

Children's workforce

GUIDE TO QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

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Directors

With many parts of the sector facing recruitment challenges, *Charlotte Goddard* identifies developments in entry-level requirements and ongoing professional development for children's services practitioners



Children, young people and families will need the support of a highly-trained workforce more than ever over the coming year, as the crisis in the cost of living deepens. However, services supporting the most vulnerable are also under financial pressure with many facing unprecedented recruitment problems.

Despite these challenges, the children and young people's sector continues to explore ways to improve training and career pathways across the workforce. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, published in May 2022, called for a radical rethink of how we deliver social care and early help, which could see new roles and fresh approaches to training in the children's workforce. Social Work England has put forward a vision for the future education of social workers, with plans to simplify the complex landscape of guidance and standards which training providers currently have to navigate.

The pandemic has led to new ways of working and learning such as Health Education England's blended learning degree in midwifery, combining practical experience and digital delivery. The coming months will see ongoing support for early years workers as part of the Department for Education's £153m early years Covid recovery programme, including mentoring and training around special educational needs and disabilities. Meanwhile, the government continues to fund bursaries for youth work training and youth justice workers have access to a new Level 5 apprenticeship.

Strong leadership will prove vital as the sector navigates new challenges. A new Social Work Leadership Pathways programme aims to create a pipeline of future leaders and The Staff College's expanding Black and Asian Leadership Initiative aims to boost diversity and inclusion at the top levels of children's services. »

SOCIAL WORK

Shortages of children's social workers in England hit a five-year high in 2021 with 4,995 full-time equivalents leaving their roles, an increase of 16 per cent on 2020. The vacancy rate rose from 16.1 to 16.7 per cent. Councils are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain social workers, according to the Local Government Association with 11.2 per cent of children's social workers leaving the profession or moving to agency work in 2021. A What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) survey of nearly 2,000 social workers in England published in March found 10 per cent were considering leaving their organisation due to racism. Respondents reported opportunities for career progression were denied or unavailable to social workers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Policy

May 2022 saw the publication of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, led by Josh McAlister, founder of social work charity Frontline. The review called for the establishment of an "expert practitioner" role within children's social work, which would see experienced social workers work alongside multi-disciplinary family help teams. The role would allow social workers to progress in their career while remaining in practice and earning a high salary.

Under the proposals, the role of expert practitioner would be gained after

participating in a new five-year early career framework. This would replace the current assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE) with a more detailed curriculum and an assessment after two years instead of one.

The review also recommended replacing independent reviewing officers (IROs), who represent the interests of looked-after children, with an independent opt-out advocacy service to be provided by the children's commissioner for England.

Other proposals included a requirement for all registered social workers to spend 100 hours each year in direct practice, the establishment of local authority regional staff banks, and a national recruitment campaign. The government plans to deliver a response and implementation strategy before the end of 2022.

Training standards

New Social Work England education and training standards launched in September 2021, applying to all qualifying routes. Social Work England aims to have inspected all initial social work education and training courses against the standards by September 2024 and review the standards in the process. It is consulting on new "readiness for professional practice" guidance.

Routes into social work

The main route for entering child and family social work is a generic three-year social work

degree or two-year masters. University social work courses are based on students doing two placements. Social Work England currently approves 301 social work courses.

Almost half of course providers reported student recruitment was lower than their target in 2021/22, according to Social Work England. Just over half said they were still experiencing placement challenges due to the pandemic.

In 2022/23, bursaries of £3,362.50 (£3,762.50 in London) are available for 1,500 postgraduates in England, who can also access up to £4,052 in tuition fee contributions. There are bursaries of £4,862.50 (£5,262.50 in London) for 2,500 undergraduates who are funded for the second and third years of their course.

Specialist fast-track routes such as Frontline and employer-based 14-month programme Step Up to Social Work provide another route into the profession. A Department for Education evaluation of fast-track routes published in December 2021 found "reasonably low" attrition rates six months after qualifying with 15 per cent of 2019 Step Up graduates and less than one per cent of 2019 Frontline graduates not working in statutory social work roles in England.

Step Up students receive a bursary of £19,833 and can train in regional partnerships, earning a postgraduate diploma in social work. The government has not confirmed whether the programme will continue in 2023 and beyond. A third route is provided by the social worker Integrated Degree Apprenticeship.

A total of 27 social work teaching partnerships aim to tackle regional variations in supply of social workers and ensure availability of practice placements for students.

Newly qualified social workers

The ASYE provides access to training and development during practitioners' first year of work, with regular reviews leading to a final assessment against national standards. Employers receive £2,000 for each newly qualified social worker supported through the scheme. Not all offer an ASYE.

NAAS

The National Assessment and Accreditation Scheme (NAAS) for social workers, which aimed to provide a clear career pathway for social workers, was scrapped in March. The government plans to introduce a new assessment model by the end of 2022.



Meet the practitioner

Patriche Bentick, senior practitioner, London Borough of Camden's Children Looked After Team

Patriche Bentick initially wanted to be an accountant but left college after three months studying economics. "It wasn't fulfilling me," she says. "Growing up in east London I saw deprivation and abuse around me, I wanted to have the power to make a difference." Bentick gained experience working in after-school clubs, summer camps, mother and baby units in hospitals, and as a youth advocate for tackling substance misuse. Six years after leaving school she undertook a three-year social work degree at Goldsmiths College, qualifying as a social worker in 2013.

The role can be emotional and challenging – particularly when placing very young babies in foster care – but also fulfilling. "We are supporting children in the care system, making sure their education is going well and thinking about their emotional and mental wellbeing." Bentick also works as a practice educator, supporting students to become social workers themselves.

Research shows a disproportionate amount of black and ethnic minority social workers are failing to complete the ASYE and spending too long in junior roles. In Camden children's services Bentick has set up Reflect, Reclaim, Rebuild groups for black and ethnic minority professionals to look at what action is needed to encourage an anti-racist workplace, and for all practitioners to focus on developing anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice.

