Children’s Workforce Strategy

The response of the National Union of Teachers to the HM Government consultation
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CHILDREN’S WORKFORCE STRATEGY
INTRODUCTION

1. The National Union of Teachers welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Government’s consultation document, *Children’s Workforce Strategy*.

2. Representing those within the children’s workforce who hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) working in early years settings, schools, colleges, local authority advisory services and youth and community services, the Union is uniquely placed to comment on the proposal. The examples used to illustrate the NUT’s views on the proposals will therefore draw on the staffing implications for such institutions.

3. The over-arching aim of the Strategy, “to create and support a world class workforce ... one that people aspire to join and are loath to leave” is welcome and reflects a consensus across all of the sectors that make up the children’s workforce. This will provide a good starting point for the complex shift in working practices and culture which the implementation of the Strategy will require.

Steve Sinnott
General Secretary
CHAPTER 1 –
OUR VISION FOR THE CHILDREN’S WORKFORCE

The Vision

4. The Government’s intention, “to overcome the restrictive impact that professional and organisational boundaries can have” is welcome.

5. The Government should acknowledge, however, the implicit tensions between each sector’s core purpose, for example, the tensions between academic achievement and social concerns for schools. Whilst Every Child Matters places equal importance on each of its five key outcomes, how these will be addressed at local and institutional level have yet to be articulated in practical terms. At school level, OFSTED will report primarily on educational standards. In its Joint Area Reviews, it will report on ‘education’ and ‘social services’ as two discrete entities, and make a broader assessment on all of the children’s services within a local authority.

6. Until clearer examples of how cross-sector working on a day-to-day operational level are provided, those working in the children’s workforce will remain uncertain about how to implement the Strategy in tangible ways. The Government fails to provide a clear overall vision of what the Strategy will mean to the workforce before launching into detailed descriptions of some, but not all, of the elements of the initiatives which would flow from it.

7. Paragraph 15 of the consultation says that “remodelling underpins the development of extended schools – our vision of where the school system needs to go to deliver the five outcomes set out in Every Child Matters.”

8. Whilst it is true that there has been an increase in the “range of adults who can work with children in a wider number of flexible roles”, in recent years, this began before the National Agreement was signed. Learning Mentors, for example, were a key feature of the Excellence in Cities initiative, introduced in 1999. Schools are dependent on the additional funding that involvement in this initiative brings for the employment of this category of staff. In addition, many schools employed nurses, until financial constraints forced them to discontinue this role in the early 1990s. It is disingenuous to link remodelling and improvements in provision of children’s services in this way, ignoring past good practice and the reasons why that practice may have been discontinued.

The Strategy

9. What is meant by “stronger leadership, management and supervision” (NUT’s emphasis) is open to interpretation and debate. Given the connotations of “stronger” as synonymous with “less inclusive” in connection with leadership, “effective” would perhaps be a more suitable term to use in this context. It is unclear whether this statement refers to leadership at institutional level or to greater centralised control of services, which could be seen as implying an increase in the current accountability mechanisms to which the children’s workforce is subject currently.

10. In addition, whilst not wishing to downplay the importance of strategic leadership, the absence of references in the document to collegiate or distributed leadership, which is an important aspect of many schools’ approach to leadership and management, are notable.

Context

11. The function of the Connexions Service has been problematic within some schools, with uncertainty being expressed about the division of responsibility of work between schools’ career staff and Connexions advisers. The Government has decided that 60 per cent of Connexions funding will go to the new Children’s Trusts, created under the 2004 Children’s Act, and 40 per cent directly to schools.

12. Even though the Connexions Service has helped a number of young people who are not in education, employment or training and has given much needed advice to...
young people, inspection reports have shown that career guidance in schools has now become ‘patchy’. The Connexions Service has not been properly funded. The Government has also set no specific goals for the universal purpose of the service. The NUT believes that, with specific funding going to schools and colleges, careers work can be developed in a strategic way, providing that the funding for schools and colleges is ring-fenced.

13. Good quality career guidance needs to be secured without losing what is good about the Connexions Service. Children’s Trusts are not a statutory requirement and some local authorities have chosen different routes to co-ordinate funding. Handing part of the Connexions Service to Children’s Trusts could prove problematic, therefore.

14. Young people need a planned careers education programme that will help them when gaining knowledge and developing skills for planning and managing their careers. In order to achieve these objectives, staff in schools and colleges and the Careers Service should be given professional development opportunities to deliver a high quality service.
CHAPTER 2 – REALISING THE VISION: NATIONAL AND LOCAL ACTION

The Strategic Challenges

15. Many parents are concerned about the potential or perceived compromising of their privacy and confidentiality, if all of the main services which they needed to access were located within their child’s school, as not all parents wish the school to know everything about their personal circumstances. Whilst agreeing that improved integration of services is more likely to meet children’s needs effectively, it must also be acknowledged that, for this vision to be achieved, it must have the support of parents, as well as the workforce who serve children and their families.

16. The commitment to Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members working in partnership with “professional bodies and trade unions locally” is particularly welcome. Such a commitment must cover all recognised unions. In this context, there is much potential to utilise the role of Union Learning Representatives, as facilitators and brokers of professional development within the workplace, in auditing training needs and identifying gaps in provision.

17. In its Education Statement, “Bringing Down the Barriers”, the NUT called for the establishment of Children’s services Forums in each local authority, whose membership would comprise a wide range of stakeholders, including teacher organisations, schools and parents. With the advent of the Strategy, it would be particularly timely to consider using this mechanism as a way of meeting its challenges for schools at local authority level.

18. The difficulties of attempting to integrate the requirements of the Strategy with local authorities’ other plans, as well as other national priorities, should not be underestimated. It is essential that authorities are given sufficient time to ensure that what they do is right for the communities they serve, rather than driven by externally imposed deadlines which may compromise the quality of services in the longer term.

19. While the Government’s intention to identify “best practice” is to be expected, it is disappointing that the consultation document does not refer to the existing mechanisms by which local authorities support each other by these means. The message implicit in paragraph three of the consultation is that “Government and our key national partners” will advance particular models of working, driven by “cost effectiveness of the whole system” rather than enable local authorities to work together and share the lessons of implementation at local level. This is particularly important in terms of finding practical solutions to issues which may well be different according to the particular circumstances of authorities. What may work in a large metropolitan authority would not necessarily be transferable to a small unitary authority.

The Recruitment Challenge

20. The Government’s proposal to develop regional and local approaches to recruitment, which would complement national campaigns, is sensible and to be supported. In order to reduce the demands on local authorities, to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure consistency of approach, it would be useful if customisable materials were made available to local authorities. Materials in community languages could be adapted to meet local circumstances.

21. The Government acknowledges that some sectors of the children’s workforce do not have a very diverse workforce and that certain groups being under represented. It says that local managers will need to take account of “diversity issues” in their recruitment strategies, considering how best to attract, retain and develop under represented groups. The NUT believes this should be a fundamental part of the Strategy.

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*National Union of Teachers, Bringing Down the Barriers, NUT, 2004.*
22. With respect to EMAG, an NUT survey\(^2\) showed that it was difficult to retain well-qualified minority ethnic staff employed by EMAG because of the lack of job security and perceived marginalisation. Developing a clear career path within EMAG linked with comprehensive training and continuing professional development would go a long way towards encouraging more staff from minority ethnic and bilingual backgrounds to remain within the EMAG remit if they wished to do so. The DfES should also support the development and promotion of support networks and mentoring schemes which assist retention.

23. The DfES needs to provide leadership if it is to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce. It should produce an equality impact assessment for its proposed recommendations about changes to the teaching workforce. It should also explore and quantify the impact of those recommendations for the recruitment and retention of specific groups within the workforce, i.e., women teachers, black and minority ethnic teachers and disabled teachers.

24. There are barriers to lesbian, gay and trans teachers in retention and promotion. Direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and prejudice continue to threaten the careers of this section of the workforce. This will be the case also with support staff and the Government should commission a study on whether support staff experience discrimination. These barriers need to be explicitly discussed by the Government in documents such as this strategy otherwise LGB teachers remain invisible.

25. The majority of the children’s workforce is female. The Government has commissioned the Women and Work Commission to report to the Prime Minister in autumn 2005 on how to close the gender pay and opportunities gap within the next generation. The pay gap is a complex and multilayered problem that requires action within each sector, including education and teaching, and the Government has asked for evidence and suggested proposals for action.

26. The Government should refer the findings of the Women and Work Commission to the DfES so that its findings can be considered in the context of developing the Strategy and developing goals within it. The NUT submission to the Commission provides evidence on the barriers preventing women from progressing and remaining in the workforce.

27. The Strategy should examine, for example, the labour market experience of women and consider how women can be given a fairer deal at work within the education sector. In particular the DfES should examine the experience of those women working part-time within education and women returning to work after a period spent on full-time care. The evidence based on women working part-time shows a clear need for better quality part-time jobs and for clear career pathways, training and development for women experiencing the “sticky floors” that part-time jobs can often have.

28. It is essential that the Strategy supports, and does not conflict with or undermine, other Government policies. Parents who return to work after childbirth need, for example:

- to be able to choose whether or not to juggle with paid work and greater access to leave for fathers so they can take their share of caring;
- more opportunities for flexible working for all parents and carers in all types of jobs within the children’s workforce and at all levels; and
- not to experience the long hours culture within teaching to ease the pressure and stress experienced by many staff in schools.

29. It is disappointing that research commissioned by the DfES\(^3\) has not been used to inform this section of the Strategy, as it has identified a number of practical suggestions about improving the

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\(^2\) National Union of Teachers, Race Equality Funding Survey; NUT, 2001.

recruitment process, from both the perspective of employers and employees. The Strategy has missed the opportunity to develop these in more detail, preferring instead to set targets relating to improved recruitment, without suggesting the means by which these targets could be achieved.

30. Given the Strategy’s emphasis on the importance of Job Centres within local recruitment strategies, it is particularly important to bear in mind the research finding that:

“Job Centres were used by most organisations, but in general were not found to attract suitable candidates in terms of experience or motivation. Some providers had the impression that some applicants from Job Centres were under pressure to prove their willingness to work and had no real interest in the job.”

31. A key aspect of recruitment and retention receives little attention in the consultation document. Whilst pay and conditions for staff across all sectors of the children’s workforce remain comparatively poor, it will continue to be difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of high quality staff into children’s services. The research cited above has illustrated the extent to which early years and childcare providers in particular faced stiff competition from retail and call-centres when recruiting and retaining staff.

32. For the private sector providers, an additional source of competition was the public sector, as pay and conditions tended to be more favourable at all levels. The strategy identified that the most negative aspect of working in childcare was perceived, by both current and potential members of the workforce, as being low pay. Other significant issues included difficult relations between managers and staff, the perceived low status of the work and administrative burdens, which often had to be completed at home unpaid.

33. Particular attention to pay rates must also be given to the increased staffing needed to meet the proposed expansion of after-school care provision. Research has shown that significant numbers of such workers have to take two or even three jobs in the sector in order to obtain a full-time equivalent salary.

