

Championing Children

A shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours for those leading and managing integrated children's services



Every Child Matters
Change For Children



NON-STATUTORY
GUIDANCE

Second edition
October 2006

department for
education and skills

Creating Opportunity
Releasing potential
Achieving Excellence

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Foreword by the Minister for Children, Young People and Families



The Every Child Matters Green Paper recognised that staff in the children's workforce, although committed to doing their very best for children in need of support, often found it difficult to join up effectively between different professions and agencies. It was not always easy to co-ordinate services around the needs of the child.

We have come a long way since then and Every Child Matters is now a huge delivery programme that puts children firmly at the centre of everything we do. It is important that we maintain this momentum by improving our services and continuing to focus on outcomes for children and families.

We will only be successful if our services have the right quality of leadership and management. We need leaders and managers who can build teams competent and confident in this new means of service delivery; who will put the child and family first; who can lead those from outside their own areas of expertise; who can manage resources in new ways; and who can reconcile team members' different working practices and expectations.

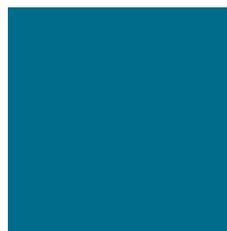
Championing Children is a framework that establishes a shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours for those who lead and manage integrated children's services. It provides a common understanding about the particular abilities required by leaders and managers of these services. Individuals, teams and organisations can use this document as a planning tool to help develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours necessary.

This version of Championing Children has been revised and updated following field testing of the July 2005 draft framework. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) will be responsible for promoting Championing Children within the children's workforce and for developing resources to help managers use it. I hope it is useful in supporting those of you who are leaders and managers and on whom we depend to achieve the very best for every child and family.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverley Hughes".

Beverley Hughes

Introduction



This Championing Children framework has a range of uses, but a single purpose: to establish a common understanding of the distinctive and different abilities required by managers of children's services who are responsible for teams that include professionals from different sectors and backgrounds; and for services that break the mould.

Multi-disciplinary teams are essential to the delivery of integrated children's services. Championing Children has been developed in recognition of the difficulty of managing this complexity in an evolving policy context. More specifically, it responds to requests from managers of integrated children's services for more clarity about expectations, and more training that is relevant to the particular challenges of the job.

This framework was developed by a steering group led by DfES and including representatives of employers, training organisations, leadership development providers and sector bodies. (Steering group members are listed at Appendix One.) It has been tested with leaders and managers from different sectors and from across the country.

The framework highlights seven aspects of management and/or leadership, all but one of which map directly onto either the Leadership and Management Standards or the Common Core for the front-line children's workforce. Under each heading is a description of how it applies distinctively to managers of multi-agency children's services. The headings are:

- Achieving outcomes
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child
- Providing direction
- Leading and managing change
- Working with people
- Managing information
- Communicating and engaging effectively with children, young people and families.



The descriptions are outcome-focussed, and are followed by a list of the **key** knowledge, skills and behaviours required. The headings, and the key knowledge, skills and behaviours identified, are overlapping and mutually reinforcing. This gives rise to some repetition within the framework but it means that any section can serve as the starting point for use. Both management and leadership skills and behaviours are included, and one is not stressed over the other, since both will be necessary.

Of course, the environment is not static. This framework is offered very much in the current context, where managers are setting up new services and/or teams, establishing new roles and making new connections. Different skills, knowledge and behaviours may assume greater importance as children's services mature – but this framework should have a shelf life of at least 4-5 years.

Purpose

Championing Children is not a checklist of competencies for individuals; nor are the skills, knowledge and behaviours

presented in any order of precedence. It does not list everything a manager does (for example, there is little here about financial or performance management).

The framework isolates what is *important* and *distinctive* about the abilities required by managers of multi-agency or integrated children's services. It is intended as a definitive document on which managers themselves, human resources professionals, providers of leadership and management development and others will draw. It aims to establish a shared set of skills, knowledge and behaviours, towards which managers from any sector and across a range of settings can work.