@PatricheBentick on Twitter

Post-qualifying training

Social workers must record continuing professional development (CPD) with Social Work England annually when they apply to renew their registration. New requirements, launched in December 2021, mean they must record at least two pieces of CPD in their online account, including one “peer reflection” where they have discussed their CPD with a colleague, manager or another professional.

The British Association of Social Workers (BASW) runs a CPD accreditation scheme and launched its own CPD programme in 2019. It also runs a mentoring scheme for newly qualified social workers, those returning to social work or trained overseas.

WWCSC has developed CPD-accredited Evidence, Learning and Method training to support social workers’ understanding of different research methods. It is running online and face-to-face sessions for local authorities this year.

Practice supervisors

The DfE-commissioned Practice Supervisor Development Programme, which provided CPD to social workers taking up their first role supporting and developing the practice of others, ended in July 2022. The DfE plans to commission a new CPD programme for the children and families social work sector.

Systemic social work

Systemic practice is a way of working focusing on relationships and working with families and professional networks. The DfE-funded Centre for Systemic Social Work was launched by Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith & Fulham councils in 2017. It provides training programmes for practitioners, supervisors and leaders. The centre offers three 15-day courses: the Certificate in Systemic Social Work Practice with Children and Families for practitioners, the Certificate in Systemic Social Work Supervision and Management for managers and supervisors, and the Intermediate (Year Two) Course in Systemic Practice with Children and Families, plus a six-day Systemic Leadership course.

Social workers in schools

A DfE-funded WWCSC project placing more than 140 social workers in schools across 21 local authorities has been extended to cover the 2022/23 academic year after it was found to have strengthened interagency working, speeded up referrals and assessments, and provided effective safeguarding support for school staff.

Child protection

The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse delivers training in preventing, identifying, and responding to child sexual abuse. It launched a raft of new courses in 2021 and 2022, including separate courses on identifying and responding to child abuse for designated safeguarding leads and police, a half-day course on sibling sexual abuse and one-day course on harmful sexual behaviour. The 10-day Child Sexual Abuse Practice Leads Programme can be tailored to social work or multi-agency teams.

Charity the NWG Exploitation Network offers a range of accredited foundation- and advanced-level courses covering child sexual exploitation and wider exploitation suitable for statutory and voluntary sector organisations.

Fast-track programme

The Frontline fast-track graduate programme aims to ensure trainees get the experience they need, while bringing high-calibre graduates into child protection social work. Participants undergo an intensive five-week training programme followed by two years working in a local authority child protection team while studying for an MSc. In their first year, participants complete a 200-day placement while learning core social work knowledge, theory, research and practice skills. At the end of year one successful participants qualify as a social worker and register with Social Work England. In their second year, participants complete their ASYE and carry out a dissertation project. Lancaster University is Frontline’s higher education partner.

Frontline will continue to deliver the programme until the cohort starting in 2025. The government is currently looking for an organisation to run a fast-track programme after the current contract ends.

Frontline is also delivering a new social work leadership development programme in partnership with WWCSC and North Yorkshire County Council, supported by Hertfordshire County Council. The Social Work Leadership Pathways programme consists of bespoke pathways for four different levels of leadership: practice supervisors, middle managers, heads of service and practice leaders. It will launch in late 2022, with the aim of 1,000 social work leaders completing one of the pathways a year. It will replace Frontline’s current Firstline and Headline leadership development programmes, with the final cohorts completing these programmes by November 2022.

NEW APPROACH TO TRAINING

In June 2022, Social Work England published a new approach to social work education, including plans to simplify the complex mix of frameworks and guidance which training providers have to follow, and a focus on improving equality, diversity and inclusion. The organisation plans to research ways to improve its oversight and support of practice educators, who teach, supervise and assess students on their placements. It is also investigating the possibility of registering social work students, putting forward plans to review its education and training standards, and considering the best approach to supporting newly qualified social workers. All plans will be developed through consultation.

The first consultation, which closes on 21 September, is on the creation of new guidance for the knowledge, skills and behaviours that social work students should be able to demonstrate by the end of their qualifying course.

“Working with the sector to ensure that public protection is paramount is central to everything that we do,” says Sarah Blackmore, Social Work England executive director of professional practice and external engagement. “A big part of that is ensuring those coming into the social work profession have the right experience, support and understanding, a consistent approach to their education and training, regardless of their entry point, and can qualify equipped and confident to meet the professional standards and to join our register.”

Looked-after children

In March 2022, the Competitions and Markets Authority published a review of the children’s social care market, which called for an annual review setting out the extent and causes of shortfalls in children’s home staff. It said recruitment and retention of staff was a “significant barrier” to meeting demand and called on the government to consider a national recruitment campaign, investment in training and qualifications and clearer career pathways.

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care proposed the establishment of local-authority led co-operatives to take responsibility for all new public sector fostering, residential and secure care. “Any commissioning arrangements need to include commissioning of workforce development,” says National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care principal partner

Social work continued

Jonathan Stanley. “Ideally this would be a regional workforce team working with others across the country to deliver an evidence-based curriculum.”

Residential child care

Recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge in the children’s home sector. “The numbers and qualities of those applying are not adequate,” says Stanley. With low salaries and minimal benefits driving the crisis, the centre is calling for a salary of £15 an hour and the same terms of employment for residential child care workers across local authority, voluntary-run and private homes.

The Children’s Homes Association (CHA) 2022 State of the Sector report, published in June, found the proportion of homes with a qualified manager in post had increased from 75 per cent to 84 per cent. Staff turnover has soared, with more than 60 per cent of providers reporting staff turnover levels above 20 per cent.

Qualifications

Staff working in children’s homes in England must obtain the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Child Care. Managers are required to hold the Level 5 diploma but have up to three years to gain it.

Two apprenticeships for those wanting to work with children and young people aim to give practitioners and managers a clearer career path and flexibility to move from one role to another. Children, Young People and Family Practitioner is a Level 4 qualification for those who want to work in

residential care or do community-based work with vulnerable children and families.

Participants are expected to gain a Level 3 Diploma in Residential Child Care or a Level 4 Certificate in Higher Education in Working with Children, Young People and Families. Children, Young People and Families Manager apprenticeship students gain either a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Child Care or a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care.

