

**SKILLS ISSUES IN THE CHILDCARE SECTOR  
IN BOURNEMOUTH, DORSET, POOLE, AND  
SOMERSET**

**A report to  
LSC Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

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## 1. Introduction

1. BMG Research has been commissioned by LSC Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole to assist the LSC to develop its policies and programmes in respect of eight local sectors. These are....
  - Health
  - Engineering
  - Construction
  - Hospitality
  - Retail
  - Financial services
  - Childcare
  - Social care
2. These sectors are regarded as current priorities for the LSC on a number of grounds. They each employ significant numbers of people in Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, and Somerset. Several of them have significant local focus (in the sense of employing above-UK average proportions of the workforce in the local area. They have an importance to local economies which extends beyond direct employment – generating wealth externally to the local area which is ‘imported’ into the local area for distribution as local incomes and wages, supporting or linking with other key activities, or providing fundamental services (in house building or social welfare, for example) which are essential underpinnings of an effective society and economy. There is also significant prima facie evidence to suggest that these sub-sectors face a substantial challenge to maintain the flow of labour and skills which they need to secure an optimal level of efficiency. This is not to say, of course, that other local sectors do not have these properties. But, with limited resource, the LSC’s intent is to seek progress in *some* sectors rather than dissipate resources too widely. Attention will turn to other areas of the economy in due course.
3. The essence of each study is broadly to undertake a desk review of available information on the sector which describes each local sector, recognises how the sector is developing and the challenges each sector faces, considers how this change process affects skills needs and supply, and, thus, identifies a set of ‘skills issues’ on which the LSC and its partners may focus with recommendations for appropriate action.
4. This report is the output of a study of the local *childcare sector*. Because of the recent re-configuration of LSC activity in the South West Region, the study, whilst originally commissioned by the local LSC for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, now reports on, and applies to, the new LSC sub-region which combines *Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole and Somerset*. For convenience, we will refer to this new operating area as ‘the BDPS area’ in the remainder of this report.
5. The report’s chapters consider:
  - The structure and character of sector delivery in the BDPS area.
  - Key skills and labour demand indicators.
  - Skills supply into the sector.
  - Skills issues and recommendations.

## 2. Childcare sector employment in the sub-region

### Defining the sector

6. The childcare sector (a term used in this report as a more convenient term for the more formal 'Early Years and Childcare' sector) is somewhat difficult to define with certainty, given that various organisations and publications appear to account for the sector in different ways:
  - Some mainly concentrate on early years care in their definition, focussing principally on pre-school activities.
  - Some include social care (including, say, the work of professional social workers, staff in residential care homes for children, and education welfare offices).
  - Some include the work of teachers who teach children at various stages from nursery education up to age 16 or beyond.
  - Some include volunteers who work in the sector whilst others focus on paid employment.
  - Some include domestic nannies when describing employment in the sector.
7. This lack of clarity in definition allows quite varied estimates of the 'childcare workforce' with numbers offered ranging from 250,000 to 2 million people.
8. However, just to take one definition, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC), part of the Sector Skills Council, Skills for Care and Development, focuses its attentions (in its report 'Recruitment, Retention and Rewards in the Children's Workforce') on services delivered by the following occupational groups:
  9. Early Years and Childcare Sector
    - Nursery Workers
    - Childminders
    - Day-care Workers
    - Nannies
    - Sessional Care Workers (including workers in childcare and playgroup workers)
  10. Children's Social Care Sector
    - CAFCASS Workers
    - Child and Family Social Workers
    - Children's Residential Care Staff
    - Connexions Personal Advisers
    - Educational Welfare Officers
    - Foster Carers
    - Learning Mentors

## Employment in the sector

11. If, at least initially, this definition is used to describe the childcare workforce, then the national number of people employed in the sector is estimated by the CWDC (Recruitment, Retention and Rewards in the Children's Workforce, First Report, CWDC, 2006) as:

**Table 1: Structure of the national childcare workforce**

	England	UK	Sector %			Gender		Age
			Private	Public	Voluntary	F	M	
<b>Early years and childcare</b>								
Nursery workers	N/A	182,550	26	10	64	97	3	Average + 32 years
Childminder	72,500	N/A	100	0	0	99	1	72% aged 30-49
Day-care worker	111,100	N/A	78	17	5	N/A	N/A	59% under 30
Nanny	N/A	111,484	100	0	0	99	1	N/A
Sessional care-worker	79,000	N/A	30	10	60	99	1	Most aged 25-39
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>262,600</b>	<b>294,034</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Children's social care</b>								
CAFCASS worker *	N/A	1,835	20	80	0	75	25	60% aged 50+
Child and Family Social Worker	34,450	N/A	5	95	0	75	25	Two-thirds aged 25-49
Children's Residential Care Staff	10,495	N/A	60	35	5	64	36	70% aged 25-49
Connexions Personal Advisers	7,905	N/A	0	100	0	78	22	N/A
Educational Welfare Officers	4,000	N/A	0	100	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Foster Carers	27,075	N/A	100	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Learning mentors	1,200	N/A	0	100	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>85,125</b>	<b>1,835</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>347,725</b>	<b>295,869</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: CWDC, 2006

\* Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service

N/A = Not Available

12. If the 'English' component of the UK figures (where only the UK figure is available) is assumed to be approximately in proportion to England's share of the UK's total population, then it can be estimated that the total number of people employed in the sector in England is of around 596,000 people [of whom around 510,000 (86%) are employed in the 'early years and childcare' sub-sector and around 86,000 (14%) are employed in the 'children's social care' sub-sector].