Championing Children has been described a cultural recipe book, from which individuals, services and organisations will plan their menus. Its use will not be enforced, but the hope is that it will prove sufficiently relevant to be widely adopted to help individuals, teams and organisations consider:

1. What knowledge, skills and behaviours already exist, and what needs to be developed?

2. What are the most important development needs?
3. What is available to help develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours identified as especially important?
4. What else needs to be done?

Directors and senior managers in local agencies can use the framework for workforce strategies, including recruitment, development and workforce planning and re-modelling in the context of the national and local actions described in the *Children's Workforce Strategy – a strategy to build a world-class workforce for children and young people*, published in April 2005. The tool can also support development of performance management frameworks.¹

Championing Children articulates the expectations for a significant number of professionals from various sectors. Providers of initial qualifications and post-qualification professional development will need to respond to these requirements.

Generic management and leadership development programmes targeted at relevant sectors should also take account of the framework, to help participants to identify how their existing skills can transfer to their new role – and how what they are learning on the programmes will apply to their specific roles.

This is a resource with the holistic needs of children at its heart, underpinned by the desire to change the culture and values of children's services forever, so that they are inclusive, holistic, responsive and ambitious. It gives a very strong message that the values underpinning Every Child Matters need to drive that transformation.

Focus

The skills, knowledge and behaviours identified in this framework are intended to characterise the activities of the managers who will implement strategies, plans and priorities on the ground. Managers of multi-disciplinary or integrated children's services will usually be working across all the rings of the *Every Child Matters* onion.



¹ Different professional groups will understand performance management and related terms differently. It is important to consider both appropriate arrangements to allow the performance of integrated teams to be planned and managed and how individuals will be provided with support and quality assurance from within their profession (often described as supervision or clinical governance).



Many practitioners have pointed out that in an ideal service, everyone should be exhibiting the behaviours and developing the knowledge and skills identified here. However, managers have a specific responsibility for providing drive and direction to new teams; keeping the focus on outcomes not processes; developing new skills within their teams; and making their voices heard as advocates of high-quality, accessible, customer-focused children's services. For this reason, Championing Children concentrates mainly on the skills and behaviours associated with leading change, establishing relationships and developing teams, and acquiring knowledge.

Championing Children has been developed with the varying needs of professionals from different backgrounds, with varying levels of responsibility and from a range of settings, in mind. For example:

- The development of integrated commissioning and of more integrated or joined-up service delivery will affect senior professionals from a number of backgrounds
- Individuals may be working in partnerships, BEST teams, children's centres, and with the voluntary and community sector
- The focus could be on serving the needs of specific groups of children and young people (such as those with specialist and complex needs) or it could be on support, early intervention and prevention for larger groups of children and young people
- Teams could be co-located and fully integrated, or could be 'virtual', with members from a number of different agencies.

Some of the new challenges these managers are likely to face are to:

- Move from a provider-led approach to one where children, young people, parents and carers dictate priorities – that is to manage a culture that is inclusive, focuses on service users, recognises the leadership skills and role of children and families, and facilitates their involvement in the design and delivery of services
- Gain and apply much greater knowledge – of different legal frameworks, as well as individual team members' expertise

- Understand and work with professionals from different backgrounds, who bring with them different assumptions, languages, concepts and experiences
- Provide adequate cover for colleagues in small multi-disciplinary teams, and therefore to ensure that individuals are confident and competent to take on new responsibilities.

How does Championing Children relate to what is already in place?

As noted above, Championing Children is intended to be relevant to leaders and managers across the range of settings and different professional backgrounds. It therefore builds on what professionals from relevant sectors are likely to already know and it does not describe generic management abilities. As career paths change over time – with the development of integrated children’s services – it is likely that there will also be more overlap across different professional groups.