34. The finding above is significant, as part-time working is predominant throughout the sector as a whole. 63 per cent of the early years’ workforce, for example, is employed on a part-time basis, compared to the national average of 26 per cent. Many early years’ posts involve few hours of work: 21 per cent require eight hours or less per week and 38 per cent are for 16 hours or less. 90 per cent of part-time early years’ workers, however, were found either not to want a full time job (83 per cent) or were students (seven per cent). The vast majority of the remaining part-time workers already had a second job in the sector. This would suggest that it is unlikely that this group of workers can be regarded as a reliable recruitment source for the staffing of new or extended provision. It would be more useful if consideration could be given within the Strategy to how increasing the numbers of hours offered for particular posts could contribute to retaining such workers.

35. Although recruitment campaigns may make much of the intrinsic rewards of working with children, it will continue to be viewed as low-status until rates of pay, conditions of service and contracts of employment are enhanced significantly. Term-time only contracts, for example, provide little incentive for potential employees to consider working in support services in schools.

36. There are additional considerations which should be taken into account in terms of the recruitment of minority ethnic staff into the workforce. The research cited above also found:

“Many providers did not have basic equal opportunities packages, such as

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4 Rolfe Ibid.
monitoring, in place and should be encouraged to adapt these. Many providers have stereotyped views about the suitability or interest of particular groups of people for childcare. Of particular concern are the assumptions made about the preferences and customs of some minority ethnic groups.”

37. Without pro-active strategies at national and local levels which aim to both challenge these assumptions and provide support for providers, the Strategy’s intention of increasing recruitment from under-represented minority ethnic groups can not hope to succeed. Such proactive strategies need to take into account the wide variation in local labour markets.

“The crucial difference with Inner was that lower levels of unemployment and the absence of community norms about acceptable employment presented more opportunities for jobs with similar levels of education attainment as the TA (teaching assistant) role, frequently accompanied by better pay.”

The same trend would apply equally to areas of the country other than London.

38. In some areas, local authorities will not be able to recruit the calibre of staff they wish, unless salaries are competitive. How authorities will achieve this, without additional funding, is not addressed by the Strategy document.

39. Some of the recruitment strategies suggested on page 12 of the consultation document are not unproblematic and have not all been proven to be “what works”. Whilst “grow your own” approaches such as employment-based training routes for teaching assistants to become qualified teachers may have much merit, there are a number of important issues to be taken into consideration alongside this proposal. Many of these were illustrated by the experience of a joint NUT/UNISON Union Learning Fund project to support bilingual teaching assistants to access further training which would enable them to attain QTS in Hertfordshire.

40. It cannot be assumed that all support staff wish to take on additional responsibilities. Many are, rightly, satisfied with their current role and the contribution they make within schools. The lack of formal qualifications in literacy and numeracy, in order to access training, lack of confidence and unfamiliarity with generic study skills should not be underestimated as barriers to this approach. The additional work generated for the individual and for colleagues within the institution, both in terms of cover when the staff member is attending training elsewhere and the support needed by them from colleagues, are also considerable barriers.

41. Incentives in relation to the teaching profession have had a mixed effect. Despite high levels of take up, the extent to which this is a reflection of recruitment and retention needs is not clear, due to a lack of up-to-date national data. Research has found that payment of a Golden Hello is not in itself sufficient to influence long-term commitment to teaching. Other factors, in particular, workload and pupil behaviour, exert a much greater influence.

42. The last suggestion listed in this section of the Strategy “exploring targeted or co-ordinated recruitment from overseas” must be treated with extreme caution. In education, there is a wealth of evidence to suggest that this practice has been at the expense of both the overseas teacher and their native country, particularly developing countries. The exploitation of overseas teachers by unscrupulous agencies in the UK and the alarming drain of teachers from the countries which funded their training, and which are equally in need of their services, led to the signing of a protocol on the recruitment of overseas teachers in 1998.

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teachers by 35 Commonwealth countries, including the UK, in September 2004, hosted by the NUT.

43. The protocol aims to balance the right of teachers to migrate internationally on a temporary or permanent basis in furtherance of their careers with the need to protect the education systems of poor countries and to prevent the exploitation of scarce human resources. The protocol is intended to facilitate agreement between recruiting and source countries on ways of mitigating the harmful impact of detrimental recruitment practices and to ensure that recruited teachers enjoy employment conditions no less favourable that those of nationals of similar status. The protocol is a recognition that teacher shortages cannot be solved “on the cheap”.

44. At a time when the DfES has committed itself to working towards less reliance on recruitment from overseas as a means of addressing teacher shortages, it is a matter of deep concern that the consultation document should propose such an approach for the wider children's workforce.

Common Core of Skills and Knowledge

45. The proposed Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the children’s workforce is a logical development arising from Every Child Matters and should provide a basic framework for both employers and employees. Its emphasis on the importance of effective communication with both other professionals and with children and their families is particularly useful.

46. The NUT has welcomed the concept of common core standards and training across professional disciplines, which should lead to a greater understanding and coherence of approach overall. It is essential however that the identity of each of the disciplines is not subsumed and that their distinctive contributions to the well-being of children and young people are preserved and protected.

47. Such training should be offered as whole staff training sessions and for those teachers who wish to pursue either the role of lead professional or pastoral roles within school. It should be acknowledged that not all teachers would wish to become more involved in pastoral matters than they are currently and that many teachers will not wish to act as lead professionals.

48. Key to the effectiveness of the Common Core will be how it is used in practice and how awareness of it will be promoted amongst staff. Unfortunately, little consideration of the practicalities arising from this proposal is given in the consultation document, other than it will be implemented “in induction and in-service training arrangements”. There is no sense of how the Common Core would be differentiated according to each discrete sector within the children’s workforce and how it would affect the various grades or levels of staff within each sector. Neither is attention given to the ‘entry level’ qualifications for particular roles, such as qualified teachers and social workers.

49. The development of a new qualifications and career structure for the children's workforce is recognised by the NUT as a positive step towards improving the skills and status of those working in the sector. Such an approach recognises that entitlement to high quality professional development and clear and accessible career progression routes are vital for recruiting and retaining all those working with children and young people.

50. Within and between sectors, levels of training have varied enormously. The development of the Strategy will create the need for even more trained personnel and higher quality training opportunities. The proposals contained within this document are in keeping therefore with other recent developments such as the new National Framework of Accredited Qualifications in Early Years Education, Childcare and Playwork. It is essential, however, that any such provision takes into account the diversity of provision in this sector and the breadth of workers' professional development needs.

51. The Strategy must also be supported by strong action to ensure that all workers, regardless of their employer, are able to
access training. Research commissioned by the DfES9 has found that:

“many providers regard training to NVQs as something which staff might do for their own interest”

In addition, both employers and employees perceived the benefits of gaining such qualifications as enhancing future job prospects, rather than relevant to their present post. There is a clear need for a national awareness-raising exercise of the benefits of training for employers in particular if the Strategy is to be adopted across all sectors.

Supporting Better Career Pathways

52. The NUT has a number of concerns about the specific aims of the single qualifications framework, as set out in paragraph 17 of the consultation. The lessons of the Graduate and Registered Teacher Programmes (GRTP) demonstrate that “more work-based routes into professional and senior roles across sectors” cannot be implemented successfully without additional resources and support for the institutions which would have responsibility for such provision.

53. In a survey conducted by the NUT of its GRTP members10, there was found to be significant variation in the type, quality and organisation of training and support experienced by trainees. Even those who expressed high levels of approval for most items on the survey were critical of specific aspects of their training programme.

54. There was evidence from the NUT’s survey to suggest that trainees’ professional knowledge and understanding was not always well developed. In the questions which related to training needs, some needed further practical training on basic teaching duties such as how to plan, assess or differentiate and subject specific content. Among a minority of correspondents there was a need for more theoretical input such as in child development, teaching and learning styles and curriculum studies. This observation would appear to be supported by recent OFSTED findings11 that employment-based teacher training routes provide a “more restricted” experience of teaching and are less effective overall. One in five lessons taken by GRTP trainees were judged to have unsatisfactory features, for example, compared to just one in ten for trainees on traditional routes.

55. The commitments to support “initial and on-going training for people to ensure they can perform their particular role well” and to “provide for a more consistent approach to the provision of excellent and stimulating continuous professional development” are welcome. The commitments, however, are unlikely to be achieved without additional, dedicated funding, of which the consultation document makes no mention.

56. This is particularly important given that resources for national CPD programmes for teachers have been reduced and ring-fencing for professional development activities in the Standards Fund removed. It is the Government’s intention that “the flexibility available within the Standards Fund should enable schools to meet the key priorities for professional development.”12 This is not an adequate approach.

57. Not only is the emphasis on the Government’s “key priorities”, rather than schools’ and teachers’ own priorities, but it is also extremely unlikely that schools would have sufficient “flexibility” in funding CPD activities, given the current pressures on school budgets. Teachers and support staff in schools have found it increasingly difficult, therefore, to access the training which they need. There is nothing in the Strategy document to suggest that this situation would be fundamentally altered.

58. Apart from the DfES induction training programme for teaching assistants, access

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11 OFSTED, An Employment-Based Route into Teaching, HMSO, 2005.
to professional development for school support staff is still unacceptably ad hoc. A recent research report has found:

“Training needs were identified in a relatively informal manner. The emphasis was on individual TAs identifying their training requirements and lobbying the head to support them rather than the school identifying the training needs of their TAs in a systematic manner.”

59. In addition, many teaching assistants are paid exclusively for the time they have pupil contact. They therefore attend professional development sessions in their own time, unpaid. A number of surveys have demonstrated the significant problems teaching assistants face in participating in development and training, especially if these take place off site or outside school hours. Many of these difficulties relate to practical considerations related to time, costs, travel and family commitments, as well as the lack of payment for time spent in training.

60. The Children’s Workforce Strategy provides the ideal opportunity for the Teacher Development Agency to launch the Wider Workforce Strategy and to relaunch the DfES National Strategy for CPD. In this context, the NUT has emphasised consistently the need to expand the coverage of the Union learning Fund to cover professional development for teachers and support staff.

61. The NUT is concerned by the proposals relating to the development of transferable core and specialist skills, so that “in future standards and qualifications are not tied solely to jobs in one traditional service.” Whilst there are similarities in the skills, knowledge and values needed across the children’s workforce, it is also important to recognise that there are distinct differences too. Roles have different core purposes and functions and these become more apparent in the demands of the higher levels or grades of posts within each sector.

62. An analysis of the QTS Standards shows the absurdity of attempting to graft generic “competencies” from the Common Core to standards which were designed uniquely to characterise the minimum competencies of a newly qualified teacher. Most of the QTS Standards relate specifically to teaching, assessment and reporting, such as possessing secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects which they are teaching or setting challenging teaching and learning objectives. There are only a small number of standards which would lend themselves easily to qualities which would be expected throughout the children’s workforce, such as “respecting children’s social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds” or “communicating sensitively and effectively with parents and carers”.

