

Annex A – Covering Template for Responses

Please complete the attached cover sheet when sending evidence, indicating the set of questions to which a response is being provided and contact details of the person for any follow-up queries.

Contact details for respondent	
Name	
Job title	Policy Manager
Do you represent an organisation? (if so, name of organisation and type: e.g. voluntary, public body, private company).	Lifelong Learning UK – Sector Skills Council for further education, higher education, community learning and development, work based learning, and libraries, archives and information services. We are also a key member of the Children’s Workforce Network.
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	Which area of the review are you responding to? (please mark X)
Prevention strand	X
Review of disabled children	
Strategy for youth services	X
Review of high cost, high harm families	X



Skills for Learning Professionals

Lifelong Learning UK

The Sector Skills Council for Lifelong Learning

Response to DfES/HM Treasury Joint Policy Review on Children and Young People

15 September 2006

Further information please contact:

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1 Lifelong Learning UK

- 1.1 Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) is the independent employer led Sector Skills Council for further education, higher education, community learning and development¹, work based learning, and libraries, archives and information services. We are also a key member of the Children's Workforce Network.
- 1.2 LLUK provides the strategic perspective for workforce planning and development for the sector across the four countries of the UK.
- 1.3 We are responsible for defining and developing the Sector Qualifications Strategy and are licensed by the UK governments to set standards for occupational competence in the delivery and support of learning. These standards are used to inform the recruitment and professional development of our employer's staff.
- 1.4 LLUK leads stakeholders in the collection and collation of workforce data and provides analysis on workforce characteristics and trends to better inform future workforce planning. We also work with partners to improve the dialogue between our employers and those who look to the lifelong learning sector to meet their own skills needs.

Further information can be found on our website: www.lluk.org

2. Summary of Response

- 2.1 This submission has been developed in consultation with the LLUK's national Community Learning and Development panel, which brings together key professionals from across youth services, parenting networks, community education and others with a keen interest in sharing best practice in this area. A list of members is attached. As a UK-wide organisation, we have brought in views of professionals from across the four nations, though we recognise that this review is focused mostly on England.
- 2.2 By ensuring that all children and young people can get the best start in life, these organisations make a massive contribution to our future society and our future economic prosperity. This should be more clearly recognised.
- 2.3 Our particular concern is around how those working with children and young people can build an excellent, sustainable and skilled workforce. We have tailored our detailed response to these issues.

3. Detail

- 3.1 Overall the organisations – private, public or voluntary – which work with children, young people and their families must be committed to working together to improve the quality of what they do. The sector needs investment in the workforce at all levels including volunteers, part time staff, full-time support, professionals and managers and leaders.
- 3.2 Where services are delivered by third sector organisations, this should not be seen as a cheap option by either local or central government or national agencies. Usually these services are tackling particularly hard-to-reach clients in the most challenging of environments, and any intervention programmes will necessarily be proportionally more expensive. The specialist staff needed to ensure the success of these programmes require specialist training and development. Where joined up services are being developed, there should be joined up training provided so as to ensure common understanding of systems and methods and transfer of lessons learned between the different strands of children and young people. There should also be common understanding of the evidence base in each locality, and evidence from the communities, families and children themselves need to be shared.
- 3.3 The following sections identify particular issues that key employers from children, youth and parenting services wanted to collectively highlight.

¹ This includes Community Development, Working with Parents, Youth Work, Development Education, Community Based Adult Learning, Family Learning and Community Education. More detail on request.

Children and Young People's Review (prevention strand of review)

What works in reaching out to the most vulnerable families to ensure they are able to take full advantage of service provision, especially in the early years?

- Implementation of training in the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce as recommended in 'Every Child Matters' can help to enable early identification and improved referral where children, young people and parents are experiencing difficulties. Joint training for different agencies at local level in the Common Core has the potential to create links across agencies and develop a shared ethos and approach which can benefit families. Joint training was suggested in 'Every Child Matters'; it should now be implemented. The Common Core training should be delivered at regular intervals to ensure that new staff can benefit and fit into existing local structures.
- The Common Core includes "Effective communication and engagement with children young people and their parents and carers." This should enable staff to
 - recognise when a parent is asking for help,
 - know where such help is available – or know where to start to find it
 - be aware that they themselves are not trained to deliver work with parents around their parenting role, and
 - know how to refer effectively
- It is also time to provide a budget and targets for the excellent NHS National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, which will incorporate routine parenting support into health provision.