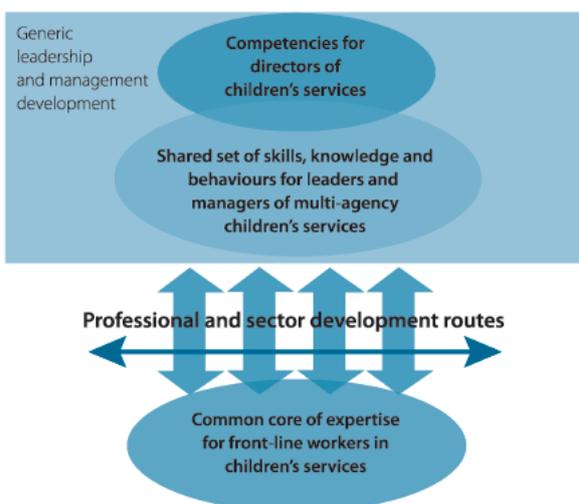


Diagram: How Championing Children relates to professional development

A very wide range of generic management competency lists, development programmes and professional and occupational standards are relevant to multi-agency children’s services. The shared set in Championing Children maps readily onto the most common of these. In particular, it has drawn on the national occupational standards for management and leadership, which have themselves been mapped on to standards and qualifications in specific sectors (such as social care).

Championing Children does not prescribe standards that underpin a qualification, as in the case of the standards for the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) or the proposed (as at October 2006) standards for Leaders of Children’s Centres. Instead, Championing Children sets out the principles expected in the workforce and provides a tool for individuals, teams and organisations to consider and plan their training and development needs. One of the ways the workforce can then be supported to achieve the behaviours within Championing Children is through appropriate training and development, such as the NPQH or National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) programme.

A fuller map of the relationship between individual headings in Championing Children and the main professional and occupational standards will be made available on the Every Child Matters website.

1. Achieving outcomes

The key to achieving outcomes in the very complex children's services environment is providing clarity about what must be achieved, both internally and to service users, and maintaining a focus on those things.

Professionals often feel that they are working to different or even conflicting agendas. A manager's role involves stressing common purpose and the values and skills that professionals hold in common. It is essential to empower staff and develop their ability to take responsibility – and to understand relevant legal and policy frameworks and how they affect multi-agency and integrated services.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Using evidence and the experience of team members to map the needs of local communities and prioritising activities on the basis of evidence and evaluation
- Involving children, young people and families in ongoing dialogue about their needs and aspirations and their ideas for service improvement
- Working with the team to seek out different perspectives on the needs of children, young people and their carers and the professionals with whom they interact, to identify opportunities for service improvement
- Developing the team's capacity to conceive of the needs of children, young people and families in a holistic way and to design services around that complexity
- Understanding one's own and others' backgrounds and values, and using this to develop approaches and processes that enhance delivery and support the concept of mutual accountability
- Networking with other managers to share information and ideas for improvement
- Setting clear goals for the service, and individual professionals within it, that are achievable as well as aspirational and inspirational
- Providing clarity about roles and responsibilities within multi-agency teams, and advising on how to work within different performance regimes to sustain the focus on locally desired outcomes
- Understanding different ways to bring services together, e.g. single access points, integrated service delivery, and integrated planning and commissioning
- Ensuring that every team member fully understands their own and their colleagues' accountabilities and protocols, so that they become increasingly comfortable with taking measured risks
- Managing resources flexibly in response to changing customer needs.

2. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child



All managers in children's services are expected to have and to promote a plan for protecting children from harm and actively promoting their welfare. This responsibility does not just apply to children who are currently at risk or socially excluded. It means championing the needs and rights of excluded and under-served groups and improving the quality of the service they receive; defining and implementing a multi-agency approach to managing risk; and ensuring that the child's voice is not only heard but responded to.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Championing equity in service delivery
- Impressing on team members the importance of raising the aspirations and expectations of children, young people and their families
- Understanding what level of need or risk a service is responding to, and articulating its role in protecting children and preventing them coming to harm
- Continually reviewing with the team how risks are identified and working together, and with partners, to escalate and deal with concerns
- Knowing enough about the accountabilities, policies and practice of team members to cover occasions when specialists are absent – and building this knowledge within the team
- Having the right contacts at policy-making levels to ensure that the voices of children, young people and families are heard
- Nurturing team members' professional skills and insights in relation to protecting children.