Apprenticeships can be a way of bringing much needed new staff into the sector, says Jordan Elms, account manager of training company Paragon Skills which has worked with the CHA to promote and deliver apprenticeships and other training. Paragon consults with CHA members to find out what their needs are and supports them in accessing the right training. “We need to look outside the sector at what great people are available, and apprenticeship programmes do that because you don’t need any prior experience,” says Elms.

Following its review of current qualifications, The National Centre for Excellence in Residential Child Care is calling for a rewriting of the sector’s Professional Practice Standards.

“We need to upskill the residential child care workforce,” says Stanley. “In reviewing the current Levels 3, 4 and 5 we have found them to be inadequately preparing the workforce to meet the high level and complex needs of children being referred.”

CAREERS IN CAFCASS

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) is England’s largest employer of social workers. Cafcass family court advisers (FCAs) work across private and public law, looking after the interests of children involved in court proceedings. They must be qualified social workers and experienced in working with highly vulnerable children and families. FCAs can become practice supervisors, taking on additional responsibility for supervising the casework of others, while supporting the service manager and handling more complex cases.

Service managers lead and manage a team of experienced practitioners and are expected to have supervisory or practice management experience gained in a children’s service setting. Heads of practice provide leadership

over particular geographical areas. Cafcass currently contracts 137 associate FCAs, who are self-employed social workers.

Cafcass is facing recruitment challenges but says it is recruiting more people than are leaving. The organisation is developing a new reward package, career and qualification pathway and staff development programme. The Cafcass Learning and Development Programme incorporates formal induction and teaching programmes alongside events, workshops and webinars.

In 2021, Cafcass launched a Social Work Academy, which oversees the organisation’s three-year newly qualified social worker programme. The course incorporates hands-on experience in social work through an ASYE, six months working for a local authority and further academic training.

FOSTERING

In 2021 69,807 children were living with around 55,510 foster families across the UK. The Fostering Network says 9,265 new foster families are needed. Record levels of enquiries were received between April 2020 and March 2021 with 160,635 expressions of interest in England. However, only six per cent went on to apply to foster. Some councils are offering welcome payments.

Recommendations

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care proposed new regional care co-operatives to take responsibility for recruiting and supporting foster carers and extra funding to improve foster carer support. It also called for a national recruitment programme to approve 9,000 new foster carers over three years. Recruitment should focus on areas of the country with most need, targeting ethnic minorities and carers able to look after older teenagers, babies and parents, unaccompanied children, siblings and children on remand. There should also be a clearer route for adults who already know a child, such as teachers, to be approved as carers.

Training

Foster carers can foster for local authorities or via independent fostering agencies. Potential carers must do pre-approval training such as The Fostering Network’s The Skills to Foster course. Once approved, carers in England must meet training, support and development standards set by the government in their first 12 months – or 18 months for family and friends carers.

Induction training is offered alongside ongoing professional development as part of regular supervision and reviews. Carers may take specific courses to meet the needs of a particular child or broaden their skills. Some are offered the opportunity to work towards the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People’s Workforce.

The Fostering Network runs courses covering issues such as fostering unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and looking after parents and children. In February 2022 it launched a new course developed with Internet Matters to help foster carers support children’s online safety.

The network also delivers courses for those who train and support foster carers.

Recent years have seen increased professionalisation of the role alongside the creation of specialist placements and specific roles such as therapeutic foster carers.

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www.glebehouse.org.uk

YOUTH WORK

In February 2022, the government committed to a new Youth Guarantee, including a £171m investment in the National Citizen Service (NCS). A £378m Youth Investment Fund will finance up to 300 new and refurbished youth facilities. Government-funded local youth partnerships in deprived areas will aim to improve services for young people through greater co-operation between the public and voluntary sectors.

Workforce

The NYA is calling for the recruitment and training of 10,000 qualified youth workers, 20,000 youth support workers and 40,000 volunteers. In the past, youth work was mainly delivered by local authorities but today is delivered by a range of organisations such as housing programmes, voluntary organisations, within the NHS, and in social care or youth justice.

Salary

At a local authority level, youth workers can be youth support workers, with Level 2 and 3 qualifications or professional youth workers at Level 6 and above. Youth and community support workers receive between £19,308 and £28,787 while a professional youth worker earns between £25,513 and £42,718. Revised pay rates are negotiated annually by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), which comprises a staff side and an employer side.

Qualifications

The JNC endorses youth work qualifications via the NYA. Level 2 and 3 qualifications are available from a range of awarding bodies. The government-funded NYA Youth Bursary Fund is offering 547 bursaries for Level 2 and 3 courses in 2022/23. For the first time the funding will support access to leadership and management modules and assessor training. A Level 3 Youth Support Worker apprenticeship was approved in December 2020 and a Level 6 apprenticeship will be available in 2023.

Youth work degree courses must be JNC-recognised to confer the status of qualified youth worker. Degrees are evolving to reflect roles outside traditional youth work settings with modules covering social care, health and business development. Level 6 qualifications include the BA (Hons), which is three years full-time, and can also be studied part time. Level 7 qualifications include full- or part-time postgraduate diplomas or masters.

Early findings from the NYA's ongoing census reveal 34 per cent of youth work organisations have staff with JNC youth work



Meet the practitioner

Kelly Crofts, senior officer for young people, Sandwell Council

Aged 16, Kelly Croft had passed her GCSEs but felt aimless. "I wasn't in a good place," she says. During work experience at Sandwell Council she shadowed a youth worker, who asked her to chair the local youth forum then suggested she apply for a job in the youth service. The youngest youth worker Sandwell had ever employed, Croft was supported to achieve Level 2 and 3 youth work qualifications and a foundation degree.

Some 22 years later she manages the council's targeted offer, having spent a few years working in social care. "My youth work skills helped me build relationships with the young people I was working with and the skills I developed in social care now feed into my youth work," she says.