13. It can also be seen that:

- Particularly in early years and childcare, the workforce is mainly in the private or voluntary sector (including directly-

employed domestic nannies, self-employed childminders, and nursery staff and other sessional carers in voluntary and community settings).

- Particularly in early years and childcare the workforce is almost exclusively female.
- Particularly in early years and childcare, the workforce is weighted towards younger and middle years age groups.

### The local workforce

14. Reliable and comprehensive figures on the local workforce of the BDPS area are not available. However, if we concentrate now on the ‘early years and childcare’ segment of the workforce (on the grounds that the ‘social care’ element has been addressed by the care sector report written in parallel to this one) it can be estimated that the early years and childcare workforce employs around 12,300 people in the BDPS area or around 10,000 people if domestic nannies are subtracted from the total. These figures are disaggregated in more detail below. However, it should be noted that the estimates assume that local early years and childcare employment is in the same proportion to the population as at national level.[In fact, the proportion of the population which is aged 0-14 years is a little lower in the BDPS area (17.2% against a national average of 18.9%) and the local workforce may, correspondingly, be marginally lower]. Thus, local figures are approximate and give only broad guidance to the scale and shape of local employment in the sector:

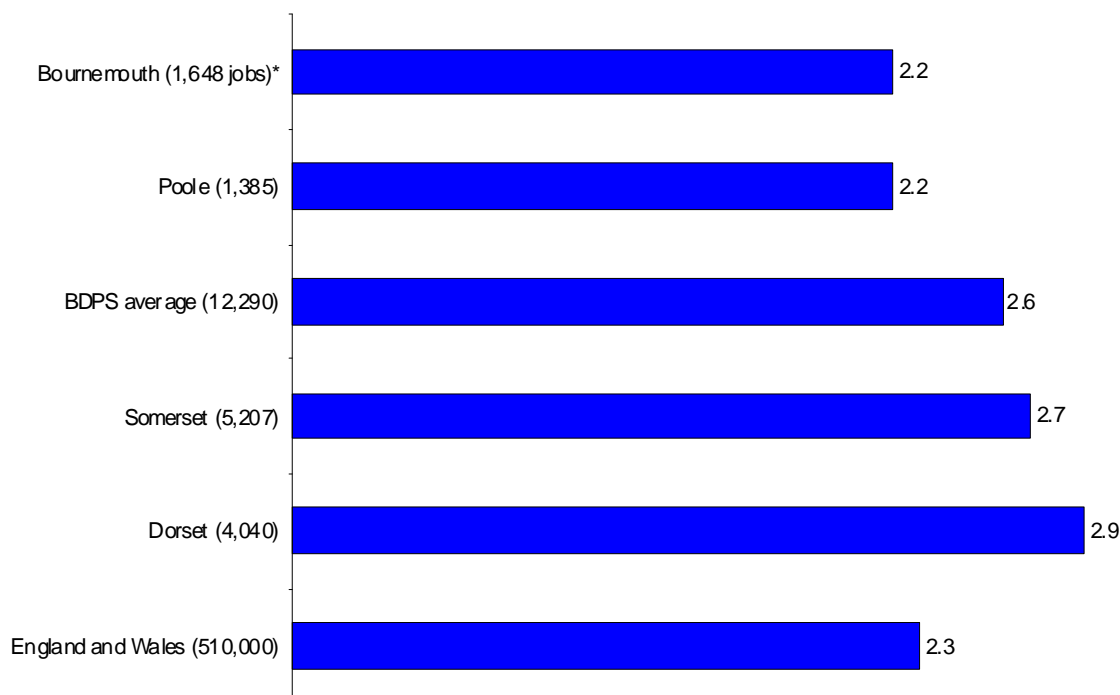
**Table 2: Estimated\* local employment in early years and childcare**

	<b>Dorset</b>	<b>Bournemouth</b>	<b>Poole</b>	<b>Somerset</b>	<b>Total</b>
Nursery workers	1,219	495	417	1,576	3,707
Childminders	576	234	197	741	1,748
Day-care workers	883	360	302	1,135	2,680
Nannies	744	303	254	957	2,258
Sessional care-workers	628	256	215	807	1,906
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,050</b>	<b>1,648</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>5,207</b>	<b>12,290</b>
<b>Total (excluding domestic nannies)</b>	<b>3,306</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>1,131</b>	<b>4,250</b>	<b>10,032</b>

\* Note: This is a calculated analysis which assumes that local areas have a share of national Early Years and Childcare employment (as in Table 1) equal to their share of national population (Mid-year population estimates, ONS)

15. These estimates would suggest that early years and childcare employment accounts for the following proportions of employment in different local areas:

**Figure 1: Percentage of all employment in each County/Unitary Authority which is in the early years and childcare sector**