An Indicative Career Framework

63. The Government’s diagrammatic indicative career framework, is a matter of particular concern. Whilst there would seem to be reasonable consistency and progression from entry level to senior support worker (levels 3 4), there is then a significant overlap and bunching of qualifications (levels 4 6) for professional/graduate practitioners, which appear to be the level at which qualified teachers, as well as HLTAs and other teaching support staff with Level 4 qualifications, would be placed. There is a tremendous difference between Level 4 (A Level) and Level 6 qualifications (honours degree) in terms of depth of subject knowledge and pedagogical theory, which the proposed framework appears to be attempting to negate.

64. In addition, Level 7 (masters degree) is intended to denote senior and advanced practitioners and service managers. There is currently no requirement on school middle managers and Advanced Skills Teachers, who would presumably be included within this level, to hold such a qualification.

15 DfES/TTA, Qualifying to Teach: Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for Initial Teacher Training, HMSO, 2002.
Conversely, many class teachers hold masters degrees. It is unclear how this grading approach can be anything other than superficial unless it is intended to be reinforced by making such qualifications compulsory.

65. Furthermore, would head teachers, who are now required to have obtained the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) before assuming headship for the first time, be graded as Level 7 or as Level 8? Whilst the NPQH may be counted towards, but is not equivalent to, a masters degree, head teachers are the “strategic leaders” of schools and are increasingly expected to act as “consultants” to other schools as part of their role.

66. Such difficulties within and between the grades for each discrete strand of the children’s workforce are multiplied when one attempts to read across the sectors and try to understand how, for example, a graduate practitioner in social services would be able to transfer across to work as a graduate “practitioner” in a school without additional specialist training.

67. The lack of consideration given to the importance of each distinct service is nowhere more apparent than in the statement in paragraph 23 of the consultation that “many leadership roles will be taken by people with appropriate skills and background from a range of service areas, not just those supporting children, young people and their families.” In effect, it is the Government’s view that leaders do not need experience of working with children, let alone of working within a particular children’s service.

68. This is fundamentally flawed thinking. How can leaders possibly fulfil all that is expected of them, in terms of strategic leadership, if they do not have first hand experience of the service for which they are responsible? Head teachers, for example, are primarily concerned with the quality of education provided by their school. Without the necessary experience of working as a teacher and manager within schools, how are they to be able to undertake this role successfully?

69. Headship is about far more than managing staff and balancing the budget – every decision that a head teacher makes is informed by their knowledge of the educational impact that their decisions will have. The same is true for every other discrete sector within the children’s workforce. To attempt to blur these distinctions, using the justification of improved career pathways, is disingenuous and is certainly not in the best interests of children or those who work in children’s services. It would be far better if priority was given to improving progression within, rather than between, distinct sectors of children’s services.

**Local Action**

70. The proposed contents of local workforce strategies appear sensible. It would be useful to add to this list a commitment to equality of access to training for all those working within children’s services, regardless of grade and that training provision should be relevant to the individual, as well as to the institution’s priorities. This is particularly important given the emphasis within the Strategy on encouraging career progression for the workforce.

71. In addition, local workforce strategies should include detailed references to their resource implications, with funding identified for each area of activity. The costing of developments would not only provide transparency and accountability at local level, but would also inform national funding decisions in the future, on an activity-led basis.

**Integrated Working Challenge**

72. There is a whole range of existing pastoral responsibilities within schools that pastoral staff carry out and which only qualified teachers can undertake. Heads of year and secondary schools are an obvious example. The NUT would agree that the pastoral responsibilities of school staff can only be carried out effectively if and when teachers know when and how to call on social workers and other professionals such as speech and language therapists and behaviour support workers. Pastoral work and social work are, however, two distinct
disciplines with very different areas of expertise.

73. There are time, workload and resource issues surrounding the work that pastoral staff carry out in which are not explored in the Strategy. Teachers should not be put under any pressure to undertake child protection responsibilities, or to organise and lead multi-agency working and collocated teams, unless these proposals are properly resourced.

74. Sufficient funding must be made available to support both the employment of suitably qualified teaching staff to undertake pastoral roles in schools and the training and non-contact time for those teachers who wish to specialise in pastoral responsibility.

75. The NUT believes that it is appropriate that, when a child is known to more than one specialist service, there should be a designated lead professional who would coordinate service provision.

76. The NUT has supported the development of key workers to coordinate support as part of the Behaviour and Education Support Teams, which has been funded by the Children’s Fund.

77. The role of the lead professional should be a distinct role and not added on to existing responsibilities of teaching staff. In particular, this responsibility should not be added to the responsibilities of special educational needs coordinators. It is not a role which can be carried out by unqualified staff such as teaching assistants. It is alarming that in the Government’s current draft guidance on lead professionals the list of those professionals identified as suitable to take on the lead professional role does not include qualified teachers. The inference from this is that it is unqualified teaching assistants which the Government has in mind as the group of staff most suitable to be designated as lead professionals.

78. It is the NUT’s view that lead professionals will require a specific career route in the same way as educational psychologists. The concept of a lead professional outlined originally in the Green Paper16 as understood by the NUT involved a professional who has the capacity to ensure action by different services. Lead professional responsibility cannot therefore bolted onto the existing responsibilities of qualified teachers or social workers, and it is not a responsibility which can be given to unqualified staff. Teaching assistants will not be able to ensure action by different services, convene meetings and ensure early identification of needs.

79. There is a strong argument for the lead professional to be a specific post with the power to draw down resources from different services for pupil at risk. Existing staff in schools do not have the time, the training or the resources at present to act as gatekeepers for a detailed information sharing system. This reality cannot be evaded by using unqualified staff to act as lead professionals, and the answer is for the Government to acknowledge that developing lead professionals is a significant undertaking which will entail a radical shake up of the way in which different professionals currently liaise and work together.

80. The NUT supports the further development of arrangements for child protection issues that brings clearer lines of responsibility and accountability. The NUT has welcomed previously the creation of child protection coordinator posts. Coordinators have been working well within clusters of LEAs to bring consistency and clarity of operation of the procedures. There is good practice here that can show the way forward for lead professionals.

81. Local authorities and school governing bodies are required to safeguard and promote and welfare of children in their activities. Yet more could be done to support local measures to ensure that child protection polices are adopted and implemented at school level. These should include identification of key roles within schools and local authorities, routes for reporting and good practice in local authority reporting to schools on the outcomes of investigations. While the coordinators have

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facilitated the development of local policies and procedures, more work remains to be done on ensuring their consistency and proper application.

82. In February 2005, the Economic and Social Research Councils (ESRC) published research into delivering children’s services17 which found that making multi agency working effective is a complex challenge, and that training to make it work and delivering children’s services should be planned and funded.

83. The ESCR research found confusion between the concepts of “multi disciplinary” and “multi agency” work. It identified lack of training in effective management of multi agency teams and managing change as two key issues that should be addressed. It highlighted the heavy demands made on the professionals involved in implementing multi agency teamwork, in terms of their need to rethink their roles and switch to different kinds of activities and working practice. A main focus of this new way of working was the sharing with others of information perhaps previously restricted to those in a particular field. Attempting to achieve a common basic data set across all services while maintaining data protection is a Holy Grail yet to be attained by the vast majority of local authorities. It will certainly not be achieved without a thorough approach to “joined up” co-ordination of services.

84. The way that joined-up delivery can be implemented has not been examined thoroughly enough. The researchers investigated five multi agency teams operating in children services in England and found that during meetings about major decisions, jargon could be used to exclude some team members from contributing fully to discussions. The report also found confusion about how best to use generalist and specialist workers within teams and highlighted that differential pay and working conditions can cause resentments if not addressed openly as part of an overall strategic plan.

85. Discussions about changing roles will undermine professionals if multi-agency teams operate in ways that suggest that responsibilities should be blurred in order to create generalist workers. It is essential for the Government to make it clear that the Strategy is not about blurring responsibilities or diluting the role of teachers but about enabling different specialists to support professionals working in universal services.

86. It is important for professionals not to feel that they are losing out as their roles change. In particular, specialists such as teachers should not feel that they are losing their particular identity. Multi-agency teams should be about better coordination between services and better communication, rather than confusing dialogue about the children’s workforce as if it is a global pot of interchangeable professionals. It is essential that education services are protected as a distinct financial and organisational service.

Extended Schools

87. While the NUT supports the concept of full service and extended schools it has a number of points to make about aspects of the current roll-out of the extended schools programme. The NUT and the DfES commissioned jointly research entitled ‘Towards the Development of Extended Schools’ published in 2003. The research itself confirmed the potential positive impacts of extended school status but emphasised also the vital need for teachers to be involved fully from the beginning in the development of any proposals for children’s services in their schools. The research certainly confirmed that teachers expected not to be involved in working in services other than education. It is welcome therefore that the Strategy confirmed the Government’s intention in this respect.

88. For this reason the NUT believes that the School Teachers’ Review Body needs to explore thoroughly the interface between teacher responsibilities and extended services. In its main submission to the Review Body of May 2005 the NUT called for the STRB to seek a specific remit from the Secretary of State on the pay and

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17 Anning, A., New Forms of Professional Knowledge and Practice in Multi Agency Services, ESRC, 2005.
conditions of service implications in the Children's Workforce Strategy, including extended schools, pointing out that the 2005 STRB remit cycle cannot fit into the current timetable for the consultation on the strategy.

89. It is noteworthy that the STRB itself has asked the NUT to expand on its contention that there should be a separate remit.

90. The remit needs to focus on three areas. They are:
   - the need to explore the impact of extended school status on head teachers/leadership group/senior management team responsibilities;
   - the implications of proposals to develop the ‘pedagogue’ and ‘new teacher’ approach for early years teachers including the impact of proposals to have a qualified teacher presence covering a number of settings;
   - the implications for teachers’ professional duties of the above in relation to the School Teachers’ Pay and Conditions Document; and
   - the implications for the health and safety of staff and pupils, and the impact upon head teachers, in terms of ensuring health and safety on a day-to-day basis. Particular issues of concern include school security, fire safety and maintenance of buildings and facilities.

91. Another area which should be explored are the implications of establishing a common ladder of occupational standards.

92. The NUT is concerned about a proposal that schools will be asked to set out in their school profiles and self evaluations any extended services they provide. In particular the NUT is concerned that the idea of ‘wrap-around’ provision synonymous with extended school status thus narrowing the concept of extended schools considerably. The requirement to outline extended school provision in school profiles will mean that schools which cannot offer such services, either because of space, or because of resources, or because of staffing difficulties or, indeed, because of the geographical location of school, could be placed at a serious disadvantage when it comes to parental choice. Government may consider that that is an element of the proposed requirement to include such information but the knock-on affect on standards and pupil rolls could damage local communities and the quality of education.

93. Extended school status is effective when it is school communities that initiate and trigger the extension of services and when those services then receive sufficient funding. The imposition of a single extended school model at the expense of ‘bottom-up’ ideas tailored to the unique nature of each school could set back the whole extended school idea.

The Leadership Challenge

94. On “the leadership challenge”, the Government restates the need for “clear strategic leadership and strong, dynamic management”. It does not, however, address the challenges facing leaders in terms of implementing the Strategy.

95. For head teachers, the demands of the Strategy could be enormous and could have serious implications for their workload. The increased number of staff working in schools, from a variety of disciplines, will require managing and will raise serious questions about accountability. Similarly, funding decisions will become more complex when services other than education have to be factored in to school budget management.

