

why?

Fact sheet 5

Why workforce development?

What do we mean by workforce development?

Workforce development is about supporting staff, volunteers and trustees, as individuals and in teams, and helping them to gain and improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in order to do their jobs well and continually improve the services they deliver.

The term 'children's workforce' is a shorter way of describing everyone who works, whether paid or unpaid, with children and young people and their parents and carers.

Workforce development involves recruiting, developing and retaining the staff and volunteers needed to help an organisation reach its objectives. Training, qualifications, induction, supervision, appraisals, coaching, mentoring, reading and reflection are all part of 'workforce development'.

Why does workforce development matter?

It is important to children and young people, who say they want the people who work with them to:

- Treat them well, with respect and consideration and not take their frustrations out on them;
- Have time and anger management training and listening skills training;
- Involve young people in recruitment and in training workers and foster carers; and
- Have an understanding of equal opportunities, children's rights, child protection, disability awareness and confidentiality. (*Building Brighter Futures: Next Steps for the Children's Workforce*)

This means a workforce that is well trained and supported.

It is good practice and improves quality.

To ensure that children and young people achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes, it is vital to have a children's workforce that is skilled, well-led and supported by effective, shared systems and processes. People in different parts of the workforce need to be able to work well together across institutional and professional boundaries, focused around the needs of the child and young person.

It helps to ensure that children and young people are safe.

Children are more likely to stay safe if the adults working around them are trained and supported to handle concerns, if they are not too stressed or burnt out to notice when a child or young person needs help and if colleagues are empowered to challenge and support each other's practice.

It helps with recruitment and retention of staff and volunteers.

Good workforce development practices, like opportunities to progress and develop, will help attract the right people and ensure there are enough workers and volunteers in the sector. As well, people who are already working with children want to do a good job and learn how to do it better.

It may be a requirement.

Some national standards may require those who work with children and families to have certain levels of development or training. For example, many inspections look at the qualifications held by staff in determining whether minimum standards have been met.

Some contracts for public services may require staff to have specified training or be educated to a certain level for the organisation to be chosen to deliver the service.

Why workforce development?

Where can I look for more resources and information?

Children England can provide advice and guidance to organisations around workforce development; for more information, contact the Workforce Development Co-ordinator on 020 7833 3319. Alternatively, visit the *Supporting Small Organisations* and *Workforce Development* pages on www.childrenengland.org.uk for useful resources including a beginner's guide to workforce development, information about funding for training and qualifications, and a resource about costing workforce development.

The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is a Sector Skills Council body set up to support and strengthen the children's workforce. Visit www.cwdcouncil.org.uk to see a range of resources, events and information relating to workforce development.

The UK Workforce Hub helps third sector organisations make the best of their paid staff, volunteers and trustees through information and resources: www.ukworkforcehub.org.uk

The Every Child Matters website outlines the children's workforce strategy: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/workforcereform/childrensworkforcestrategy

Building Brighter Futures: next steps for the Children's Workforce describes how the Government plans to support the children's workforce to improve its skills and capacity to take forward the actions described in the Children's Plan. Both documents can be downloaded from www.dcsf.gov.uk

The Learning and Skills Council of County Durham has toolkits and worksheets to help organisations with workforce development: www.workforcedevelopment.org.uk

Appraisals: Go to www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/practitioners/WorkforceDevelopment/StaffAppraisal for forms to help with appraisals.

Coaching: A one-to-one relationship in which one colleague is supported by another in a risk-free, caring environment. See www.cipd.co.uk for resources and information on coaching.

Induction: See www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/induction-standards for induction standards guidance.

Mentoring: A one-to-one relationship in which a more experienced colleague passes on skills, knowledge and advice through example and dialogue. See www.cipd.co.uk for resources and information on mentoring.

Reflective practice: It is important to take time, individually and in teams, to read, study and think about the work you are doing, including underlying theories, examples of best practice and learning from colleagues.

Supervision: See www.skillsforcare.org.uk and search 'providing effective supervision' for a helpful toolkit.

Training: Can often be found free of charge from your local infrastructure organisation (Council for Voluntary (Youth) Service, Voluntary Action) or from further education colleges or your local authority.

Qualifications: Information about relevant qualifications can be found on the CWDC website at www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/qualifications. See also <http://eypquals.cwdcouncil.org.uk> for a database of early years and playwork qualifications.

July 2008