3. Providing direction

Managers of integrated children's services are leaders in many respects. They contribute to determining and articulating the vision for services, as well as making it happen. Because their knowledge of the needs and aspirations of children, young people and families is crucial to strategic thinking, they play a role in policy development. They should also model a collaborative, open, inclusive approach in their own behaviour, and build common purpose.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Understanding how strategic, commissioning and policy development roles are undertaken
- Translating strategic vision into local plans in collaboration with professionals, partners and users
- Using the collective knowledge base to challenge the status quo and to do things differently to meet the needs of children and families more effectively
- Influencing the governance of children's services locally
- Building a shared value base and common purpose
- Displaying leadership across the whole system through behaviours such as listening, building alliances and challenging others if the expertise of colleagues or the experience of service users is not being taken into account
- Supporting others to talk knowledgeably about issues in their area of professional expertise and helping to produce innovations in those areas
- Making clear how improved *service* performance and *customer* satisfaction can be achieved through a responsive and flexible service that reflects the needs of children, young people and families and delivers across the five outcomes for children
- Working for equality, both within the service and around it, and being a credible and compelling advocate for equality
- Developing a culture of, and systems to support, a high level of responsiveness within the service
- Influencing the environment and local strategy by taking opportunities to share ideas and enthusiasm about children's services and what can be achieved
- Knowing the legislative frameworks for all services to children and young people, and knowing where to go for detailed interpretation if required.

4. Leading and managing change



Managers of integrated children's services are at the forefront of transforming children's services. They need to be able to take forward a programme of transformational change, both within their service and in the environment around it. Inclusive and facilitative in their approach, inviting ideas, they should also lead change from a clear value base and articulate the rationale, benefits and impacts of change for individuals, the local authority and partners. Specific changes will often be determined by users, so managers need to build a high level of responsiveness into the service and to make sure that the pace of change is acceptable to users.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Developing a shared understanding of the scope and nature, values and principles of the specific changes needed to achieve desired outcomes and of what will drive and sustain the changes, both within the team and across services
- Establishing a shared language for the team, partners and the children, young people and carers who use the service
- Negotiating changes to how things work now with team members and related services, including the very sensitive issues associated with bringing together different cultures and asking professionals to work in different ways
- Developing team members' ability to plan, manage and instigate change
- Influencing the culture of children's services, in line with the strategic vision of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
- Involving service users in change
- Acting as an ambassador for user involvement and professional collaboration to build a responsive service
- Generating, inviting and promoting ideas.

5. Working with people



In perhaps one of the greatest challenges of the role, integrated children's services managers need to support a group of professionals from different sectors to work in new ways and to develop as a team or service, producing real collaborative advantage from the inter-agency team. They must also establish and maintain partnerships, and look beyond service providers to identify and engage with other people who influence the service.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Visibly upholding parity of esteem between professions and valuing people with different backgrounds
- Nurturing the professional skills and aspirations of team members, so that they feel valued professionally in a culture which is more responsive
- Prioritising development for all staff, drawing on the Common Core for the children's workforce
- Fostering a learning culture that encourages informal knowledge sharing and joint learning, so that integration adds further value
- Involving team members in the design of the service, the design of new roles and the recruitment of team members
- Supporting individuals who feel they are faced with contradictions between the demands of their parent organisation or profession and those of the team
- Managing the team in a way that encourages professionals constantly to seek service improvement and to act on good ideas
- Managing multi-agency joint appointments so that posts are well designed; the mix of skills, knowledge and experience within the team is appropriate; and there is backing from all partner and parent agencies

- Challenging over-adherence to professional boundaries, stressing what is common and transferable in the skills and experience of professionals
- Developing skills in facilitating cross-partner meetings, including recognition that different professional assumptions and concepts may need acknowledging and exploring to achieve desired outcomes
- Working openly with those responsible for governance of the service and those accountable for it
- Working with managers responsible for related services, so that ideas for integrating and improving services are regularly aired and acted upon
- Anticipating concerns and reassuring service users, professionals and the wider community
- Ensuring that relevant politicians, senior leaders and the press are well briefed about the service and are updated regularly
- Using personal influence and contacts to support the Director of Children's Services to widen engagement.