96. Head teachers already suffer from excessive workload. The PricewaterhouseCoopers’ study on Teacher Workload\(^\text{18}\) reported that secondary head teachers’ workloads were higher than average annual hours worked in the UK by some 300-400 hours a year. The Government’s Strategy has the potential to exacerbate this situation considerably.

97. Many schools are already facing difficulties in recruiting head teachers. Last year, 23 per cent of primary schools and 16 per cent of secondary schools reported unfilled head teacher vacancies. 33 per cent of primaries and 25 per cent of secondaries

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had to re-advertise head teacher posts at least once. Particular recruitment difficulties were experienced by schools in disadvantaged areas, precisely those schools where Children’s Centres and Extended Schools, for example, are most likely to be situated19.

98. This shortage is compounded by the reluctance of many senior teachers to take up headship posts and the significant proportion of head teachers, currently around one third, who retire before age 60. This has been linked, by John Howson20, to the increased demands placed on head teachers:

“It is possible that head teacher turnover has risen during the past few years due to the increased demands placed upon school leaders. This may be particularly the case for head teachers who shoulder the responsibility of steering the most ‘challenging’ schools to improved performance”.

99. It is important to note that few senior staff from any ethnic category other than “white” have been appointed:

“Over the past few years we have commented upon the relatively small number of appointments at senior level amongst those for ethnic minority groups … This year, we see few signs of any change in the position and there still appears very little interest in this issue. This is a disappointing situation and one that needs to change.”21

The NUT would commend this analysis to Government and would urge that particular attention is given to addressing this issue as part of the work programme taken forward by the Strategy.

National Action

100. The development of support programmes for Directors of Children’s Services and Lead Members, described in paragraph 38 of the consultation, is welcome as this suggests a bottom-up approach, based on sharing good practice and peer support, which has already been proven to work by the Improvement and Development Agency’s (IDeA) programmes for supporting ‘weaker’ local education authorities, where capacity building has been a key feature.

101. The introduction of the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) is a cause for concern. NPQICL participants do not need a degree level qualification in order to undertake this qualification, which has been marketed as of an equivalent level to a masters’ degree. This devalues the importance of graduate status when compared to a head teacher in the nursery/primary sector, particularly as the qualification is intended to have parity with the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). The introduction of this qualification also contributes nothing to achieving the Strategy’s target of one graduate member of staff in every setting by 2015.

102. NPQICL participants are not required to hold a pedagogical background, and there is little emphasis on teaching and learning within the programme’s content. This will inevitably have a detrimental impact on the quality of educational provision. It would appear that the introduction of this qualification is more concerned with staffing the radically increased number of centres offering early education and care, rather than enhancing professionalism and improving the quality of provision.

103. To date, the NPQICL has been characterised by lack of consultation – professional associations were only invited to a consultation once the pilot scheme had been operational for several months and the national roll out was announced before any evaluation of the pilot was shared. This does not augur well for its acceptance by the teaching profession.


21 Howson, J. 2004 ibid.
CHAPTER 3 – THE CHALLENGE IN EARLY YEARS

Introduction

104. The NUT would agree strongly with the sentiment, that “the early years' workforce is critical to giving children the best start in life.” The NUT has campaigned consistently for high quality education provision for the under fives and for the same recognition and support to be awarded to all those who work within the early years sector, teachers and support staff, as for their colleagues in the compulsory education sector. A national strategy for developing and strengthening the early years’ workforce is long overdue.

105. The references to the Government’s Ten Year Strategy for Childcare repeat that document’s blurring of the evidence relating to early years’ education and childcare. The two are certainly connected but have distinctive roles within the overall system of early years’ provision. The evidence cited extensively in the Ten Year Strategy, from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project (EPPE)\(^2\) does, as its name suggests, focus on the benefits of education. Childcare, however high the quality, cannot achieve the same results.

106. Lack of progression opportunities and career structures for nursery nurses and other support staff has meant that pay remains low despite the accumulation of experience, training and qualifications. Many such staff are acutely aware of the possibilities that other jobs, such as those in supermarkets, can offer – better pay for a fraction of the pressure, skills and responsibilities that are inherent in their current jobs.

107. It will be important to manage the expectations of the workforce in terms of new opportunities for training, qualifications and career progression. Support, including dedicated funding, must be in place at both local and national level before this strand of the Strategy is rolled out if the existing workforce is to be retained and strengthened.

108. The establishment of wrap-around services that offer education, childcare and a variety of other support services in the 20 per cent most disadvantaged wards of England represent an attractive and logical development. The recognition that many of the poorest children do not live in these areas, and the proposed expansion of the Children’s Centre programme to cover every community, is logical therefore.

109. The NUT is concerned, however, about the role of teachers within Children’s Centres. The current Sure Start guidance on establishing Centres advocates “strong learning and teaching” by qualified teachers, who should plan and ‘substantially lead’ activities for all groups of children. The advice goes on to say, however, “we would expect that in most centres the employment of an early years teacher on a half-time basis would achieve this objective”. (NUT’s emphasis)

110. This contradicts all the evidence about what makes effective early years education provision. The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) research cited above found that “settings which have staff with higher qualifications, especially with a good proportion of trained teachers on the staff, show higher quality and their children make more progress”. The evidence clearly indicates that there should be at least one full-time teacher employed in every Children’s Centre working directly with children as well as planning and managing other staff members. The NUT believes that every Children’s Centre should employ at least one full-time teacher who would have the key responsibility for education within the Centre.

111. The commitment that all full daycare settings would be led by graduate qualified early years’ professionals is welcome but does not go far enough. This commitment should be extended and enhanced, to require all settings which offer early years education to be led by a qualified head teacher. In addition, the value of qualified

112. As noted above, the NUT has serious concerns about the new qualification for leadership of integrated centres. This concern is reinforced by the final bullet point in this section relating to “stronger leadership, management and supervision to provide the pedagogical, management and business competencies required for high quality, sustainable provision” (NUT’s emphasis). Unless leaders of Children’s Centres and other integrated settings which offer education have experience of working in early years’ education, how is “pedagogical competency” to be achieved?

113. The interplay between these three “competencies” is crucial in ensuring that leaders’ decision making is based on an overall evaluation of the impact they would have on the quality of children’s experience at the setting. It is incontestable that leaders of primary and secondary schools need to have been teachers previously, in order to use their professional judgement to make such decisions. This proposal is of particular concern, given that the “reforms” of the workforce set out in this chapter are intended to apply to “early education settings such as nursery and reception classes in primary schools, and nursery schools.” It is unclear why it is felt that the leadership of early years’ settings should be viewed in such a different way to school settings.

Transformation Fund

114. The Strategy paints an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the current state of provision in order to justify reform. It confirms, later, that the overall standard of early years education currently is good. It summarises the latest OFSTED findings that “most providers of early education for three and four year olds are ranked as good, with nearly a third as very good”. It would be more honest for the Government to acknowledge that the real “driver for reform” is the perceived need to increase quantity, not quality.

115. In this respect, it is important to note that OFSTED23, like the EPPE research, has consistently identified publicly funded, maintained settings as providing the highest quality provision. It is no coincidence that levels of qualification and pay, for both teachers and support staff, are significantly higher in the public sector compared to the private, voluntary and independent sectors. A key challenge for Government, given its encouragement of these sectors to become early years’ providers in recent years, will be to ensure that its drive to improve the quality of and rewards for the early years’ workforce impacts on these sectors too.

116. The extent of this challenge should not be underestimated. According to the 2003 DfES Nursery Workforce Survey, the total number of nurseries in England has increased by 42 per cent since 1998. 81 per cent of these were found to be in private ownership with other sectors representing a very small proportion (voluntary represented five per cent and local authority nurseries six per cent of the sector). Whilst the Government is right to claim there has been growth in early years’ provision under its administration, the bulk of this growth has been in the private sector. The NUT has been concerned about this expansion, involving as it does, lower standards in rates of pay, facilities and staffing than in the maintained sector.

117. In contrast to this expansion, the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare and the Children’s Workforce Strategy imply a movement away from this policy.

118. For this to happen, there needs to be a concomitant increase in the resource allocation for public sector provision. The funding base to support high quality development of the workforce is extremely constrained currently, particularly as there

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23 E.g. OFSTED, The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools, HMSO, 2004
is still a heavy reliance on parental fees. No other country, including those cited as potential models, has achieved a well-qualified early years workforce without adopting a tax-based supply subsidy.24

119. The consultation document makes much of the Transformation Fund which has been established to deliver this sea-change. Whilst the introduction of the Transformation Fund will make available an additional £125m per year to help develop early years professionals, this is unlikely to be enough to achieve all that has been planned for the sector, which is significantly under-funded and under-supported currently. The Daycare Trust, which worked closely with Government on the development of the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare, has estimated25 that between £210 – 320m every year for at least ten years would be needed if such radical improvements to the early years’ workforce are to be achieved.

120. This figure is based on its estimates of total spending on early years’ education and care in the UK, including parental leave payments and would mean that spending would need to increase from the current 0.8 per cent of GDP to 2.6 per cent if this Strategy and the Ten Years Childcare Strategy are to be implemented successfully. In this context, it is important to note, given these countries’ influence on the consultation document’s proposals, that both Sweden and Denmark currently spend between 2 – 2.5 per cent of GDP on early education and care, excluding parental leave payments.

121. The Daycare Trust concludes that “the net impact on the public finances would be significantly less than the gross costs”, given the well-established contribution early years’ education and care makes to eliminating child poverty (Sweden and Denmark are the only countries close to achieving this at present); boosting the life chances of disadvantaged children; reducing spending on remedial education, health care and criminal justice costs; and increased economic activity, which would boost tax revenues and reduce social security spending.

122. Although the Transformation Fund is a welcome start, therefore, Government should prioritise further funding for its early years reforms as an investment which will provide savings in the longer-term.

Analysis of the Current Position

123. It is self-evident that labour shortages act as a barrier to the expansion of current provision. It is disappointing, however, that the Strategy neither provides further evidence to support this claim for either childcare or nursery education, nor differentiates between the public and private sectors, where there are marked differences in patterns of employment.

124. For example, 64 per cent of the early years’ workforce is employed by the private sector, where annual gross pay rates are much lower compared to the maintained sector – £7,831 and £22,662 respectively.26 Such enormous differences in salary, and their effect on recruitment and retention, is barely acknowledged by the Strategy.

125. Many of the studies cited in this response identify high levels of satisfaction with the intrinsic nature of working with under-fives, but low pay and the low status attached to the work make the sector particularly vulnerable to high turnover rates. This is linked, particularly in the private sector and to a lesser extent the voluntary sector, to poor retention practices by providers, such as induction, appraisal and professional development.

126. Reliable figures on turnover in the sector are difficult to find, because of variations in methods of measuring turnover, varying economic climate and variations between types of provider.

“Turnover has been found to vary according to type of setting, and is typically lower in the maintained

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sector, particularly school based care, than in private or voluntary settings. This may be due to a number of factors, including pay and training opportunities.”