National Occupational Standards

- "How we work with parents is as important as what we do" was the message from David Quinton's "Supporting Parents" (Jessica Kingsley 2003), an account of 15 research projects undertaken for the Department of Health and DfES. People working with parents around the parenting role should have training specifically for that purpose, not merely for a related area such as work with young children or with sick people. That training should enable them to meet the National Occupational Standards for Work with Parents. It should enable them to work with parents as partners rather than a top-down expert model, which is doomed to failure, especially in the case of the most vulnerable families who do not respond well to feeling patronised and held in low regard.
- Modular training programmes need to be available, which map onto the Integrated Qualification Framework and will enable people to add to existing skills and knowledge.
- Universities and the Learning and Skills Council should provide this training.

Mainstream funding

- Mainstream sustained funding streams are required to enable planning and staff development, and to enable providers to create the structures to make the services available in the longer term – the recent PriceWaterHouseCoopers report on marketing the sector commented on the lack of regular reliable funding sources.
- An urgent first step is for the Learning and Skills Council to routinely make available funding to provide local parenting programmes free to parents in the same way as Literacy and Numeracy has been for some time. The nation stands to benefit at least as much from good parenting.

How can we build the capacity of parents, families and communities to shape the design and delivery of services for children and young people?

- Volunteering in this sector has to be valued and promoted as an opportunity for life
- Encouraging parents, families and individuals from the communities to volunteer in their own children's services can involve them at all levels.
- Particular advantage should be taken of those with specific skills, bringing in volunteers to offer management consultancy, as well as offering reading support or behavioural management or simply to arrange fundraising.
- Care responsibilities, languages and cultural sensitivities must be addressed when arranging steering groups and other consulting events to ensure that communities know they are getting a personalised service for their children.
- The ParentingUK Community Consultants (<http://www.communityconsultants.org/>) project trains local parents to consult other parents. Parents who have completed parenting programmes frequently want to go on to help others or contribute to their community.

How can rights and responsibilities for individuals, families and communities be integrated into services to improve the lives of children and young people?

- The rights and responsibilities of children and families should be included in the underlying principles on which all work with families is based. They are enshrined in the National Occupational Standards for Work with Parents (<http://www.parentinguk.org/2/standards>).
- All occupations which work with parents must meet the standards as set out. Permitting delivery by poorly or inappropriately trained and supported people not only wastes money but gives this area of work a bad name and dooms it to failure.

Strategy for Youth Services

Building on the Youth Green Paper, is there more that could be done to improve and sustain the effectiveness in the delivery of existing services and activities?

- In order to meet the aspirations of the Green Paper, there needs to be sufficient levels of ring-fenced funding for the 'Youth Offer'. The minimum expectation expressed in 'Resourcing Excellent Youth Services' (2001) of £100 per head for 13-19 year olds is still a distant dream in most local authorities in England
- There is still a significant shortfall in the number of qualified staff available for youth work. A workforce development strategy should ensure that a sufficient supply of recognised, skilled professional youth work staff can provide the best possible youth work opportunities for young people, with a further 4000 full-time youth workers still needed.

How can we best combine demand led provision for young people with provision that is planned and structured to have the best impact on outcomes for children and young people?

- There is a need for secure, ring-fenced funding for the Youth Offer, locally and nationally. Plans for the Youth Offer should ensure that they allow scope for developmental work to emerge in response to young people's expressed needs and wishes. This could be achieved through a combination of clear national standards and expectations with locally determined delivery mechanisms, which involve young people and communities in the planning process.

What are the barriers and enablers of effective Third Sector provision, including statutory commissioning capability?