As well as managing her team and overseeing and developing the council's targeted work Croft continues to work directly with young people, including specialist one-to-one work with young women who have been exposed to exploitation. She has also developed youth work support packages for children leaving care.

degrees and 40 per cent have staff with youth work qualifications at Level 2 or above. Data will be used to feed into the development of the NYA's workforce strategy, which it hopes to publish soon.

Recruitment

In its 2019/20 annual monitoring report, published in October 2021, the NYA found the number of higher education institutions offering youth work courses, the number of courses and number of students were at a record low. De Montfort University recently announced it was suspending intake for its Youth and Community Development course from this month [September 2022] due to significantly lower recruitment rates and the financial impact of the pandemic. However, at least five new courses have been validated during the last year. "We've seen an increase in the number of universities that are expressing interest in delivering a youth work degree and also engagement from universities that want to come on board to deliver the apprenticeship degree," says McLatchie.

Post-qualifying training

The NYA's Youth Work Academy is a digital

platform bringing together low-cost and free training courses and webinars.

The NYA launched a government-funded media literacy and digital youth work course in April 2022, and a new CPD module on trauma-informed practice in May 2022. It is developing further training on working with gypsy and traveller young people, detached youth work and safeguarding. In October, Level 4 and 5 qualifications will be available for youth workers keen to specialise or working in other professions such as youth justice.

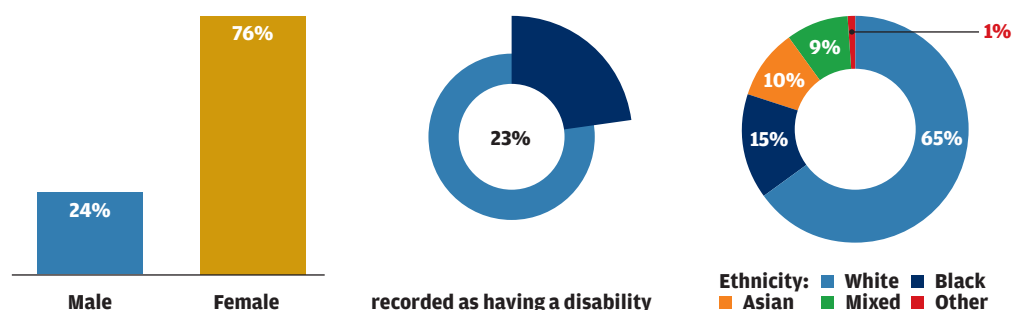
The NYA's Youth Work Tea Breaks and Supper Breaks, which enable practitioners to come together and explore common themes, continue to run with a range of partner organisations. The Equal Equity programme continues to support youth workers from minority ethnic backgrounds, and the NYA is also developing support for LGBTQIA youth workers and faith sector providers.

Youth Work Register

The NYA plans to launch a voluntary register for professionally qualified Level 6 and 7 youth workers this year, to be administered and managed by a sub-group of its Education and Training Standards Committee.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF YOUTH WORK STUDENTS

Students undertaking youth work courses at universities in England 2019/20



Source: National Youth Agency Annual Monitoring Report 2019/2020



Trauma-informed Practice

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YOUTH JUSTICE

Youth justice roles are available in youth offending teams (YOTs), the police, courts, Crown Prosecution Service, secure estate and voluntary sector. There are also roles in the Youth Justice Board (YJB), which oversees the system in England and Wales.

The YJB's 2021-2023 workforce development strategy aims to ensure its Child First principle is embedded in workforce development, promote anti-discriminatory practice and professionalise the workforce.

The Youth Justice Institute offers short online courses and five-week Effective Practice Awards (EPAs), accredited by Skills for Justice Awards. A new EPA, Child First, was created in 2022 in partnership with the YJB. Other courses include trauma-informed practice, youth diversion – created with the Centre for Justice Innovation – and desistance.

The YJB has funded youth justice services to train a Child First “champion”. Other training around the Child First approach has included lectures and online sessions.

Key qualifications offered by Unitas include the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEPCC) accredited by Skills for Justice Awards and endorsed by the YJB.

The Foundation Degree in Youth Justice offered by Unitas is suitable for those working in both community and secure establishments and consists of four modules taken over two years and two months – or 18 months for those who have completed the YJEPCC. Students who have completed the foundation degree can top up to a BA (Hons) in Youth Justice by completing an extra module on either social policy in youth justice or managing and coaching in youth justice, plus an independent research project.

A Level 5 Youth Justice Practitioner Apprenticeship launched last year, aimed at practitioners in local authority youth offending

services or relevant voluntary sector organisations. The YJB plans to develop a supported youth justice apprenticeship for people with lived experience of the care/justice system and from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Secure estate

The Youth Custody Service (YCS) is a specialist service within HM Prison and Probation Service. The youth secure estate is made up of five under-18 young offender institutions, two secure training centres and eight secure children's homes.

Youth justice workers work with 12- to 18-year-olds in specialist YOIs and secure training centres. Until recently, youth justice workers were expected to complete the Youth Justice Foundation Degree and progress to the role of Band 4 youth justice worker specialist. Some 201 have already achieved the degree-level qualification and 314 others are in training. However, a Ministry of Justice spokesman said the YCS was developing a new apprenticeship approach which will mean the foundation degree will no longer be offered as required training for YCS officers.

Leadership development programme Unlocked Graduates has been placing officers in YOIs including Feltham, Cookham Wood and Werrington for four years. This year, the programme will place more than 120 graduates as prison officers across nearly 30 prisons. To be eligible for the fully-funded programme, which includes work towards a Masters degree, graduates must have a 2:1 or above. They receive a salary of up to £31,000 depending on location. Applications open for the next cohort in mid-September 2022.

In 2016, the government said it would open two secure schools to provide education and rehabilitation to young offenders in a

therapeutic environment. A National Audit Office report published in April 2022 found the first proposed school, for 49 pupils, is now three years behind schedule and £31m over-budget. Run by charity Oasis, the school is set to open in 2024 in Medway.

Community

YOTs are multi-agency services, including social workers, probation officers, police, education and health workers. Many YOTs also employ YOT officers or practitioners who undertake youth justice specific in-service training and may get the opportunity to do YJEPCC or a youth justice degree. The YJB's skills audit tool is designed to help practitioners identify potential gaps in their knowledge and access targeted training.