127. High turnover is not only problematic for employers, but can also adversely affect the quality of provision, which in turn may impact on parents’ willingness to use it. Research\footnote{E.g. Cameron, C., Building an Integrated Workforce for a Long-term Vision of Universal Early Education and Care, Daycare Trust, 2004.} has suggested, for example, that high turnover of staff in pre-school settings had a detrimental effect on the development of children’s language and social skills, which were found to persist, for some children, well into primary school. The specific section of the Strategy must address, therefore, the issue of how to reduce high turnover rates and identify the mechanisms to achieve this reduction.

128. Despite the diversity of provision within the early years’ sector, there is a strong degree of homogeneity within its workforce, which is predominantly female (98 per cent), white (96 per cent), young (24 per cent are under 24) and have children (51 per cent)\footnote{Lindsay, C., State of the Labour Market, National Statistics/HMSO, 2004}. Whilst the hours of work typically offered for early years’ work may suit many in the workforce currently, in particular women with school aged children, it is likely that both hours and pay result in low levels of employment amongst other groups, especially men. To compete with other jobs, pay must be raised to a more competitive level and more full-time employment opportunities provided, perhaps by enabling jobs to be combined. In addition, increasing the security of employment would help attract and retain more workers in all groups.

129. The Strategy provides no evidence to support the view that “many of the additional workers (for extended childcare provision) will be part-time, many of them are likely to be drawn from the existing early years’ workforce.” Staffing the new eight a.m. to six p.m. childcare provision will not necessarily be an attractive alternative for many of the current early years’ workforce, who are typically female with their own caring responsibilities. The hours they work enable them to fit family commitments around work: working before the start and after the end of the school day would not be convenient for many. After-school care workers have reported, for example, that session times are “at awkward times of the day and can adversely affect family life”\footnote{Rolfe, H., Recruitment and Retention of Childcare, Early Years and Play Workers: Research Study, National Institute of Economic and Social Research/DfES, 2003.}. There is a strong need for ‘family friendly’ policies such as free or subsidised places for staff’s children and time off for events such as parents’ evenings, if the Strategy is to benefit all children and parents/carers, including those who work in the children’s workforce.

130. Further, the skills and experience of such workers would not automatically be appropriate for the sort of childcare that is envisaged in the Ten Year Childcare Strategy, which would involve working with much older children in a range of provision such as music, sport and the arts. It remains unclear, therefore, why the Children’s Workforce Strategy should imply that the early years’ workforce would staff extended childcare, especially as recruitment and retention for the early years’ sector is one of the stated aims of the consultation document.

131. The NUT agrees that “pay rates in early years’ occupations are relatively low” when compared to similar positions outside the children’s workforce. It would argue, however, that salaries for most of those within the children’s workforce are equally low, regardless of level of employee.

132. For teachers, starting pay is lower than that of the average graduate and this pay gap widens as teachers experience lower levels of pay progression. Income Data Services (IDS)\footnote{Income Data Services, Pay Report, IDS, 2004.} estimated that the expected average graduate starting pay for 2005 would be £20,769. This was £1,746 or 9 per cent higher than the first point of the Main
Scale for teachers in April 2005. Teaching will continue to start at a major disadvantage compared to other graduate employers unless starting pay for teachers is comparable to that of other graduate employers.

133. Improving the levels of qualifications across the whole early years' children's workforce, presents a major challenge. There are relatively few workers holding Level 4 and above qualifications in most sectors. The large numbers of staff who would need additional training to achieve Level 2 qualifications, the national target set in paragraph 24 of the consultation, demonstrates that the Children's Workforce Strategy must be long-term and sustained – such improvements cannot be achieved overnight or by short-term funding measures.

134. The Government's aim to raise “the historically low status” of work with the under fives is welcome. The NUT agrees that working with this age group should have equal status with any other phase of the education system and, for that to be so, it needs to be staffed by suitably qualified people. Where that provision is deemed to be ‘education’, that should mean staffing by qualified teachers, as in the other phases.

135. ‘The historically low status’, low rates of pay and the high numbers of women working in the sector are closely linked. The Government's intention to address this undervaluing of women's work is, therefore, welcome.

136. Thirty years have passed since the first equal pay legislation was introduced and the Equal Opportunities Commission was set up. The NUT concurs with the Government that women's work continues to be undervalued and the new Children's Workforce Strategy needs to question the value attached to women's work within the children's workforce.

137. It is particularly puzzling why no reference has been made in the consultation document to the existing work which has been carried out on early years' recruitment, particularly by Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCPs). Many are already offering providers practical assistance, such as group adverts and advice in the form of information packs. They have also been found to put “considerable energy” into recruiting under-represented groups, particularly men and ethnic minorities. Indeed, the role of EYDCPs and their relationship to the enhanced responsibilities of local authorities arising from the Strategy has been over-looked completely by the consultation document and demonstrates poor understanding of the dynamics of provision strategic management at local level.

Government Measures to Support Reform

138. The NUT welcomed the introduction of the National Childcare Standards and a more uniform regulatory system, which it believes will contribute to coherence between the quality of childcare provision, regardless of provider.

139. The introduction of a common inspection framework for all early years' childcare and education provision addresses a serious anomaly, which has been a matter of long-standing concern for the NUT, in that different regimes for the inspection of nursery education have operated for the maintained and private and voluntary sectors, although both are publicly funded and both are required to follow the Foundation Stage curriculum guidance as a condition of public funding.

140. The dual inspection of childcare and education provision highlights the need for inspectors to be experienced, hold appropriate qualifications and be properly trained to inspect. Without recent and relevant experience, inspectors are unlikely to be able to determine the effectiveness of a setting and how it meets the needs of the children it serves fully. Even the highest quality inspector training programmes cannot hope to address gaps in inspectors’

knowledge and understanding of early years' care and education issues, which is vital if inspectors are to engage in professional dialogue with those being inspected and have credibility with them.

141. The NUT would suggest that any future revisions to the inspection framework for early years' provision would benefit from the addition of the following common principles:

- the main focus of the external inspection should be on whether or not a provider has effective systems and procedures for self-evaluation and improvement;
- making judgements about provision should be a corporate activity – one inspector acting alone is not satisfactory;
- all inspectors should be appropriately qualified and have significant early years' experience; and
- there should be common minimum standards for staffing, premises (indoor and outdoor), health and safety, the curriculum, etc, against which all providers are inspected.

142. These proposals would compliment and strengthen the new inspection arrangements for early years' provision and would increase the reliability and validity of inspection reports, making them of greater use to both settings and parents.

Recruiting More People into the Sector

143. The NUT welcomes the declaration by the Government that it wants to see the workforce become much more representative of society as a whole, than at present.

144. The Strategy rightly recognises the importance of a diverse workforce which 'enhances children's experiences and raises their awareness of others as role models' (paragraph 21 of the consultation). The fact remains, however, that black and minority ethnic (BME) communities continue to be severely underrepresented in the children's workforce, both within the teaching profession and in the childcare and early years' sector.

145. In 2004, 17 per cent of the maintained school population in England was classified as belonging to BME groups. The figure for teachers from BME groups stood at nine per cent.

146. The Government refers to the 2002/03 Childcare and Early Years' Workforce Survey which showed that eight per cent of the workforce is from BME backgrounds compared with three per cent in 1998. Whilst any improvement is to be welcomed, this is still well below the percentage of children from BME backgrounds in childcare and early years' settings.

147. Also the figure of eight per cent masks differences in the types of provision – for example, in primary schools with reception but no nursery class, the percentage of BME staff drops to 2 per cent.

148. Additionally, the survey provides no data on the location of BME staff in the hierarchy of the early years' setting or which particular ethnic groups are represented. Previous estimates suggest that there are more people of African Caribbean background working in early years settings than from Asian backgrounds. Few BME staff work in the higher status, higher paid areas of the service than white people. The NUT recommends, therefore, that future surveys on the children's workforce should collect data not only on the number of BME workers, but also broken down by grade, and different ethnic groups.

149. To be a truly diverse workforce, it is important that BME and white communities are employed roughly in proportion to their numbers in the community and at all levels.

150. The Strategy should refer to the need for local initiatives on recruitment and retention to give due regard to the relevant legal obligations, particularly anti-discrimination legislation regarding gender, race, sexual orientation, religion and belief, age and disability.

151. In addition, local action should include the requirement to produce race equality impact assessments for all proposed action on recruitment, retention and progression of the children's workforce. A requirement to produce race equality impact assessments would ensure that
consideration of the outcomes for different groups of teachers, will influence and inform the strategies at local level.

Home-Based Carers

152. More detail is needed about how the proposed childminding networks would be linked with extended schools in particular. Implicit in the Strategy is the suggestion that the head teacher would have overall responsibility for co-ordinating such provision, acting as the inter-face between childminders and parents as well as facilitating training and support for childminders. Although day-to-day management of these responsibilities would necessarily be the role of an additional support worker, head teachers would be accountable ultimately for these services, yet another additional responsibility which could potentially detract from their core business of the education of the pupils attending their school.

Inter-Agency and Multi-Disciplinary Working

153. The consultation document says that the Ten Year Childcare Strategy will result in “traditional demarcations between care and education jobs disappearing over time”. This objective is both vague and dangerous. A blurring of teaching and care would undermine the Government’s efforts to improve the quality of early years’ provision overall.

154. The terms “education” and “care” have different definitions, different training and education requirements and qualifications and should have different emphases and priorities in their delivery. Teachers are continually identifying opportunities to maximise learning, assessing developmental needs and recognising new opportunities for teaching. Carers, on the other hand, emphasise immediate well-being and different, sometimes wider, aspects of development.

155. The desire for greater integration in terms of the availability and accessibility of services to young children and their parents must not be interpreted as requiring a merger of these two approaches. High quality education is underpinned by good standards of care. Good quality care inevitably leads to opportunities for learning. Integration must focus on easier access to services, not lead to a compromise in terms of provision in which the strengths of neither care nor education are apparent. Education and care overlap, but those involved in planning and organising provision for young children should continue to have regard to the distinct purposes of both traditions.

156. Whilst recognising that currently many children may have to be moved between settings providing childcare and those offering educational provision, in order to fit in with parents’ commitments, this would not appear to be a valid reason for proposing such a radical shift in entitlement. Given the emphasis on wrap-around services throughout both the consultation document and the Ten Year Strategy for Childcare, it is essential that the entitlement to nursery education should be maintained. Priority must be given to the quality of the educational experience young children receive in Children’s Centres and other settings which offer both education and childcare, in particular, the need to increase the number of qualified teachers who are early years specialists. Where early years provision is designated as ‘education’, it should be provided by a qualified teacher.

Early Years Professionals

157. The Government recognises that there is a link between quality of provision and quality of workforce, but then undermines this understanding by failing to recognise the importance of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in the examples that it cites. Maintained schools and Children’s Centres, for example, are only required “to have QTS teacher involvement”. (NUT’s emphasis)

158. The introduction of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the Foundation Stage Profile call for specialist skills to ensure that the educational element of the Foundation Stage is managed appropriately in accordance with early years’ principles. Children from deprived communities are known to face significant disadvantages
during compulsory schooling: without pre-school educational experiences provided by a qualified teacher, those disadvantages are multiplied.