6. Managing information



Effective and responsible information sharing is essential for protecting children and building trust between professionals. Information sharing systems have to protect confidentiality, while establishing a practical approach that holds and shares the right information to improve outcomes and reduce the risks to children and young people. Information sharing is however not just about record management and personal files: keeping abreast of research and developing practice accordingly are equally important. The overriding objective is to build a common understanding of aims as well as processes.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Understanding legal frameworks
- Developing a shared appreciation of the role of information sharing in improving services and supporting integrated service delivery
- Addressing any doubts of professionals within and around the service about information sharing and assessment or data sharing
- Using sensitivity to ethical issues and different views about data sharing to develop robust shared information systems and procedures, working within the broader framework and policy of the authority
- Ensuring robust safeguards are in place in both information systems and policies to control access to information about individuals
- Developing reflective practice within the team, considering relevant research from different professions and learning from the experience of multi-agency working
- Ensuring that data, where appropriate, is used to inform and improve service delivery
- Building understanding about how integrated management of information can enhance service provision
- Looking outside the area for examples of best practice.

7. Communicating and engaging effectively with children, young people and families

Building trust and good lines of communication between service providers and users is at the core of the Change for Children programme. But engagement is not an end in itself. Managers need to communicate in a compelling way, both inside and outside the service, about the role of children's services; listen to different views; and understand different audiences. They must be able to draw on a range of techniques for engagement and communication for different purposes. Above all, they must work with children, young people, parents and carers to produce solutions.

Key knowledge, skills and behaviours required:

- Taking opportunities to speak and listen to communities and to children and young people about what the service is trying to achieve; being open in conversations and feeding back the outcomes of discussion and consultation
- Facilitating leadership opportunities for children, young people and their families in the design and delivery of services
- Communicating values powerfully
- Understanding who the key stakeholders are and what their perceptions are of the service and its users
- Knowing the information needs of different groups of children and young people, service users, staff, communities, partners, members, the media and other relevant stakeholders
- Helping colleagues to develop listening and communication skills and the skills and knowledge to facilitate consultation with children, young people and families
- Demonstrating a commitment to involving and empowering communities, children, young people and families
- Ensuring that engagement is seen and managed as a step on the way to user involvement in the transformation of services, and not as an end in itself

- Making engagement with all communities and individuals happen – especially those which have previously not had good links with service providers – in order to build knowledge, trust and resilience within the service and communities, families, children and young people
- Working with key individuals, community leaders, groups and families, children and young people to co-produce services
- Speaking for the whole service, not just one area of specialist professional expertise
- Knowing about media relations – whom to contact, when to instigate action and what protocols exist.



Appendix One

Steering Group Members

The following organisations have been involved in the development of Championing Children:

Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)
Association of Directors of Education and Children's Services (ADECS)
Cabinet Office
Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC)
Employers' Organisation for local government
General Social Care Council (GSCC)
Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)
Leadership Centre for Local Government
Local Government Association
National Children's Homes (now NCH, the children's charity)
National College for School Leadership (NCSL)
National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS)
National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations (NCVCCO)
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)
National Youth Agency (NYA)
NHS Leadership Centre (now the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement)
NHS University (now the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement)
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Department for Communities and Local Government)
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE)
Teacher Training Agency (now Training and Development Agency for Schools)
Training Organisation for the Personal Social Services (now Skills for Care)
Virtual Staff College
Youth Justice Board

You can download this publication at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

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Please quote ref: 04012-2006BKT-EN

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DfES Publications

PO Box 5050

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Nottingham NG15 0DJ

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Fax: 0845 60 333 60

Textphone: 0845 60 555 60

Please quote ref: 04012-2006BKT-EN

ISBN: 978-1-84478-828-6

PPSLs/D32/1006/1251

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