Source: Projection from CWDC national figures

\* Actual numbers of early years and childcare jobs

16. The number of locations at which childcare is provided is also difficult to estimate. Childminders and nannies, of course, mainly operate at domestic premises. Ofsted (inspection report website) reports that the numbers of day-care providers in each area are: Dorset (281); Bournemouth (142); Poole (72); Somerset (424). However, it is not clear that a 'provider' is equivalent to a site in Ofsted terms (some 'providers' may operate from several sites) and Ofsted figures may not be wholly comprehensive in respect of some voluntary or community provision or that connected to after-school clubs.
17. However, if we assume that Ofsted figures are broadly accurate then they suggest a total of at least 919 childcare locations in the BDPS area (excluding domestic ones) employing around 8,300 staff, or around 9 people per location on average.
18. The workforce is very heavily weighted towards female employment – only around 2% of employees are thought to be male. The balance of full-time/part-time working in the sector is not known. It has been suggested by local sector representatives that the age profile of the sector is polarised between young women taking a first job and older women with children (who work in the sector while their own children are young and leave when their children become independent of childcare).

#### **Future employment in the sector**

19. There is no available formal forecast for employment in the early years and childcare sector because forecasting models (such as Working Futures II, the model generated by IER on behalf of the SSDA and LSC) forecast only at the

level of 'social care and development' as a broad sector encompassing adult and children's care alike.

20. However, the Skills for Care SSC notes (The State of the Social Care Workforce, Skills for Care, April 2005) that employment in paid childcare was estimated to have changed between 1998 and 2003 as:

**Table 3: National change in the early years and childcare workforce, 1998-2003**

	<b>% change 1998-2003</b>
Nurseries (full day-care)	+ 158
Play-groups and pre-schools	- 9
Out-of-school clubs	+ 96
Childminders	- 21
<b>Total</b>	<b>+ 24</b>

Source: State of the Social Care Workforce, Skills for Care, 2005

21. These statistics show that the childcare workforce has grown strongly overall, influenced, of course, by government policy, with a very significant shift from relatively informal modes of childcare to childcare of a more formal character and for longer periods of the day.
22. Whether this employment trend has reached a peak or plateau such that further growth will be of a lesser scale is uncertain (see next chapter for discussion of key sector drivers) but it seems likely that current employment trends, favouring more working women, and government concern that formal childcare should be widely available are, in combination, sufficient to ensure that levels of employment in the sector do not fall back and may well rise further.

**Summary: employment in the childcare sector**

23. A review of employment in the sector makes the following key points:
- The sector is variously and sometimes ambiguously defined. Statistics on employment are correspondingly less robust for this sector than most others (for which the government's Annual Business Inquiry usually makes available a basically reliable employment picture).
  - It is estimated, however, that the sector generates between 2% and 3% of the total employment of local areas and around 10,000 to 12,000 jobs in the BDPS area (excluding 'social care' provision for children's welfare and concentrating just on early years care and out of school provision for children).
  - Within this total, employment is most numerous in private sector provision (whether in private nurseries, by self-employed childminders or by domestic nannies) or in

provision by social and community organisations. Employment in public provision is lesser.

- Employment is weighted almost exclusively to that of women, with younger women having prominence in some particular forms of childcare.
- The recent trend in employment has been upwards, and in favour of formal settings for care. This trend is driven by social and economic trends which favour female employment and by government policy to widen the availability of childcare for a mix of social reasons (concerned with raising equality of opportunity for disadvantaged children) and economic reasons (concerned with ensuring that mothers are more easily able to enter or remain in work in the years when they have young children).

### 3. Key sector drivers

#### Introduction

24. We noted in the previous chapter that childcare has gained much prominence in recent years in government policy, and that employment in the sector has risen strongly. This chapter reviews some of the 'driving forces' of the sector in more detail.

#### Policy background: the National Childcare Strategy and beyond

25. The introduction of the National Childcare Strategy in 1998 marked a radical shift in government policy and for the first time put childcare provision firmly on the political map. The strategy clearly signalled the government's commitment to providing "good quality and affordable childcare provision ... in every neighbourhood".
26. Since 1998 a wide range of childcare initiatives and funding streams have been introduced, with linked but slightly different foci and aims. Some of these initiatives and funding are universal. An example of this is the provision of free part-time early years education for three and four year olds.
27. Other initiatives have been targeted at specific groups (eg. low-income families and student parents). Some programmes have been launched nationwide, such as out-of-school childcare funding from the New Opportunities Fund. Other programmes are provided only in the most disadvantaged areas, such as the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and Sure Start Local Programmes.
28. In 2001, National Standards were introduced. These set a baseline below which no (registered) service can fall. They cover all aspects of childcare provision, from health and safety to learning opportunities, and from staff qualifications to partnerships with parents. A new Early Years Directorate within Ofsted was also created to inspect childcare services and to ensure that the required standards are met. While setting minimum standards, the government is also encouraging providers to raise the quality of their service beyond the baseline guaranteed by the National Standards, through quality assurance schemes, such as Investors in Children (for group-based providers) and Children Come First (for childminders).
29. Then within its *ten-year strategy for childcare*, announced in late 2004, the Government signalled its plans to develop its policies to provide 'affordable, flexible, high-quality childcare for all parents who need it'. At the heart of the strategy lies the belief that, like education, different forms of childcare play a major role in children's social, cultural and psychological development. The strategy is also closely linked to other key policy priorities, namely tackling child poverty, labour market disadvantage and social exclusion.
30. Key points of the strategy include:

#### Parental leave

- Maternity leave to increase from six to nine months by 2007, with the goal of 12 months' paid maternity leave by the end of the next Parliament.
- Consultation on giving families the right to transfer a proportion of maternity pay and leave to the father by the end of the next Parliament.

