

# what is...

B3SDA

BURY THIRD SECTOR  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

## Children's Workforce Development?

Factsheet 2 - July 09

### first things first

Let's start from the top. The 'Children's Workforce'. What is that?

The Children's Workforce consists of everyone who works with children, young people and their families, either all or some of the time, whether in a paid or unpaid role.

Working with children and young people is a vital role, whether in the early stages or through to teenage years. It can be both rewarding and challenging at the same time. Third sector organisations are well-placed and effective in providing services, but in moving forward there is now a new agenda on the table – the **children's workforce development agenda**.

This is not something that has emerged out of a vacuum, or has been developed just for the sake of good management practice. Instead it is based on key child protection legislation and sets out basic expectations for anyone who engages in work with children and young people.

Understanding the background is key to understanding the children's workforce development agenda and realising why it's an important step forward.

### why change?

The new emphasis on workforce reform follows the investigation into the death of Victoria Climbié, the little girl who died in 2000 after being subject to horrific abuse and neglect. An independent enquiry was set up to find out how Victoria had 'slipped through the net' when so many agencies had contact with the family.

Lord Laming took the lead in this enquiry and highlighted that all agencies failed to communicate with each other and share information appropriately. People were simply not on the same page. The result was a government response called 'Every Child Matters' and the foundation of the Children Act 2004.



'Every Child Matters' (ECM) established that everyone who works with a child or young person, whatever their background or circumstances, has a role to play in supporting them to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

These are also known as the 5 ECM 'Outcomes'. To ensure all children and young people have the best possible outcomes, it is important to develop the people who work with them so that everyone is skilled, trained, supported and works together effectively. This is what is meant by **workforce development**.

It is giving staff and volunteers the opportunity to learn and develop to meet the changing requirements of the children and young people they are working with.

## does it matter?

Children and young people have said they want people who work with them to:

- Treat them with respect and thought
- Listen carefully to what is being said
- Speak to each other so their story doesn't have to be repeated
- Understand their rights and the context of their lives

This means a workforce – people who may be in different roles or agencies – working together with a focus around the needs of a child or young person. That aim can so often get lost but needs to be a foremost thought. It will improve quality of what we do and help ensure children stay safe.

A workforce that is trained and supervised well is also a good and vibrant workforce to be part of. Where staff or volunteers enjoy what they do will always benefit children.

## next steps...

In 2005 the **CWDC** (Children's Workforce Development Council) was set up to implement the changes outlined in Every Child Matters. Some of the current developments include:



- Creation of a 'Common Core' of skills and knowledge, outlining a set of key competencies expected from anyone who works with children (paid or unpaid)
- Guidelines for induction which will help to support new staff
- Development of processes for working together, such as the CAF - 'Common Assessment Framework'

For more information go to:

[www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk)



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