159. It is important to note that the Foundation Stage is now legally part of the National Curriculum, to be followed by all publicly-funded early years education settings. The NUT would be extremely concerned, therefore, about any suggestion that qualified teachers should not be involved in its delivery. In addition, the NUT has held the long-standing view that the current recommended ratio of one teacher to every ten early years settings is grossly inadequate in meeting the educational needs of young children in provision in the private and voluntary sectors.

160. The NUT would oppose any proposals to deploy teaching assistants or other unqualified persons to substitute for teachers in Children’s Centres or other early years’ education settings. The NUT has received a number of reports that this practice is being considered in some areas and this is borne out by evidence contained in the National Survey of Teaching Assistants and Nursery Nurses by the GMB which states that support staff are taking on ‘a wide range of responsibilities with a great deal of flexibility in terms of the levels and settings in which they operate’. The NUT would not wish, however, to detract from the excellent work carried out by nursery nurses and teaching assistants in their valuable supporting role within the classroom.

161. An NUT survey in 2003 on the impact of the Workforce Agreement on early years settings and the staffing of Children’s Centres included a number of comments relevant to the Children’s Workforce Strategy. A sample is included below.

- **Maintained Nursery School Head Teacher** – The proposal that each primary school will set up its own childcare centre cannot work as it cannot be funded at a level that would ensure qualified staff.
- **Nursery Teacher** – Another concern is the fact that in some nursery classes in our authority nursery nurses have been employed as ‘nursery managers’ instead of employing nursery teachers—is this right?
- **Maintained Nursery School Head Teacher** – It is important to retain the skill and experience of qualified nursery teachers and nursery nurses as this impacts directly on the quality of provision and practice.
- **Maintained Nursery School Head Teacher** – To give children a quality start you need quality staff led by a head teacher trained in the early years and in a setting appropriate to provide a quality environment.
- **Maintained Nursery School Head Teacher** – We find ourselves fighting hard to maintain our qualified teachers and nursery nurses whilst at the same time trying to compete with local private provision in terms of fee-levels for full-time places. It’s not just the workforce reform initiative that’s hitting us—it’s also the National Childcare Strategy. Where are the lead professionals in early years if you take out the teachers and nursery nurses?

162. Such comments illustrate the on-going constraints and pressures early years’ teachers and head teachers are facing currently in maintaining the quality of educational provision.

163. The NUT’s policy on class size recommends that for nursery classes, the adult child ratio should be 2:26 where half the staff, and all those employed as teachers should have QTS. This is based on the DfES recommended ratio, which also suggests that support staff should be qualified nursery nurses. It is important that all early years’ provision which offers education, including Children’s Centres, meets these minimum requirements.

164. Independent research has found where settings use qualified teachers to be the

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best way of improving the life chances of young children. Professor Kathy Sylva, director of the EPPE project cited above, found in a study comparing the impact of six types of pre-school (reported in the Times Educational Supplement 28/3/03) that:

“Centres run by highly qualified teachers-more common in nurseries-were best. … Considering all the external factors influencing children’s development, state nursery schools and classes, particularly those combining nursery education with wider support for the family, were most likely to produce good results. Although there were some excellent private nurseries, many were less likely to employ trained teachers and more likely to have a high turnover of young, relatively inexperienced staff.”

165. Parents should be able to expect the same high quality provision wherever they live and whichever institution their child attends. The basis for that equality of opportunity should be that where provision is designated as “education”, children are taught by a qualified teacher. This would provide the best guarantee that all three and four year olds, whatever their home circumstances and prior leaning, will have their learning needs met in an appropriate way.

166. The proposal that private, voluntary and independent early years’ settings should also be required to, as a minimum, have QTS “involvement” can only be a first step. The Government may consider this an “expensive option”, but the benefits which QTS brings to settings is evident from research.

167. The target of one full time teacher to every ten private, voluntary and independent early years settings, however, is rather unambiguous, given that this is an existing recommendation and will have a limited impact on raising the overall standard of provision. At most, the teacher would be able to spend half a day a week in each setting, leaving little time to get to know the staff and children at the setting, which is essential if their support is to be tailored to meet the individual needs of each institution.

168. Where provision is profit making, it would be reasonable to expect that the employer should contribute directly to the costs of securing QTS involvement. There would also need to be co-operation between the local authority and settings, perhaps through the Early Years Childcare and Development Partnerships, which are conspicuous by their absence from the consultation document, in order to coordinate QTS involvement across so many different settings.

169. The NUT notes the Government’s description of new models of early years’ professionals drawn from Scandinavia and New Zealand, and its consideration of adopting these models to meet the needs of England. It is important, however, that the roles and responsibilities of each of these models are considered alongside the wider system in which they operate, if their potential for transferability is to be assessed accurately. The NUT’s understanding of the roles of the pedagogue and new teacher is set out below.

170. In Denmark there is no specific QTS teacher training route to teach in pre-school classes. Pedagogues’ training is seen as generally the same as that of teachers’. Their training lasts three and a half years’ long, however, compared to four years for teachers. Since 2003 pedagogues have been awarded a Bachelor’s degree, although this is slightly below a teacher’s qualification on the European Higher Education qualifications comparator. Teachers are still viewed as having higher status in comparison to pedagogues. Their training does not cover how to teach young children literacy or numeracy for example; the emphasis of their training is very much on child development and play-based education.

The Pedagogue

171. In Denmark, salaries and conditions of service are different for the two groups of staff. Both work 37 hours per week but teachers have to work outside these hours to prepare and plan whereas pedagogues
have approximately 30 hours contact time and use the remaining hours for preparation. At entry level, there is a significant difference in salaries per month and this gap widens as workers become more experienced. The leaders of kindergartens are always pedagogues.

172. Pedagogues work in daycare centres and pre-schools (kindergartens) for children aged from one to five or six. The kindergartens are open from 7am until 5pm. In kindergartens, children aged under three are organised in groups of ten. Children aged three to five and six are placed in groups of twenty. For each group there is one full-time pedagogue, one part-time pedagogue and one ancillary member of staff. Most ancillaries have little or no training, therefore priority has been given to improving this staffing ratio (sixty per cent pedagogue: forty per cent ancillary) year on year.

173. The Danish pedagogue is, uniquely, a non-teacher model, being administratively located within the Ministry of Welfare, rather than Education. This is due to the fact that kindergartens are regarded in Denmark as having a dual function – the care and raising of children, developing their personalities AND meeting society’s needs. Both parents and the state need someone to look after children during the working day as well as influence children in their formative years, to minimise attitudinal and other problems in later life.

174. Denmark’s approach to early years’ provision, unlike England’s, takes a holistic view of education. Its emphasis is on the overall development of the child and the competencies needed to support the child in all aspects of their life. Children are immersed in activities both inside and outside kindergarten. There is a distinctive philosophy based on ‘what is a child?’, rooted in child development. This approach is obviously very different to the traditional Danish teacher training for primary school children, and to training to teach in the Foundation Stage in England.

175. As described above, the core qualification for pedagogues in Denmark takes three and a half years to complete at a Higher Education institution. In the UK, however, the main training course for become a qualified nursery worker takes two years at a lower level Further Education institution. The salary for a pedagogue, approximately 3,000 euros a month, is double the amount for an equivalent worker in the UK. Unfortunately, the consultation document does not explore such vital differences and the implications that they would have for the adoption of the pedagogue role in this country.

176. In Finland the non-graduate qualification of kindergarten teachers was replaced by a three-year Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education. The degree focuses on practice and research, the ability to analyse the needs of children and families and to meet them through education. Kindergarten teachers can extend their education and training by completing a four-and-a-half years’ Master’s degree which is the equivalent of the qualifications required of class teachers in schools. Where pre-school education is provided in conjunction with the first two years of comprehensive education, teachers must be qualified as class teachers.

177. This is important, as direct comparison with the situation in the Scandinavian countries is not always helpful. In England, the Foundation Stage is a formal part of the National Curriculum. There are prescribed areas of learning, with centrally determined learning objectives including the teaching of literacy and numeracy. There is a national assessment and records methodology, the Foundation Stage Profile, which is used in a variety of ways for accountability purposes at individual teacher, school and local authority level.

178. None of this exists in the Scandinavian countries; while there is a broad framework, curriculum and pedagogy are play based and determined at institution level. Reporting and assessment are also informal. The teaching of reading and writing, which are important parts of the Foundation Stage curriculum in England, does not take place until children enter the compulsory phase of education where they will be taught by a qualified teacher.
179. The consultation document has therefore been disingenuous in its presentation of the “pedagogue” as an alternative to the qualified teacher. As the philosophies, aims and pedagogies of the Scandinavian countries are so different from those in the English early years’ sector, there could not be a straightforward adoption of the pedagogue model.

“New” Teachers

180. In Sweden, Spain and New Zealand, the countries cited as examples for the “new teacher” model, all workers with children aged 0-19 are classified as “teachers”, whether they work with pre-school children, in after-school services or in schools. In Spain, for example, a “new teacher” works with children aged nought to six, with a lower trained technical assistant to support them. Similarly in New Zealand, the “early childhood teacher” works across the nought to six age range in a variety of settings. The level and duration of training is equivalent with that of teachers of compulsory school-age children.

181. The example of New Zealand illustrates that it is possible to improve the quality of provision across the whole early years’ sector by making significant investment in training and by enforcing it through regulation. From January 2005, all teachers in the early years education sector have been required to be qualified and registered.

182. The research project “Competent Children”, conducted by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, is tracking the long-term development of approximately 500 children. It has already shown that quality ratings for early childhood education centres have increased as the proportion of qualified staff has similarly increased. The research also shows that “receiving a quality early childhood education enables a child to perform better at school and this continues into their adult life”.

183. The New Zealand system also demonstrates that any changes in mandatory qualifications for early years must be phased and practicable. It was reported late in 2004 that up to 400 publicly funded pre-school centres faced closure because of a shortage of suitably qualified staff, demonstrating that programmes must be planned, funded and implemented properly.

184. In Sweden there are now three new grades of staff working in the pre-school setting: “pedagogues”, “new teachers” and “social pedagogues”, who are all involved with the “learning, care and upbringing” of pre-school children.

185. Swedish universities have autonomy and though there is a national framework for teacher training, each university is allowed to adapt the training programme to suit its own curriculum. Training programmes are generally the same for all three categories of staff in the first year, students specialise only in the second year. Part of the training takes place in schools and practising teachers are responsible for inducting new teachers. There has been some resentment from practising teachers who feel the new training was too hastily launched because of political reasons and was not properly funded. The Government must avoid the same mistakes being made in England.

186. Pre-school children are organised in groups of 15 to 18. They are separated into ages one and half to three years old and four to five years old. There are always two and half to three adults per group and never less than one qualified “new teacher” per group. Support staff may complete a three year vocational course but often have no formal qualifications. Although the law does not state a qualified teacher must lead each pre-school group, it is very rare to find any one other than a qualified teacher in this role.

187. In pre-school there is no formal requirement to teach reading and writing.

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children are taught once they are deemed to be ready. It is thought important to have a qualified teacher in each class who will recognise when a child is ready to progress to the next stages of their learning.