### **Childcare and early education services**

- 3,500 children's centres by 2010, providing access for all families. Most children's centres will provide early education and childcare, although some will just provide signposting to childcare services.
- Free part-time early education places for three and four year olds extended from 12.5 hours a week 33 weeks a year to 38 weeks a year by 2006 and to 15 hours a week by 2010, with the goal of 20 hours a week, 38 weeks a year.
- By 2010 all 5-11 year olds to access affordable school-based childcare all year round. All secondary schools will be open from 8am to 6pm during the week by 2010.
- A new duty on local authorities to ensure that quality affordable childcare is available where families live.
- A Transformation Fund of £125m a year from April 2006 to support investment by local authorities in quality affordable and sustainable childcare.
- A new legal framework for the regulation and inspection of early education and childcare by 2008, creating a single system for all services.
- A single quality framework for children from birth to five, taking an integrated approach to care and education.

### **Childcare workforce**

- A long-term vision that all full day-care settings are led by graduate qualified early years professionals.
- A single qualifications framework and the raising of the qualifications of the workforce and the development of training opportunities for childminders and other home-based carers to achieve level 3 qualifications.

### **Affordability**

- An increase in the maximum eligible costs in the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit from £135 to £175 a week for one child, and from £200 to £300 a week for two or more children from April 2005.
- From April 2006 an increase in the proportion of childcare costs covered by the tax credit from 70% to 80%.
- Consultation on extending entitlement to the childcare element to those working less than 16 hours a week.
- A series of pilots aimed at improving accessibility and affordability of childcare for parents on lower incomes living in London.

31. Following the inception of the strategy, *Children's Centres* are now building on many of the programmes set up in the early years of the National Childcare Strategy (in particular Sure Start, the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and Early Excellence Centres) to bring together, under the same roof, childcare, early years education and a range of other family services. Children's Centres are expected to provide services for 650,000 children and their families by 2006, and the aim is for every community to have a Children's Centre by 2010, serving every child under 5, starting with the most deprived areas. Through Children's Centres in their local community, the ten-year strategy aims to give every family easy access

to integrated services offering information, health, family support, childcare and other services for children.

32. A range of *childcare subsidies* is also now available directly to parents. The main demand-side funding is the childcare element within the Working Tax Credit (WTC), which is available to low and middle income parents working more than 16 hours a week (both parents in couple families). This was changed in April 2003 to make it more flexible and available to a greater number of families. There are further aims to expand this within the ten-year strategy. However, funding to help parents to pay for childcare is also available from a range of other sources (eg. the Childcare Access Fund and the Childcare Grant for students; help with childcare costs provided as part of the New Deal for Lone Parents). There are also plans within the ten-year strategy to extend the childcare providers eligible for financial support via a childcare approval scheme and to extend support for employer-supported childcare.
33. The National Childcare Strategy also includes a commitment to raising the *quality of childcare* and giving parents the *information* they need to choose what is right for their children. Many studies have shown that positive outcomes for children are closely related to the quality of care children receive, as was shown by the study on the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project, Sammons, Sylva, Melhuish and Blatchford, 2003). There is also evidence to suggest that parents will not use childcare services, unless they believe they are of acceptable quality and will meet their children's needs.
34. Further, the ten-year strategy includes proposals to ensure high quality childcare provision via *reform of the childcare workforce*, through additional funding and a new qualification and career structure. Via reform of the regulation procedures and inspections, there are proposals to improve standards and better inform parents.
35. Formal childcare is used mainly by working families, and parents who are studying or training in order to re-enter the labour market or change career. Therefore, the National Childcare Strategy places a great emphasis on ensuring that childcare services are sufficiently *flexible* to reflect changing employment patterns, and in particular trends in womens' employment – as by and large, mothers still have main responsibility for childcare. This might mean, for example, an increasing need for childcare at non-standard times, a wide range of part-time arrangements, and wraparound childcare to combine with early years provision.

### **The Childcare Act 2006**

36. Further impetus has been given to the 10-year strategy by the recent Childcare Act. This Act, which came into force in July 2006, enshrines in law parents' expectation of accessible high quality childcare and services for children under 5 and their families.
37. The Act establishes new *statutory* duties which build on local authorities' existing roles and responsibilities:
  - It requires local authorities to improve the outcomes of all children under 5 and close the gaps between those with the poorest outcomes and the rest, by ensuring early childhood services are integrated, proactive and accessible.
  - Gives local authorities the lead role in facilitating the childcare market to ensure it meets the needs of working