- We are not convinced that a statutory commissioning approach is in the best interests of young people. In order to function effectively, youth work provision needs a stable base in which young people feel comfortable and are encouraged to take an active role in determining the programme curriculum. This includes the opportunity to test out new approaches and learn from both their successes and failures. To achieve success, youth work needs stable foundations as a basis from which to undertake flexible, young people led programmes and activities. A commissioning framework could undermine this by:
 - Establishing contracts on too short timescales for basic provision (we consider a minimum of 5 years to be necessary to build consistency and continuity)
 - Setting expectations and criteria so tightly that youth work cannot respond flexibly to young people's needs as they emerge locally
 - Reducing the commitment to neighbourhood based working by engaging service providers that are not rooted in communities
- Significant elements of the VCS are not likely to engage in commissioning processes as they are value driven organisations which want to work developmentally with young people, rather than being commissioned to deliver specific services. Such organisations often currently receive grant aid from local authorities and there is danger that this money would be drawn into commissioning pots and would migrate away from small local voluntary youth organisations towards more commissioning of friendly national voluntary organisations which lack the local links and commitment of the smaller voluntary organisations. Thus the diversity offered by the VCS could be reduced by a commissioning process
- Where commissioning processes are established, we think that representatives of the VCS should be involved as commissioners, as well as simply as commissionees. This would help to ensure that the informal, diverse and responsive elements of provision for young people would be recognised and valued within the commissioning process.
- Commissioning needs to be underpinned by effective quality assurance processes. Commissioned services should be expected to adopt recognised QA standards such as the National Youth Agency's YSQM: Quality Mark for Young People's Services
- We support the concept of 'full cost recovery' for the VCS and all commissioned services, and would want to see equality across providers in terms and conditions of employment and rates of pay.
- All commissioning prospectuses should require that organisations applying for funding identify how they will develop their staff to ensure sustainability of the service.
- If we want to maintain the national and regional infrastructure agencies, we also need to be able to access national level funding, and not be expected to apply for funding from a large range of local pots

Which projects and programmes in the last five years have had a proven and sustained impact and brought innovation to delivery of services for young people?

- The 'Transforming Youth Work Development Fund/Performance Improvement Fund' was an extremely useful tool in promoting innovation in youth work. Much work piloted under this fund has now been mainstreamed into local authority youth services and voluntary youth organisations. The combined length of the two funds (5 years) proved sufficient to show many positive outcomes, particularly for young people's participation in decision making, and for the accreditation of young people's learning through youth work.

- The creation of the Youth & Community Sub-Block also provided an extremely useful lever for youth service managers, to ensure that the allocation of local authority funds to youth work was significantly improved. However, as local authorities move to more integrated budgets for Children and Young People's Services, we are already seeing some of this work undermined, as the need of crisis intervention for individual children and young people at risk remains top priority, with preventative and more universally accessible work such as youth work and the youth offer seeing budget reductions to compensate for this. There is a need for an adequate and sustainable allocation for youth work interventions within all Children and Young People Plans.

What attracts people to the youth work workforce?

People are attracted into youth work because:

- They want to do something positive to help and support young people
- They want to help young people change their lives
- It can help them deal with their own children
- They have been helped by youth work themselves and want to put something back
- They tend to get involved in youth work 'gradually', starting as volunteers and moving through part-time evening work into full-time roles, so often they are already quite heavily involved before they make a decision to 'become a youth worker'
- Youth work is based in communities, so easily accessible for local people to get involved
- It looks exciting, attractive and fun
- Youth workers have considerable personal autonomy and control over the content of their work and how it is done
- People who have worked in more formal and individualised sectors such as teaching and social work move into youth work as they see the enormous benefits of working in settings where young people are engaging voluntarily

What is less attractive about membership of this workforce?

- Youth work is not seen as having the same value as other professions: there needs to be parity of esteem between youth work and professions such as teaching and social work, reflected in expectations of qualifications and pay rates
- Pay levels are not comparable with similar levels of responsibility in other professions (a full-time professional youth worker is usually expected to manage a team of Youth Support Workers and design and deliver a full youth work programme with young people from the moment they qualify)
- Anti-social hours: much youth work takes place when young people are available, at evenings and weekends
- There is a need for a clearer statutory base to ensure that youth work is stable and recognised as a valuable contribution to young people's development
- Youth work needs a Workforce Development Strategy, similar to that for Early Years, with higher levels of consistent funding, including funding for students and providers of HE programmes at the same level as social work and teaching

Review of High Cost, High Harm Families

Are current incentives and levers adequate to deliver co-ordinated responses for families?