The Association of YOT Managers (AYM) runs the Aspiring Future Leaders course with local government leadership body Solace Enterprises. This is aimed at managers in YOTs who want to develop their leadership skills and apply for more senior roles. The course is set at Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Level 5 and can include work towards a separate Certificate in Leadership and Management. The AYM also offers an accredited ILM Level 7 Certificate in Leadership and Management for YOT heads of service, also in conjunction with Solace.

The Youth Justice Sector Led Improvement Partnership is funded by the YJB, administered by the AYM, and delivered by senior leaders in youth justice. It offers training for managers interested in doing peer reviews of YOTs and peer review team leader training. It also offers operational manager training, coaching and mentoring for YOT managers and supervisors.

The YJB has created the Developing Practice Group Basecamp, a virtual space to support sharing of knowledge and information across YOTs. More than 200 YOT staff have signed up. It has also created quarterly developing practice forums.

Probation

The probation workforce consists of probation service officers (PSOs) and probation officers. Probation officers can work in YOTs on secondment. To train as a probation officer, applicants need a recognised Level 5 qualification or above in any subject. Aspiring probation officers start as PSOs and work their way through the Professional Qualification in Probation (PQiP) programme. PSOs taking the accelerated PQiP PSO Progression Programme do not need a Level 5 qualification and can study part-time or full-time.



Meet the practitioner

Sophie Shipton, prison officer, Unlocked Graduates

When Sophie Shipton graduated with a degree in politics from the University of Leeds in 2019, she was looking for a fast-paced, challenging role where she could make a difference. The two-year Unlocked Graduates programme was the answer.

An intense six-week residential course prepared her for her first day as a Band 3 prison officer at Feltham YOI.

Supported by a prison officer mentor, after 15 months she was promoted to supervising officer, helping run a wing of 20 young people and 12 staff. Her role requires empathy and patience. “These children are amazing – if they focused their energy in the right place they could be the next CEOs of the world's top companies,” she says.

A Ministry of Justice placement opened her eyes to a potential future in the civil service, but she is also considering supporting prisoners on release. “Whatever I do next will definitely be in the criminal justice sector,” she says.



The Harmful Sexual Behaviour Support Service by SWGfL and The Marie Collins Foundation is available for any professional in England working with children and young people in tackling harmful sexual behaviours.

The support service is available **Monday – Friday: 8am – 8pm**

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For more information visit:
swgfl.org.uk/harmful-sexual-behaviour-support-service/

***The support service is due to come to an end on 28th October 2022. We encourage professionals working with children and young people to continue engaging with the service until then.**

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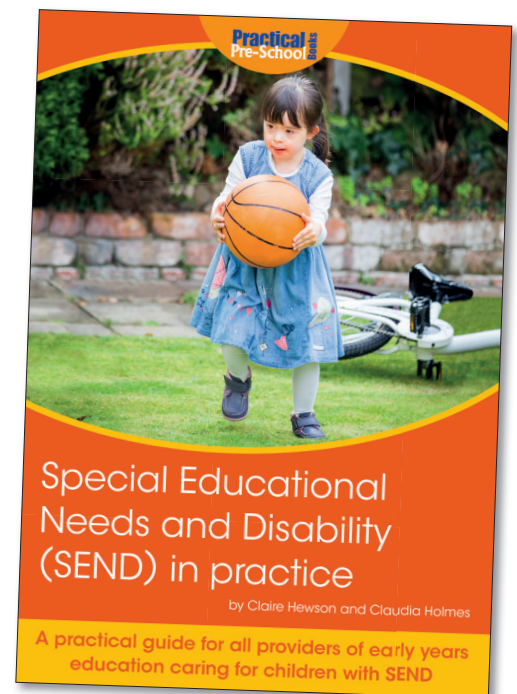
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Pre-School Books

EDUCATION

The government's schools white paper, published in March 2022, includes plans for funded training for a senior mental health lead in every school and the provision of six million tutoring courses by 2024.

Tutoring

The government's £1bn National Tutoring Programme gives schools support from tutors and in-school academic mentors. It has appointed three delivery partners, Tribal Group, Education Development Trust and Cognition Education, to quality assure tuition partners, recruit and deploy academic mentors and train new tutors.

Academic mentors work alongside existing school staff to provide one-to-one and small group, subject-specific tuition. Last year, 1,124 mentors were placed in 946 schools across England to support 103,862 disadvantaged pupils.

Academic mentors must hold a minimum of three A-levels at A*-C grade (or equivalent) and a minimum of a grade 4 (C grade) in English and Maths at GCSE level. Previously the requirement was for applicants to have a degree at 2.2 or above or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Academic mentors are currently offered training through Liverpool Hope University. Education Development Trust (EDT) has been appointed as training provider for the NTP programme in 2022/23 and will be sharing further details of its training offer in due course. The role can be a step into a career in teaching – 30 per cent of academic mentors without QTS were accepted onto a teacher training programme during the last academic year.

Tutors are recruited and trained by organisations signed up as tuition partners. A school-led route is delivered by school staff, who receive online training.

Teaching assistants

The number of full-time equivalent teaching assistants (TAs) in England has increased by 4,400 since 2020, standing at 275,812. TAs make up 28 per cent of the school workforce.

There are teaching assistant qualifications available from Level 1 to Level 4, as well as a Level 3 teaching assistant apprenticeship. Students taking the Level 3 Education and Childcare T-Level can choose to specialise in Assisting Teaching. TAs can progress into the role of higher level teaching assistant (HLTA), which involves an assessment against 33 standards. In secondary schools TAs can be known as learning support assistants (LSAs). A National Education Union survey published in

April found TAs take on more work than their contract allows, with 40 per cent regularly working as cover supervisors.

From September 2022, consultancy MaximisingTAs is partnering with the National College of Education to offer the Future Leaders Programme: Maximising Impact of Support Staff, a 12-month CPD programme aimed at TAs, HLTAs and LSAs which includes a Level 3 Team Leader/Supervisor Apprenticeship.

