Before Housing Costs
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CIS	Children's Information Service
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
CWDC	Children's Workforce Development Council
CYPP	Children and Young People's Plan
DCL	Director for Children and Learners
EPPE	Effective Provision of Pre-School Education
EY	Early Years
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EYP	Early Years Professional
EYPS	Early Years Professional Status
GSSG	General Sure Start Grant
JARs	Joint Area Reviews
LAs	Local Authorities

LLSC	Local Learning and Skills Council
OCR	Ofsted Childcare Register
PEAL	Parents Early Years Learning project
PCP	Parents Consultation Project
PCTs	Primary Care Trusts
PSA	Public Service Agreement
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent sector
SENCOs	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators
SHAs	Strategic Health Authorities
SSCCs	Sure Start Children's Centres
SSLPs	Sure Start Local Programmes
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
WTC	Working Tax Credit

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www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

DfES Ref: 0356-2006DOC-EN

PPSLS/D16/0406

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Produced by the Department for Education and Skills