- parents, in particular those on low incomes and with disabled children.
- Ensures people have access to the full range of information they may need as a parent - each Local Authority is required to operate a Children's Information Service providing advice and information to parents as to the availability and costs of childcare.
  - Introduces the Early Years Foundation Stage – to support the delivery of quality integrated education and care for children from birth to age 5.
  - Aims to lead to a reformed, simplified, childcare and early years regulation framework to reduce bureaucracy and focus on raising quality.
38. Thus the act places a statutory duty on top tier local authorities (LAs) in England to improve the *Every Child Matters* outcomes for all under fives and reduce inequalities in achievement, through helping them to access to integrated, pro-active early childhood services.
39. In discharging these duties, LAs and their partners in the NHS and Jobcentre Plus are required to work together and have regard to statutory guidance which will indicate how services will be delivered through children's centres.
40. LAs must improve the well-being of young children and reduce inequalities in relation to:
- **being healthy** - physical and mental health and emotional well-being
  - **staying safe** - protection from harm and neglect
  - **enjoying and achieving** - education, training and recreation
  - **making a positive contribution to society** - support for the vulnerable and positive outlooks
  - **social and economic well-being** - parents in employment
41. Integrated early childhood services must include:
- early years provision (integrated childcare and early education)
  - social services
  - relevant health services eg. health visitors, ante-natal, post-natal care
  - services provided by Jobcentre Plus to assist parents to obtain work
  - information services (under the revised duty in clause 12)
42. LAs and their partners must deliver early childhood services in ways that:
- are integrated - to facilitate access and maximise benefits to users
  - include pro-active outreach – to ensure that those families needing services are identified and helped to access them, and that fathers as well as mothers are reached and engaged

- involve fathers and mothers in service planning and delivery
  - involve other providers, including from the private and voluntary sectors
43. All in all, much has changed since 1997 and the election of a Labour government which has encouraged a substantial increase in childcare services and a proliferation of delivery models. The government reports having increased the stock of childcare places by 90% since 1997, now providing 1.2 million registered places in England. The new Childcare Act will require local authorities to secure sufficient childcare places for their local areas.

**Summary: key sector drivers**

44. The underlying 'drivers' of change and development in the sector concern the widening of access of women to training and employment for economic reasons, the countering of social disadvantage which occurs through weak and unassisted parenting, and a concern that welfare dependence should not be intertwined with the unavailability of childcare so frequently as it has been.
45. However, these drivers have been given clear regulatory and legislative force by a series of developments pushed forward by government since 1997. These developments have vastly increased the state's role: regulating childcare standards, seeking to professionalise its workforce, and greatly expanding the scale of provision.
46. At this point a range of delivery challenges remain:
- The cost burden of childcare still remains high for many.
  - It is not clear that provision intended to help disadvantaged women actually does so in many cases – rather it is those further up the employment and income scale who may benefit.
  - And the push for expansion of childcare places and concomitantly on the size and standards of the childcare workforce inevitably raises difficulties in securing that workforce in a sector where wages are low and labour turnover is significant.

## 4. Demand for labour and skills in Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole, and Somerset

### Introduction

47. Thus far, we have reflected on the size of the childcare sector in the BDPS area, on the trend in employment, and on the major factors which drive both the overall level of employment and the changing nature of skills required in the industry.
48. In this chapter, the nature of labour and skills *demand* in the sub-region is considered in more detail.

### Occupational structure

49. At the simplest level, 'labour demand' can be considered just as the necessity to fill the 10,000-12,000 or so jobs which are offered by the sector in Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole and Somerset. In principle, the nature of those jobs can be more clearly understood by reference to their occupational structure.
50. However, a clear occupational structure for workers in the sector has not yet been developed. For example, Skills for Care in its report 'The State of the Social Care Workforce 2004' (Skills for Care, April 2005) classifies staff (nationally) as:
  - Managers in Early Years and Childcare settings (30% of total)
  - Supervisors in Early Years and Childcare settings (38%)
  - Other staff in Early Years and Childcare settings (32%)
51. The same report, however, also uses a separate classification, which includes:
  - Senior Manager (22% of total)
  - Supervisory staff (ie. qualified to supervise a group of children on their own, eg. Nursery Nurse) (24%)
  - Childcare staff (24%)
  - Nursery Nurses (qualified) (18%)
  - Other paid Early Years support staff (5%)
  - Head Teacher (0.1%)
  - Early Years Foundation Stage Co-ordinator (3%)
  - Qualified Early Years Teacher (5%)
  - Student volunteers (7%)
  - Other volunteers (11%)
52. However, it should be noted that neither of these descriptions clearly identifies where nannies and childminders fit into the analysis (if they do) and that in the second analysis Nursery Nurses could apparently fall into two groups ('Supervisory Staff' and 'Nursery Nurses').
53. In a separate report of the Children's Workforce Development Council (part of Skills for Care), staff are classified (nationally) in a way which puts greater emphasis on the location rather than grading of staff:

- Nursery worker (30% of total)
  - Childminder (14%)
  - Day care worker (22%)
  - Nanny (18%)
  - Sessional care worker (16%)
54. Locally, other distributions are used. For example, Dorset Sure Start (in, for example, 2005 Childcare Workforce Strategy – Summary, Dorset Sure Start, 2005) simply classifies staff as:
- Leaders (26% of total)
  - Staff (52%)
  - Childminders (22%)
55. In short, therefore, there is little clarity or consistency in the way in which the Early Years and Childcare workforce is classified, relating to the point made earlier that the sector itself is not clearly defined. Perhaps the most that can be said is that, occupationally, the sector (excluding domestic nannies) is comprised of around a quarter of people who have an ownership/leadership/management role, somewhere around a fifth (or fewer) are childminders, and the remainder (around 55%) are in intermediate roles of varying responsibilities, including supervisors, nursery nurses, 'other staff', and those with teaching roles.
56. If this very crude distribution were applied to the local (non-domestic nanny) estimate of the total workforce (around 10,000 people) it would suggest that, in the BDPS area, there are about 2,500 owners/leaders/managers, around 5,500 intermediate and lower grade staff in various childcare group settings and somewhere around 2,000 (or perhaps fewer) childminders.