Special educational needs and disabilities

All mainstream schools are required to have a special educational needs co-ordinator (Senco), responsible for assessing, planning and monitoring the progress of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Sencos must be qualified teachers. Newly appointed Sencos without more than a year's past experience of the role must achieve a postgraduate National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination within three years of appointment.

The government is currently consulting on proposed changes to SEND and alternative provision in England. These include a single national SEND and alternative provision system and new local SEND partnerships. The government intends to consult on the introduction of a new Senco National Professional Qualification for school Sencos and increase the number of staff with an accredited Level 3 Senco qualification in early years settings to improve SEND expertise.

A first round of 36 special schools are set to open in September 2022 followed by another round in September 2025 following a bidding process. The schools will offer specialist support and education for pupils with needs

such as autism, severe learning difficulties or social emotional and mental health conditions.

Nasen provides training, support, consultancy and coaching in SEND and "inclusion by design". Membership became free to all UK individuals in January 2021. Nasen also offers accredited courses such as a Level 3 and 4 SEND Casework Award and Youth Mental Health First Aid. The Whole School SEND Consortium brings together organisations and individuals who share a commitment to improving the educational experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Free CPD resources can be found online at Whole School SEND at www.wholeschoolsend.org.uk.

PSHE

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is compulsory in all state-maintained schools alongside relationships education in primary schools and relationships and sex education in secondary schools. The PSHE Association offers a range of continuing professional development (CPD) and one-to-one support opportunities.

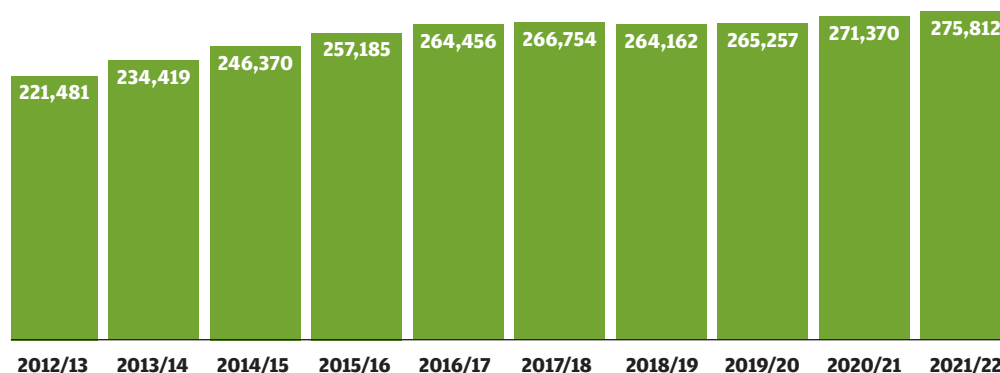
Other roles

Government funding for educational psychologist training has been extended, with an expected 203 funded places available for September 2023.

Every school in England is required to have a named "careers leader". The Careers and Enterprise Company delivers government-funded training for careers leaders, with a £1,000 bursary offered on completion which can be spent on further CPD. At the end of May 2022, 2,117 careers leaders had completed the training offer and by the end of October 2023 this will reach 3,500.

GROWTH IN TEACHING ASSISTANT WORKFORCE

Full-time equivalent teaching assistants in England



Source: School Workforce in England: Reporting Year 2021, Department for Education

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Thursday 27th October 2022 (In-person)

Thursday 17th November 2022 (Online)

Tuesday 22nd November 2022 (In-person)

TRAUMA AND CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION (CCE)

Monday 6th October 2022 (Online)

Tuesday 15th November 2022 (Online)

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Tuesday 20th September 2022 (Online)

Thursday 13th October 2022 (Online)

Tuesday 18th October 2022 (Online)

Tuesday 1st November 2022 (Online)

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN THE UK EDUCATION SYSTEM

Thursday 22nd September 2022 (In-person)

Tuesday 8th November 2022 (Online)

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EARLY YEARS

The early years sector continues to face a recruitment crisis with 84 per cent of settings finding it difficult to recruit suitable staff, according to an Early Years Alliance (EYA) survey published in December 2021. The EYA is calling on the government to provide early years funding rates that enable providers to pay higher salaries, and to run a high-profile recruitment campaign.

Ratios

Early years settings must meet specific requirements for the ratio of qualified adults to children. Level 2 or 3 practitioners must hold a “full and relevant” qualification endorsed by the Department for Education. The government is currently consulting on changes that would increase the number of children a practitioner can look after, which it says would encourage more people to become childminders and reduce childcare costs.

Childminders

The government also wants to increase the number of childminders by allowing them to work from a greater range of locations, reducing inspections and slimming down the statutory framework they must follow. The EYA called the measures “retrograde steps”.

Childminders must show knowledge and understanding of the early years curriculum and framework. Some local authorities fund pre-registration training such as the Level 3 Award in Preparing to Work in Home-based Childcare.

Level 2 and 3

Staff with endorsed Level 2 qualifications are known as “early years practitioners”. A new Early Years Practitioner Level 2 Apprenticeship launched in March 2020. Staff with DfE-endorsed Level 3 qualifications gain Early Years

Educator (EYE) status. A Level 3 EYE Apprenticeship launched in April 2019.

EYE qualifications are currently being reviewed by education charity NCFE, which is looking at issues including the requirement for Level 3 staff to hold GCSE or equivalent English and Maths qualifications and the number of placement hours required.

The first cohort of Education and Childcare T-Level students (see box) will gain the new Level 3 qualification this summer. The government plans to eventually replace all funded Level 3 EYE courses with the T-Level and the apprenticeship.

Leadership

A Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner Apprenticeship launched in August 2021. It aims to offer a way of progressing a career in early years through practice leadership.

The fully-funded 18-month National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership, aimed at managers or aspiring managers of nurseries, or childminders with leadership responsibilities, opened for applications in June 2022.