188. The leaders of pre-schools are always qualified teachers. Every pre-school is linked to a primary school and shares the same head teacher. Often there are three or four pre-schools linked to one primary school. This means that many head teachers now have first-hand pre-school experience.

189. Studies such as those undertaken by the OECD have reported how well the Swedish model combines care and education. Every activity is used as education in a way that children can manage. Play is seen as important in children’s intellectual development, with a qualified teacher needed to exploit play for its learning qualities. The high standing of the Swedish, and other Scandinavian countries’ early years provision is therefore as much to do with its philosophical approach as who staffs it.

The Key Issues

190. The consultation document fails to mention that many countries, particularly English-language countries such as Australia and the USA, have a split system of education and care services. “Care” typifies provision for younger children (nought-three), offered by staff with the equivalent to nursery nurses’ qualifications, whilst the emphasis is on “education” for older children (three-six), provided by a qualified teacher.

191. The consultation document also does not say that in one of the countries referred to, Spain, services for young children, both under and over the age of three, have in recent years undergone a radical shift, to place educational services rather than care at the centre. No other country is attempting to do what is being proposed in this document, integrating workers from different backgrounds and disciplines in one workforce for children and minimising the role of qualified teachers. Most other countries, including those cited in the consultation document, have a hierarchy of trained and untrained staff and staff from different disciplines who work together.

192. Drawing on the international evidence provided by the consultation document, the NUT believes that the most appropriate staffing model for the early years’ sector would be that of employing qualified teachers in each setting specifically trained in early years, working in partnership with appropriately trained support staff, as in New Zealand and Sweden. There would appear to be the closest fit between these countries’ systems in provision and the requirements placed upon it. There cannot be a “read over” of the concept of the “pedagogue” without corresponding seismic shifts in the approach taken to education in the Foundation Stage and beyond. The pedagogue does, however, have potential as the training model for those who will be employed in after-school care for school-age children.

Supply of Professionals

193. There are currently many problems around the current supply of trained early years’ teachers. Early years’ teachers are required to train across two Key Stages (Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1). Many early years settings, such as Neighbourhood Nurseries and Early Excellence Centres, are not eligible to offer the induction period that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) must complete in order to achieve qualified teacher status (QTS). The Strategy has missed an opportunity to address this important omission from the current regulations.

194. As noted above, a combination of trends, including pressures to make savings in school budgets has resulted in schools employing support staff instead of qualified teachers. There are many examples of NNEB staff and teaching assistants replacing qualified teachers in the classroom. In this context, the NUT

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supports the Government in opening up a debate about the skills and knowledge necessary for effective early years teaching.

195. The consultation document identifies a number of ways in which the supply of early years' qualified teachers could be enhanced to meet increased demand for such staff. There is certainly capacity within the initial teacher training (ITT) sector to increase the number of training places available for the early years, especially given the current reduction in the number of primary teacher training places being offered.

196. In addition, the requirements for ITT early years' courses would need to be reviewed, not only to incorporate the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, but to reflect the younger children such teachers might work with. As well as the current Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 option offered in ITT, there would need to be an additional nought to three/Foundation Stage course made available. This would also require changes in the regulations regarding newly qualified teacher induction, which the NUT has recommended previously in this response.

197. As noted above, the number of primary teacher training places has been reduced to reflect falling pupil numbers in this sector recently. Falling rolls have also led to a number of primary teachers being made redundant. Together with the Pool of Inactive Teachers (PIT), many of whom have left full time teaching because of family commitments, this presents a significant opportunity to offer re-training to qualified teachers to enable them to take up new posts within the early years' sector if they would so wish.

198. The NUT would agree that “establishing new training routes for ‘new’ teachers or pedagogues would take significantly longer than building on established teacher training courses”. It would also fail to capitalise on the expertise that already exists in many ITT institutions. Whilst there may be some merit in developing a ‘new’ teacher PGCE course, this would need to be balanced with the importance placed on knowledge of child development for all of the new models.

199. There is also much potential in exploring how HE early years' qualifications could be aligned to ITT, such as acting as a bridge between gaining QTS. It would be useful if work could be carried out nationally on mapping such qualifications against the QTS Standards, to identify ways in which these qualifications could be counted as credits towards gaining full QTS for those that wanted to pursue this route. This could be modelled on the way in which the current Employment Based Early Years Route to QTS for those who hold the Early Years Sector-Endorsed Foundation Degree operates now.

Incentives for Employment of Early Years’ Professionals

200. Ensuring that private, voluntary and independent providers employ qualified teachers and other early years’ professionals will certainly require “the careful design of funding systems and incentives”. It will need to have ‘teeth’, in the form of regulation, if it is to be taken seriously and to become embedded across these sectors, using the same principle of pressure and support that has characterised Government reforms of the public sector. New Zealand may provide a useful example in this context, as the government funding regime links the grant for pupil hours to factors such as child: staff ratios and staff qualification levels, providing a financial incentive for all sectors to increase quality levels.

201. Although levels of staffing and qualifications are generally significantly worse than in the public sector, this should not mean that resources are disproportionately allocated to improvements in those sectors which would, in effect, reward those providers for lack of investment in the past. In this context, it is important to remember that the various countries’ education systems cited earlier in this chapter were all committed to public provision of early years education and childcare. The private sector does not receive the same level of support as is being proposed in this
Strategy and accounts for a relatively small proportion of early years’ provision overall, for example, 13 per cent in Sweden\textsuperscript{41}.

202. The consultation document appears to imply that the Government’s preferred model for the early years is the pedagogue, because their “holistic way of working with children” would seem to fit particularly well with the increased integration of children’s services. This is to misunderstand the basic premise of pedagogues – in Scandinavia they do not so much work as part of a team with other children’s services, as offer a very distinctive ‘holistic’ approach to early education, which is not comparable to the approach taken in this country.

Proposed Way Ahead

203. The three stage objectives for early years’ professionals are in need of much greater clarification. It is not clear what is meant by either “early years’ professional” or “in”. Does this relate to qualified teachers or other ‘models’, or to any member of staff who holds a qualification above Level 3? Is it intended that there should be ‘involvement’ only, or actual employment of such a person in each of the types of setting? Until such basic concepts are explained, the NUT is unable to comment on these proposals, except for the last. The Foundation Stage is legally part of the National Curriculum and, in publicly funded settings, it should already be taught by qualified teachers. The “longer term vision” should in fact be an immediate priority.

204. The NUT would support the proposals to review the standards and training for all those working in the early years if such a review involved fully early years teachers. The use of the EPPE project to identify “key competencies” appears to be a sensible development, as does investigation of revisions to the ITT curriculum for the early years, to incorporate the requirements to specialise in working with nought to three year olds.

205. The NUT has already argued that leaders of early years’ centres should hold QTS. It would point out, however, that the responsibilities listed for the managers of Children’s Centres, “health, family support, outreach and employment support”, fails crucially to identify the key service for children attending Centres – education. The NUT’s concern is that leaders without educational expertise would make a similar error.

206. The level at which education and qualifications for the children’s workforce is envisaged is pitched too low. Whether the “new teacher”, “pedagogue” or some other model is adopted, the norm should be degree level education, as in most other OECD countries. The NVQ system, which is referred to a number of times as the qualification which the workforce will be encouraged to attain, at whatever level, was designed for industrial or technical occupations and is too limiting for children’s professionals, who need to develop and understanding of theories, concepts and specialist knowledge.

207. The target of only one member of staff trained to graduate level in every setting by 2015 would not deliver the vision of a “world class” early years’ education and childcare service for England, as many of the OECD countries, including all those cited in the consultation document, have already exceeded this level of staffing.

208. The Strategy does not address how the proposed single qualifications framework would work in practice and how this would address the need to offer both education and care of the highest quality. The NUT would agree with the Daycare Trust that “educational principles and a pedagogical approach should underpin the reform of the early education and care sector.”\textsuperscript{42}


CHAPTER 4 – SOCIAL CARE AND FOSTER CARE

Professional Pedagogic Training in Europe

209. The Children’s Workforce Strategy represents a big challenge for the ways in which educational psychologists operate. It is essential that the specialist knowledge of educational psychologists is not lost when children’s services are re-organised. The NUT believes that educational psychologists have a key role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Educational psychologists should have representation on Children’s Trusts and contribute to children and young people’s plans.

210. The NUT believes that educational psychologists could act as lead professionals with their expert knowledge and child development and their expert knowledge in applying the SEN Code of Practice. Educational psychologists, in addition, have a unique knowledge of children’s syndromes and medical conditions as they affect children’s learning. They can meet the needs of the family as well as the child and should have a role in networking good practice and providing professional development in schools.

Pedagogy in England

211. The typical training programme for pedagogic training in Europe includes a number of aspects which the NUT has long called for to be part of ITT in England, in particular, theoretical studies relating to child development and skills training. There is no reason why these could not be incorporated, perhaps as part of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, within the training of early years teachers, rather than establish a separate type of worker. For the delivery of childcare for older children, however, there would seem to be a clear place for this new category of support staff within the children’s workforce.

Foster Care

212. The NUT welcomes the Government’s determination to improve the stability of care placements, which has been shown to have a significant impact on the educational achievement of looked after children. The Government’s emphasis, therefore, on recruiting and retaining high quality foster carers is shared unequivocally by the NUT.

213. The NUT generally supports the Government’s redefinition of foster care but has some concerns about the Government’s understanding of foster care. Whilst the NUT welcomes the highlighting of the diversity of the foster care workforce, short-term and support foster care will not necessarily contribute towards the overall aim of improving the stability of care placements.

214. The NUT shares the Government’s assessment that the need to develop appropriate support and training for foster carers is paramount if caring for vulnerable children is to be made an attractive option for more people. Not only should foster carers be consulted systematically with and included in all multi-agency service planning, development and training, but the Government might also wish to consider initiating more informal support networks of foster carers.
CHAPTER 5 – SCHOOLS, HEALTH AND THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Introduction

215. The NUT would agree that there is an integral link between pupils’ academic performance and their wider well-being. It has welcomed previously the revisions to the OFSTED Section 10 inspection framework to reflect the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

216. It is essential to ensure that there is an appropriate match between the particular aspect of the children’s services being inspected and seeking to secure sufficient evidence of how it meets each of the Every Child Matters indicators for outcomes. This should not lead to an artificial exercise conducted mainly to gain such evidence for its own sake. The quality of the service, within the confines of its particular remit, must be the most important feature of any review process.

217. The NUT notes the cross-referencing of the Every Child Matters indicators with the evaluation requirements in the OFSTED Common Inspection Schedule, to facilitate the usage of inspection outcomes by Joint Area Reviews of children’s services. Whilst it is inevitable that the second indicator, “enjoying and achieving” should be predominant in the inspection schedule for schools, colleges and other providers, there is considerable variation in the frequency with which the other indicators appear, for example, the “social and economic well-being” indicator is used twice as often as “staying healthy”. This would seem to imply a hierarchy of indicators, at least in educational settings, which could undermine the holistic approach taken in Every Child Matters to the relationship and inter-play between these indicators.