### Future labour demand

57. As we noted earlier, there is no formal forecast for the future level or type of employment in the sector. The sector has grown strongly over recent years in terms of employment levels and the statutory demands of the Children's Act of July 2003 may imply further growth (though funding issues remain a significant barrier to such growth).
58. In addition, the sector has a significant need to replace staff who leave.
59. At national level, turnover rates are estimated (by the 2005 Early Years and Childcare Providers Survey, DfES, 2006) as:
- Fully day care 17%
  - Sessional care 12%
  - Out-of-school care 21%
60. These rates, however, include an unspecified element of 'churn' *within* the sector not simply those who leave the sector entirely.
61. Locally, Dorset's 2005 Childcare Workforce Strategy reports an overall turnover rate of 13%, of which a third of movement represents 'churn' (ie. two-thirds of the childcare workforce or around 9% leaves the workforce).

62. Using these estimates suggests that the *new* recruitment requirement (that is of people who have not previously worked in the sector before) is of around 1 in 10 of the base workforce (around 1,000-1,200 people in the BDPS area) per year.
63. Local discussions suggest that turnover is driven by two particular factors:
- Firstly, that wage levels in the sector are frequently quite low (as nationally). Even posts requiring Level 3 qualifications may pay wages not greatly above minimum wage level. For example, some local jobs recently advertised include:
    - Pre-school assistant £5.35 per hour
    - Nursery cook £6.00 per hour
    - Holiday club assistant £6.22 per hour
    - Nursery manager (minimum Level 3) £6.75 per hour
    - Play leader (minimum Level 3) £7.50 per hour
    - Pre-school supervisor (minimum Level 3) £6.25 per hour
  - Secondly, that women frequently work in the sector whilst their own children are in 'childcare' stages but then leave the sector once their children are through these stages.
64. These factors suggest that most labour turnover is likely to affect lower and intermediate occupations in the sector rather than managers and nursery proprietors.

### The skills requirement

65. Whilst the numbers of people required by the sector can (with considerable caution) be estimated, the further question arises as to what skills will be in growing demand.
66. It seems to be the case that the basic skills of childcare are essentially what they have always been. Seeking to care for and socialise young children requires a set of attributes which are effectively timeless (though some of the more punitive approaches have gone out of fashion!).
67. However, what is clear is that the national childcare strategy has brought much more *formalisation* such that the skill needs of sector workers become much more explicit and capable of measurement and certification.
68. Techniques for formalisation concern, principally....
- The identification of a set of common induction standards for all workers in the sector.
  - The creation of Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) for senior workers in the sector.
  - Establishment of an Integrated Qualifications Framework.

### Induction standards

69. Following an extensive stakeholders consultation early in 2006, a set of Children, Young People and Families Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Induction Standards has been published (September 2006), together with supporting

materials for those involved in the first stage of implementation, which will be in children's social care from September 2006 onwards and in other childcare settings thereafter. These standards set out clearly what new workers should know, understand and be able to do *within six months of starting work*. In summary, they address:

70. Understanding the principles of childcare
  - Principles and values
  - Equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice
  - Person-centred approaches
  - Confidentiality and sharing information
  
71. Understanding the childcare worker's role
  - Work role
  - Legislation, policies and procedures
  - Relationships with carers, parents and others
  - Team working
  - Being organised
  - Complaints and Compliments
  
72. Understanding health and safety requirements
  - Laws, policies and procedures
  - Moving, lifting and handling people and objects
  - Premises
  - Medication and health-care procedures
  - Personal safety and security
  - Risk assessment
  
73. Knowing how to communicate effectively
  - Encourage communication
  - Knowing about communication
  - Communication with parents and carers
  - Principles of keeping good records
  
74. Understanding child development
  - Attachment and stages of development
  - Supporting play, activities and learning
  - Observation and judgement
  - Understanding contexts
  - Transitions (Transitions are stages in children's lives – some are general, some are individual)
  - Supporting disabled children and children with special educational needs

75. Safeguarding children
- Laws, policies and procedures
  - Providing safe environments
  - Recognising and responding to abuse
  - Working with other agencies
  - 'Whistle-blowing' (reporting failures in duty)
76. Attention to development
- Your role and registration
  - Using support and supervision to develop your role
  - Meeting learning needs as part of continuing professional development (CPD)
  - Career progression
77. Thus, Induction Standards establish, perhaps for the first time, a set of basic knowledge, skills and attributes which are required of all those who work with children and, in doing so, generate a description of the base skill requirements which the sector workforce will seek to develop in the short and medium term.