Services are still not sufficiently co-ordinated, and more needs to be done to ensure that key players, notably schools and health services, are obliged to work in partnership with other services that intervene in young people's lives. This could be achieved through:

- More joined up policy making at central government level: the current Education Act will give schools even more autonomy and make it even more difficult to engage them with other agencies if they choose not to
- Integrated inspections of services that focus on effective partnership working
- Inspections of schools and other services actively taking account of young people, children and families perceptions of their services
- Supporting partnership arrangements where partners are seen as of equal value, not subsidiaries to an influential 'lead partner'

More creative use of informal approaches through youth workers working in formal educational and health settings would help to engage high risk young people without stigmatising them.

Conclusion

In conclusion, key areas to highlight in this review include the need for shared training for those in linked services for children, parents and young people; the need for a common workforce strategy built on shared national occupational standards and the need to promote the benefits of volunteering. Funding should be consistent, with longer term funding for core services and reduced commissioned activities. Policy making and planning in these areas needs to be far more joined up at all levels.

Services for children and young people, and their families, are essential, and growing more so as society becomes more diverse and fragmented. Investment in these services for all pays large dividends over the long term. These services need an excellent workforce, one ready to work flexibly and responsively, in conditions that are often not great. By building an excellent workforce you will ensure an excellent start for children, young people and their families into the future.

Catherine Prisk
LLUK
September 2006

Thanks to members of LLUK's Community Learning and Development National Panel for their contributions, in particular Gill Millar, Mary Crowley, Steve Drowley and Jim Sweeney

Annex 1 – list of Community Learning and Development Panel

Jim Barnaville	Senior Development Officer(South and West Wales)	Community Development Cymru
Emily Brown	Deputy Director	Together:working for well-being
Anna Clarke	Community Development Officer, Education and Training	Rural Community Network (NI)
Lucy Collins	Project Coordinator	TWICS(Training for Work in Communities)
Mary Crowley	Chief Executive	Parenting Education & Support Forum
Andy Driver	National Youth Work Convenor	Community and Youth Workers Union
Steve Drowley	Team Manager Quality Standards	The National Youth Agency
Dick Ellison (Chair)	Chief Executive Director: Community Learning and Development	ETEC (Sunderland) Ltd Cambridgeshire County Council - Education, Libraries & Heritage
Mike Hosking	National Director	Centre for Youth Ministry
Revd David Howell	Chairperson	Ubuntu
Dean T Huggins		BOND(British Overseas NGOs for Development)
Charlotte Imbert	Learning and Training Manager	Parents Advice Centre (Ltd)
Alison Loughlin	Regional Manager	Federation for Community Development Learning
Janice Marks	Head of Agency	NIACE
Annie Merton	Senior Development Officer	
Damian J Pinel	Youth and Community Officer (Training and Development)	Army Welfare Service
Graham Price	General Secretary(Chief Executive)	WEA South Wales
Tim Price	Area Youth Worker	on behalf of UNISON
Susie Roberts	Chief Executive	Association of Principal Youth and Community Officers
Jim Robertson	Chair of Management Group	Churches Community Work Alliance
Ali Rusbridge	Community Training and Development Manager	Tower Hamlets College
Duncan Simpson	Area Operational Team Leader	Fife Council
Jayne Stuart	Director	Learning Link Scotland
Jim Sweeney	Chief Executive	YouthLink Scotland
Courtney Taylor	Team Leader. Training, Education and Workforce Development	Welsh Assembly Government
Phyllis Thompson	Deputy Director	Development Education Agency(DEA)
Rashmi Varma	Chief Executive Officer	Confederation of Indian Organisations (UK)
Veronica Wilson	Chief Executive	Council for Wales Voluntary Youth Service
Gill Millar	Head of the Regional Youth Work Unit	Learning South West