Early Years Teacher Status

The number of students enrolling on Early Years Initial Teacher Training courses fell by 18 per cent in 2021/22 compared with 2019/20 with 477 new entrants, although the government points out the training year was affected by the pandemic. There are three routes into Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS): undergraduate, graduate employment-based and graduate entry. EYTS is considered the equivalent of Qualified Teacher Status but does not bring equivalent pay and early years teachers cannot lead nursery or reception classes in maintained primary schools.

PLAY

Ofsted-registered out-of-school clubs and holiday play schemes are not required to employ staff with childcare or playwork qualifications but a number of qualifications are available from bodies including NCFE and City & Guilds.

Level 2 and 3 qualifications developed by Play Wales currently have only limited availability in England but can be undertaken via Adult Learning Wales.

The Playwork Trailblazer Group, a group of play employers, worked with Training Qualifications UK to develop the TQUK Level 2 Diploma for the Playwork Practitioner, which launched in October 2021. The qualification will sit alongside a Level 2 apprenticeship for playworkers, which is still in development.

Leeds Beckett University offers a BA (Hons) in Childhood Development and Playwork. The University of Gloucestershire’s Playwork Partnerships courses can be delivered by the university or local providers registered as associate trainers.

Degree-level

There are around 320 early years degrees in England. Not all qualify a graduate to be counted as a Level 3 practitioner. The Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network’s Early Childhood Graduate Practitioner competencies can be “bolted on” to a degree and ensure minimum standards such as 80 placement days.

CPD

The government’s £153m Early Years Education Recovery Programme includes the development of 18 stronger practice hubs to support settings with evidence-based practice, and a mentoring programme to roll out in September 2022. The National Children’s Bureau has been appointed as the stronger practice hubs programme delivery partner and the programme will start in November 2022. The government also wants to increase the number of practitioners with a Level 3 special educational needs co-ordinator (Senco) qualification by 5,000 over two years.

In 2021/22, the government extended its early years professional development programme to about 2,000 more early years practitioners and teachers. The programme includes online training focused on personal, social and emotional development, developed by the Anna Freud Centre.

Sector bodies such as the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years, the National Day Nurseries Association and the EYA deliver online and face-to-face CPD on a wide range of issues and topics.



TAKING A T-LEVEL

Mia Saxby, 18, is one of the first young people in the country to complete an Education and Childcare T Level. Mia, from St Thomas More Catholic

School in Tyne and Wear, says the course has improved her confidence, especially the time spent on placements.

“I’d also say that I now have better time-management skills, as I have to plan for observations, plan activities and have to do

certain jobs when I’m on placement,” she says. “I’d recommend taking a T-Level – the courses are for people who learn by a balance of a hands-on approach as well as exams.”

Gaining the equivalent of three A-Levels from one course is a positive for those with a career in childcare in mind, she says. “It can put you leaps and bounds ahead of other candidates.” In September, Mia plans to go to Northumbria University to study primary education.



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HEALTH

While the NHS remains the biggest employer of children's health professionals, many work in multi-agency teams. In the children's sector, roles cover a wide range of areas including nursing, midwifery, health visiting, paediatrics, mental health, substance misuse and sexual health.

There are ongoing concerns about staffing in health services due to Covid-related sickness absence, long-standing vacancies and a backlog in care. Shortages in the UK's 30 paediatric intensive care units are so severe that healthcare assistants are covering the work of nurses, according to the Paediatric Intensive Care Audit Network.

In May 2022, NHS England sent a letter to all NHS Trusts setting out plans to recruit and retain staff to tackle the Covid-19 backlog. These included encouraging recently retired staff to return and persuading staff and volunteers involved in the Covid vaccination programme to join the NHS on a longer-term basis.

NHS England has launched a Nursing International Recruitment Programme to develop the NHS as the "destination of choice" for internationally trained nurses, and a Refugee Nurse Support Pilot Programme to support refugee nurses who want to work for the NHS.

Nursing and midwifery

The number of registered nurses, midwives and nursing associates in the UK increased by 26,403 this year, according to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). However, the number leaving the register has also risen by 3,199 after falling in recent years.

Applications for UK nursing courses have fallen by eight per cent from last year's record high, although they are still up 9.5 per cent from 2020 and 28 per cent from 2019. The number of children's nurses has risen to a new high of 55,062, and the number of school nurses has increased by 173, to 4,047 in 2022. Routes into nursing include the nursing

degree apprenticeship and the nursing associate role.

In July 2022, the NMC launched standards for the education of specialist roles including health visitors, community children's nurses and school nurses, with a new focus on issues such as promoting the rights of school-age children and young people. Students starting courses after 31 August 2024 must be registered on the new programme.

Health Education England has launched a blended learning degree in midwifery. Students gain practical experience close to home, with other aspects of training delivered remotely.

Health visitors

In England, the number of full-time equivalent health visitors continues to fall, standing at 6,156 as of February 2022 – a 40 per cent drop since 2015. In December 2021, an Institute of Health Visiting survey found an estimated shortfall of 5,000 health visitors has left the remaining workforce with unmanageable workloads.

In its Start for Life review into early years health the government said it would work with partners to promote health visiting as a career. However, a £302m investment in the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme contains no funding for health visiting services. The funding, which includes £10m to test "innovative Start for Life workforce models", will be shared between 75 local authorities to provide services including perinatal mental health support.

Mental health

There are ongoing concerns about children and young people's mental health with 1.025 million referrals of under-18s to specialist mental health services in England in 2021. There are 15,486 people working in the children and young people's mental health workforce and 1,642 vacancies, according to

the NHS. Three quarters are employed by the NHS, 11 per cent by the independent sector and the rest by the voluntary sector, local authorities and youth offending teams.

The NHS has sped up the roll out of its mental health support team (MHST) programme and aims to have more than 500 mental health support teams supporting schools in England by 2024. In 2021/22, 112 teams began training and 104 will start during 2022/23.

MHSTs usually include four education mental health practitioners (EMHPs), who assess and support children and young people with mental health difficulties such as mild to moderate anxiety. The role can include advising on sleep, problem solving and panic attacks and promoting approaches to improve emotional health. EMHPs undertake a funded 12-month university course combining academic and theory elements, self-study and work-based placements. An early evaluation of the programme, published in July 2021, found retaining EMHPs was a challenge as the role was seen as a stepping stone to other careers.