#### *Early Years Professional Status (EYPS)*

78. Evidence from the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study (The Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Project: Findings from the Pre-school Period, Sammons, Sylva, Melhuish and Blatchford, 2003) showed that improving the quality of the early years experience is directly related to better outcomes for children. Key factors contributing to the quality of this experience are well-qualified leaders, trained teachers working alongside and supporting less qualified staff and staff with a good understanding of child development and learning.
79. Correspondingly, the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) has sought to develop EYPS as a recognisable status equivalent to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). It will be awarded to practitioners leading and delivering excellent practice in early years settings. The Early Years Professional role has been created in response to the national consultation on the future of the children's workforce, which highlighted the need for further reform of the early years workforce. Early Years Professionals will be key to raising the quality of early years provision, modelling the skills and behaviours that safeguard and promote good outcomes for children.
80. In developing EYPS, the CWDC and its partners stress the importance of increasing levels of training and development across the whole of the early years workforce, the need to recruit and retain highly qualified staff and provide opportunities for more people to receive on-the-job training to equip them for their role and offer career progression opportunities. Priorities include support for the achievement of the National Occupational Standards at Level three and establishing an early years 'climbing frame' built around Level 3 and Level 6 qualifications and awards, with Foundation Degrees providing a bridge for those who wish to achieve EYPS.
81. Improving workforce skills, knowledge and competences are believed to be key to delivering the new Early Years Foundation Stage. Early Years Professionals will work in a range of settings in the private, voluntary, independent and maintained

sectors and will be key to leading and improving practice across the new EYFS. The CWDC believe that, over time, only those with EYPS should lead the delivery of the new Early Years Foundation Stage. The CWDC also believes that the relationship between Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and EYPS should be clarified in time for the introduction of the new Early Years Foundation Stage in 2008.

82. The Government aims to have EYPS in all children's centres offering early years provision by 2010 and in every full day care setting by 2015. A Transformation Fund has been established to improve the quality of provision in the early years, without passing on the cost to parents.
83. Providers accredited to deliver EYP training in the South West in Phase 2 of the programme are:
  - Bath Spa University
  - Best Practice Network
  - South West Initiative for Training
  - University of Gloucestershire
  - University of the West of England
  - University of Winchester
84. In addition to funds allocated to local authorities, the CWDC has been allocated £51.8m from the Transformation Fund to cover the costs of developing training and assessment pathways to EYPS and to provide financial support to EYPS candidates. This funding has been allocated to the CWDC to support candidates with Level 5 and Level 6 qualifications who wish to gain EYPS.
85. From September 2006, support from the local authorities' administered section of the Transformation Fund will be available through local authorities for a Recruitment Incentive of £3,000 each year for full day care settings in the private and voluntary sector to employ staff, for the first time, who are aspiring to achieve EYPS within two years; and a Quality Premium of £5,000 each year for those full day care providers in the private and voluntary sectors with an employee who will reach EYPS within two years.

#### *Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF)*

86. Following the publication of an initial development plan in April 2006, a new document (Clear Progress: towards an Integrated Qualifications Framework, Children's Workforce Network and CWDC, November 2006) sets out the next steps in the implementation of the IQF. In addition, further information is revealed about how the IQF will work including how it will be a unit based framework with eight levels up to and including higher education and professional level qualifications.
87. Designed to create mobility across the children and young people's workforce, IQF aims to bring together and simplify the range of qualifications available and to provide a qualifications framework that employers can easily understand and that will help them identify the skills and training required for a particular job.
88. The development work for the IQF is co-ordinated by the members of the Childcare Workforce Network in partnership with CWDC and employers and other stakeholders. The launch of the publication is the next step forward in ensuring the framework is delivered by 2010 and provides details of key milestones

including the establishment of a Higher Education Reference group and when the first qualifications will be 'posted' on the framework.

89. Key developments the document outlines include:

- Establishing a Higher Education/Professional Body Reference Group which will include professional bodies, higher education institutions and the Quality Assurance Agency to advise on effective approaches, communication and adopting common learning outcomes.
- Facilitating a series of national and regional workshops for HE and Professional Bodies and produce preliminary proposals for how the IQF will link with the Higher Education Qualifications Framework by July 2007.
- Establishing an awarding body consultative forum to develop transitional arrangements for existing qualifications by December 2006. A Vocational and Educational Training Reference Group made up of a mix of partner SSCs, CoVEs, Ofsted, LSC, Ofsted and training providers will also be established.
- Putting in place the final specification for the inclusion of qualifications on the IQF by September 2007.
- All new and revised qualifications taking account of the IQF by October 2007.
- Clear progression routes for members of the children's workforce and the first undergraduate/posted on the IQF by December 2009.