218. In addition, the rationale for assigning indicators to some of the strands of the inspection schedule appears unclear or arbitrary. It is proposed that judgements on the behaviour of learners, for example, would provide evidence for the “staying healthy” and “keeping safe” indicators, although behaviour has a fundamental impact on “enjoying and achieving” and could also be argued to relate to “contributing to the community” and “social and economic well-being”. Similarly, “the acquisition of workplace skills” would provide evidence for the “contributing to the community” and “social and economic well-being” indicators, but not for the “enjoying and achieving” indicator. Such a distinction could be interpreted as undermining efforts to value vocational and academic qualifications and achievements equally.

219. This exemplifies the difficulty of attempting to marry the OFSTED inspection schedule with the Every Child Matters indicators, as the two have very different starting points, over-arching philosophies and purposes. Whilst acknowledging the desire to subsume the Every Child Matters agenda within the OFSTED inspection framework in order to “mainstream” it, this can only ever be on a superficial level, as the much broader and less easily measurable concerns of the former cannot be adequately captured by the “snap shot” approach of the latter.

Recruitment and Retention

220. The Government paints an extremely positive picture of the number of teachers currently employed in schools and reductions in teacher vacancy rates in recent years. The NUT has submitted consistently evidence to the STRB, including evidence for this year’s round, which describes a less optimistic situation. The Government has received this evidence, which will not be rehearsed again under this section.

Extended Schools

221. The NUT has emphasised earlier the importance of schools taking control of the services they offer and of choosing, at their own pace, the services can be co-located on their sites. The NUT has set out, in its document “Bringing Down the Barriers” a set of strategic actions which it believes Government ought to encourage and promote financially to enhance the
capacity of local authorities in supporting schools which have additional services. In the document the NUT proposed that:

- education advisory forums (or children services forums) should be responsible for providing advice on the development of a single conversation with schools in relation to the development of ‘The Every Child Matters’ agenda;
- that such forums should include in their membership, representatives of parent, teacher and governor organisations and representatives from every extended school;
- audits should be conducted of the additional services needed at school level by schools in conjunction with local authorities;
- with the financial and logistical support from local authorities, schools themselves would make proposals for developments;
- and that the Government should set up a funding review group which would examine the role and capacity of local authorities to sustain across all services the needs of socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

222. In relation to the last proposal from “Bringing Down the Barriers” the NUT notes the announcement for funding within the strategy and recognises that the additional sums set out in “Extended Schools: Access to Opportunities and Services for All – A Prospectus” are significant. Those funds however are described as “start-up funding” within the prospectus. The NUT has no way of knowing whether the additional funds arrived from the audit process of the type recommended in its document “Bringing Down the Barriers”; for example, whether the needs of schools for new capital provision and new revenue funding. In addition start-up funding itself is problematic, as the evidence from other projects which have received start-up or seed-corn funding is that projects tend to die when the money runs out.

223. The recent NFER survey of head teachers’ views (2005) makes it clear that it is a lack of space and resources which are preventing them adopting new collocated services, not a lack of enthusiasm. In addition teachers’ anxieties about their classrooms being used for pre and after school care provision, thus disrupting their own work, need to be allayed. ‘Wrap around’ services, alongside other extended school provision, cannot be introduced with a proper cost audit and the identified costs met in full.

224. The NUT urges the Government, therefore, to both commit itself to continuing funding for extended schools post 2007-08 and, in the next spending review, conduct the audit process recommended by the NUT.

Building on School Workforce Re-Modelling

225. The NUT supports the Government’s vision of “a broader range of dedicated staff to help teachers meet different aspects of children’s needs”. The NUT agrees with UNISON that working together, all school staff – teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff – can contribute to enhancing the educational opportunities for all pupils and students. Both unions acknowledge the role of teachers in teaching and learning and assistants in supporting teachers in these tasks. Such a view is very different from the roles envisaged for HLTAs.

226. In respect of support for both the remodelling process and extended schools, it is important to remember that it is ultimately the responsibility of the head teacher and governing body to make decisions about how these are implemented at individual school level. There should be no element of compunction in attempting to force through aspects of the Children’s Workforce Strategy if head teachers do not believe them to be in the best interests of the children they serve.

Implications for Local Workforce Planning

227. The NUT agrees in principle with the move towards a single strategic overarching Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP) for all local services for children and young people. In principle, a strategic plan should reduce such bureaucratic burdens.
228. It is important that local authorities continue to consult relevant partners. The plan should be prepared jointly with those partners, including teacher and staff organisations, schools, colleges, the voluntary community sector and parent and governor organisations.

229. The single strategic overarching plan must outline clearly and in detail how all local authority services and duties, including the new duties set out in the Children’s Workforce Strategy, will be delivered, particularly since it is intended that the single plan has to be consistent with the separate plans.

230. The Strategy proposes that school should have the additional responsibility of working closely with Children’s Trusts for preparing and delivering the CYPP. It is crucial therefore, that the CYPP stipulates clearly the arrangements for co-operation with schools, especially since schools will play a key part in delivering services with children and young people with their role in the prevention and protection agenda.

231. The Government intends the first CYPP plan to be put in place by 1 April 2006. This is not a realistic deadline. In addition to addressing the implications of this consultation document, the planning process must also focus on the five Every Child Matters outcomes. The drawing up of the plan requires the active involvement of a wide range of partners, such as district councils, police authorities, local probation boards, youth offending teams and others, including maintained and independent schools, which will need time if it is not to a cosmetic consultation exercise. A longer timescale, possibly September 2006, is needed before the joint plan is put in place.
CHAPTER 6 – MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Introduction
232. Much of this chapter summarises proposals made elsewhere in the consultation document, therefore the NUT’s response will be confined to the overall implications of the Strategy only.

Local Accountability for the Strategy
233. Local authorities, together with Children’s Trusts, are charged with ensuring that local workforce strategies are developed and implemented. This central role for local authorities is welcome. Local authorities have detailed knowledge of local issues and needs and their lead role in implementing the Children’s Workforce Strategy should reduce a potential layer of bureaucracy for both employees and employers wishing to access support.

234. The centrality of local authorities’ support to the early years’ and the wider children’s workforce is at odds, however, with the fact that many of the responsibilities with which local authorities are charged may no longer be exercised by local authorities, as a result of the Contracting Out (Local Education Authority Functions) (England) Order 2002.

235. The Order enables local authorities to retain only the broadest monitoring role in the implementation of national initiatives, compounding the situation where all functions concerned with the curriculum, for example, are considered appropriate for contracting out. In addition, local authorities have found it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain high quality staff to undertake such roles, often due to the financial constraints arising from the trend of delegating education funding direct to schools, leaving little available to maintain central services.

236. The consultation document fails to show how local authorities would be able to undertake the functions set out in the consultation document, given the reduction in their powers in recent years. It also does not take into account the impact of the Strategy on other areas of local authorities’ work, such as admissions, falling rolls policies and youth and community services.

237. In addition, this proposal does not give sufficient consideration to the role of schools, which will be critical in delivering much of this provision, and their relationship with local authorities, which are subject to the Code of Practice on Local Authority-School Relations. It is unrealistic to give local authorities the responsibility for delivering the Government’s Children’s Workforce Strategy without considering also their relationship with schools.

238. In order for local authorities to be able to undertake the functions set out in the consultation document, they must be provided with the necessary resources, including experienced and expert personnel, who are able to support schools and early years settings at all stages of the Strategy’s implementation process. It must be recognised that not all local authorities have been able to maintain sufficient numbers of high quality advisory staff and that they themselves may require support in this respect.

Resources
239. The Strategy says that many of its proposed actions will, as well as leading to better outcomes, improve efficiency by removing duplication between services and enabling resources to be used in the most effective way. It assumes that reform and development of the children’s workforce can be achieved from within the existing available resources.

240. The Select Committee on Education and Skills Report into Every Child Matters, however, queried why the Government expected improvements to services to be largely resourced from mainstream non-ring fenced budgets and savings derived from more integrated and coherent services.

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241. Those giving evidence to the Select Committee said that this would be difficult to achieve in practice. The Select Committee report said that workforce development for existing staff was of critical importance, but was likely to be resource intensive. The Select Committee reported that:

“It is not clear that services will be able to meet the costs that this will incur. The initial set up of Children’s Trusts arrangements is also likely to be costly, yet minimal funding is being provided directly for this purpose. The Government, therefore, needs to lead from the top and provide evidence of how efficiency savings and improved services might be achieved concurrently”.

Developing the Workforce and Equal Opportunities

242. There are implications for training on equal opportunities throughout the whole of the Children’s Workforce Strategy. Any common core training or unified continuous professional development for those working with children should incorporate equality issues, including goals for promoting race equality, disability equality, gender equality and eradicating homophobia from schools. Specifically, initial teacher training should incorporate awareness raising about how racism, sexism, homophobia and disability discrimination operates in our society and in schools, both individually and institutionally.

243. Workforce “reform” should entail a consideration of who works in this workforce. The DfES should address the under representation of minority ethnic teachers in middle and senior school management. There is a need also to identify and address the under representation of disabled teachers at all levels of the teaching profession, and to tackle the under representation of women teachers in senior school management and headship.

244. There are positive action measures that can be taken to ensure that the teaching force becomes increasingly diverse and further work needs to be undertaken by the Government and other agencies in this area such as the Teacher Development Agency, in consultation with the EOC, the DRC and the CRE so that the teaching workforce can be grounded in an equality philosophy that celebrates Britain’s diversity.

245. Achieving equality means doing more than not discriminating against people. For schools it means, for example, providing the kind of support that will enable disabled teachers to be recruited and retained. It also means getting schools to change the way they operate as institutions and as employers rather than simply challenging acts of discrimination against teachers after the event. The workforce strategy should contain objectives for acknowledging and tackling -in the shorter term and in the longer term – the barriers faced by black teachers, women teachers, gay and lesbian teachers and disabled teachers.
CONCLUSION

246. The Government’s consultation document rarely addresses the practicalities of achieving an integrated children’s workforce. Cultural differences between the professions, for example, are often more important than acknowledged by the Strategy. Although different sectors may share similar aims or targets, this may disguise fundamental differences, yet almost nothing on how such significant barriers would be tackled is to be found in the consultation document.

247. There is confusion within the consultation document about which sectors it seeks to address. The introductory section implies that it covers anyone who works with or for children, young people and their families. Within the main document, however, the focus is almost exclusively on the practice areas where there are particular issues relating to workforce capacity and quality – early years, children’s social care and foster care. There are, however, shortages and training issues for teachers and for support staff in schools, which are equally important within the context of a national Children’s Workforce Strategy and which the NUT’s response has sought to highlight.

248. The main problem with the consultation document is that it identifies the “big issues” but gives little practical detail of how it proposes to address them, for example, it refers to gaps in provision, but fails to suggest what actions should be taken if there are too many competing providers in one area or how to decide which service to prioritise if funding is limited.

249. The over-arching principle that the NUT would wish to see adopted by Government is that any developments in the children’s workforce should not be detrimental to education. This is not to seek to preserve the status quo but to protect the distinct role of schools and nurseries in educating children and to ensure that these concerns are not lost in the multitude of other responsibilities with which schools would be charged, arising from the Children Act and the Government’s policies that flow from it.