The British Psychological Society (BPS) and the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP) are developing registers for EMHPs and children's wellbeing practitioners (CWPs) which are set to launch later this year. A CWP offers a range of low-intensity psychological interventions for mild to moderate mood and anxiety disorders and works within a variety of mental health settings, including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS). A CWP must complete a HEE-commissioned training course of around 30 to 35 days over an academic year.

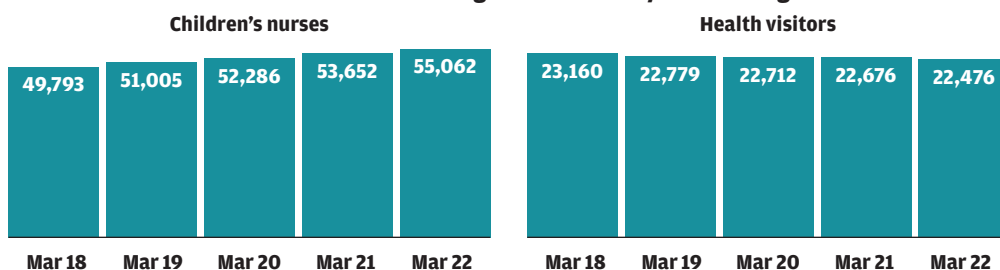
A mandatory register for Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWP) launched in June 2021. A PWP is trained to assess and support people with common mental health problems to manage their own recovery and can specialise in perinatal work. From June 2022, all PWPs working in England within the NHS are required to register with either the BPS or the BABCP.

Schools and colleges can apply for £1,200 to train a senior mental health lead to develop a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in 2022/23. More than 3,500 senior leads have begun training.

Child and adolescent psychotherapists usually work in CAMHS. Trainee child and adolescent psychotherapists must have completed a recognised pre-clinical course and then undertake a four-year full-time programme including teaching, supervision, personal psychoanalysis and a salaried training post.

NURSES WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Number of nurses on the UK-wide Nursing and Midwifery Council register



Source: The NMC Register 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, Nursing and Midwifery Council



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EARLY HELP



The government is investing £200m to extend its Supporting Families programme to March 2025. Supporting Families provides targeted early interventions for families with complex, interconnected problems.

The programme was revamped in 2022 to tackle 10 specific challenges facing families, such as domestic violence, child abuse and exploitation.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, published in May 2022, called for a £2 billion investment in a wider early intervention programme to be called Family Help, which would incorporate Supporting Families. It said the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities should pass responsibility for family support workers to the Department for Education and called for central investment in training and professional development, and a Knowledge and Skills statement for family support workers to establish expectations for the role.

Supporting Families workforce

Local authorities run the programme in different ways, but the role of keyworker or lead practitioner is central to delivery. Keyworkers, often known as family support workers or family intervention workers, work with every member of the family and bring local services together to resolve issues at an early stage. According to a 2021 evaluation of the programme, 63 per cent of keyworkers have an NVQ 4+ or equivalent while 28 per cent have a NVQ 1-3 or equivalent.

Supporting Families co-ordinators lead the programme in a local area, co-ordinating with other relevant national government programmes. They are mostly educated to

NVQ 4 or degree level, or higher.

Data leads provide data analysis to support and underpin the programme's delivery.

Supporting Families employment advisers are employed by the Department for Work and Pensions/Jobcentre Plus and seconded into specialist roles, working closely with others in the early help system to support families on the programme. The most common route into the role is by working as a work coach or employment adviser, a lone parent adviser or an 18- to 24-year-old work coach.

Training

Supporting Families' 2022 annual report found keyworkers expressed a need for more consistent training and greater access to specialised training across areas such as mental health. Most areas support basic mandatory training with tiered training programmes and optional courses on topics such as safeguarding, child development and parenting techniques.

Family hubs and Start for Life

The government is investing £82m to create a network of family hubs, bringing together support services for families with children aged 0 to 19. The National Centre for Family Hubs is planning a series of events to support local family hub providers in setting up and delivering their early help services.

The £170m Start for Life programme aims to improve support for parents during a baby's first two years and will include breastfeeding support services and parenting programmes. Five local authorities are sharing £10m to develop "innovative Start for Life workforce models".



DIRECTORS

During 2021/22, there were 18 new permanent appointments of directors of children's services (DCSs), up from 12 the previous year, according to the Association of Directors of Children's Services. Fewer local authorities are combining children's and adult services with just 22 "twin hat" directors, the lowest number since 2010.

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care found leadership was not "sufficiently stable, diverse or experienced", with only six per cent of DCSs identifying as an ethnic minority. It called for a review of the curriculum for leadership programmes and action to address under-representation.

Aspiring directors

The Children's Services Leadership Consortium – made up of The Staff College, Institute of Public Care (IPC), Skills for Care and GatenbySanderson – created the Upon programme to support existing and aspirant DCSs, funded by a three-year £3m Department for Education grant. Its Aspirant DCS Programme will welcome cohorts 4 and 5 in September 2022. Around a third of applicants are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, according to The Staff College chief executive Jane Parfremment.

New directors

The New Directors Programme continues to support all new DCSs, many of whom went through the aspirant programme. DCSs are facing a wide range of challenges, including recruitment and retention issues and financial pressures on local authorities and families, says programme lead Gail Hopper.

Inclusion

The Staff College will have delivered at least six Black and Asian Leadership Initiative programmes by the end of 2022 and plans to offer further cohorts on its Women in Leadership programme in 2023.

Leadership training

The IPC delivers leadership and management training specific to children's services and offers bespoke programmes for councils. The IPC also delivers a Postgraduate Certificate in Strategic and Operational Leadership for Social Care Wales. The Local Government Association runs the residential Leadership Essentials Children's Services programme, providing an intensive introduction to the role of lead member for children's services. It offers mentoring and coaching plus bespoke support for councils and councillors. In 2021, it published a guide for new lead members.