#### **Summary: demand for labour and skills**

90. A review of demand for labour and skills in the childcare sector is hampered by restricted and ambiguous data both at national and local level. However, what is apparent is:

- Labour demand at its most basic is comprised of a requirement to provide staff to fill the 10,000-12,000 early years and childcare posts in the BDPS area.
- Identification of a more specific occupational requirement is difficult because of data weakness and scarcity but it seems that around 2,500 posts are at senior level (proprietors, managers, leaders), about 5,500 posts are in intermediate and lower grades in group childcare settings, and up to 2,000 people may be working as self-employed childminders.
- Future demand is difficult to estimate and there is no available formal forecast. Using available figures for recruitment needs suggests, however, that the sector overall may need to recruit around 1,000-1,200 staff annually to replace leavers. However, this figure may rise significantly if recent growth in employment in the sector, driven largely by government policy, continues in future years.
- Replacement needs are partially driven by low pay in the sector with many jobs paying at or a little above minimum wage even when those jobs require Level 3 qualifications.
- It is suggested that the fundamental character of childcare skills does not greatly change. However, government

interest in the sector reflected in the statutes and legislation discussed in the previous chapter, have led to a very clear focus on formalising skill requirements and professionalising the sector workforce. This focus has found particular expression in three initiatives:

- The identification of common Induction Standards for new childcare staff.
- The establishment of Early Years Professional Status to bring senior staff up to the standard of qualified teachers.
- The introduction of an Integrated Qualifications Framework to simplify the qualifications framework and encourage progression within the workforce.

## 5. Supply of labour and skills

### Introduction

91. The previous section of this report considered labour and skills demand – the numbers of people with particular abilities which the childcare sector in the BDPS area needs, now and in the near future, to operate its services at an efficient level.
92. This chapter moves on to consider the ability of the local area to supply those requirements. However, as context we first set out a brief consideration of some national supply characteristics.

### The national supply picture

#### Introduction

93. The most up-to-date national picture of qualifications and training in the sector is offered by the report of DfES surveys of the workforce (2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Surveys, DfES, 2005).
94. This survey uses the revised levels of qualifications adopted in 2005.
95. Thus, the qualifications are grouped together in the levels as accredited with by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority:
  - Level 1 (foundation level) – GCSE grade D-G, Foundation level GNVQ, Level 1 NVQ
  - Level 2 (intermediate level) – GCSE A\*-C, Intermediate GNVQ, Level 2 NVQ
  - Level 3 (Advanced level) – A level, Vocational A level (Advanced GNVQ), Level 3 NVQ
  - Level 4 – Higher level qualifications, BTEC Higher Nationals, Level 4 NVQ (e.g. Level 4 Certificate in Early Years Practice)
  - Level 5 – Higher level qualifications, BTEC Higher Nationals, Level 5 NVQ (e.g. Early Years Foundation Degree)
  - Level 6 – Honours degree (e.g. Qualified Teacher Status)
  - Level 7 – Masters degree
  - Level 8 – Doctorate

#### Any childcare qualification

96. Using this structure, the surveys found that the proportion of paid staff that held some kind of qualification related to childcare had increased slightly across the different settings from 2003 to 2005. In 2003, 71% of the workforce held a relevant childcare qualification, in 2005, 74% held a relevant qualification.
97. In full day care settings there was a slight increase in the proportion of staff with a qualification related to childcare, 80% in 2005 compared with 77% in 2003.
98. In sessional settings there was also an increase in the proportion of staff that held a childcare qualification, from 65% to 76%.

99. Three quarters (76%) of all paid staff working in out of school providers had a childcare qualification.
100. The proportion of childminders who had a qualification is lower than for staff in group settings. Similarly to 2003 when the figure was 64%, 65% of childminders held some kind of childcare qualification in 2005. (However, local industry representatives believe this national report may have overstated these proportions and may have conflated general qualifications with specifically childcare qualifications - local experience suggests that fewer childminders have relevant qualifications than the national report suggests):

**Table 4: Proportion of paid staff with any relevant childcare qualification**

	<b>2005</b>	2003	<i>03/05 change</i>
Full day care providers	<b>80%</b>	77%	+ 3
Sessional day care providers	<b>76%</b>	65%	+ 11
After school providers	<b>71%</b>	58%	+ 1
Childminders	<b>65%</b>	64%	+ 1
Total	<b>74%</b>	71%	+ 4

Source: 2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES

*Level three or above childcare qualification*

101. The National Standards for Under Eights Day Care and Childminding state that all those *leading* group-based provision should have an appropriate Level 3 or higher qualification.
102. The survey found that the proportion of staff that hold at least a Level 3 qualification had increased across the provider types.
103. *Full day care providers* had the highest proportion of staff at this level. In 2005, 63% of all paid staff in full day care settings held at least a Level 3 qualification, an increase from 57% in 2003. Nearly all senior managers and supervisory staff had at least a Level 3 qualification (90% and 84% respectively), but the proportion was much lower for other paid staff at 17% (a decrease from 24% in 2003).
104. 55% of all paid staff in *sessional providers* held at least a Level 3 qualification, an increase from 44% in 2003. Again the majority of senior managers (86%) and supervisory staff (74%) held at least a Level 3 qualification. The figure was much lower for other paid staff at just 13% (the same as 2003).
105. Of the group settings, the proportion of staff that held at least a Level 3 qualification was lowest amongst *out of school providers*. Overall, half (51%) of all paid staff in registered out of school providers held at least a Level 3 qualification. The proportion of all paid staff that held at least a Level 3 qualification has increased from 37% to 51%.

106. In *registered out of school settings* a majority of senior managers (82%) and supervisory staff (68%) had at least a Level 3 qualification. The figure was much lower for other paid childcare staff (10%).
107. Overall, *childminders* were the least likely to hold at least a Level 3 qualification, with two-fifths of childminders (43%) saying they had a Level 3 qualification or above. While this is lower than the other provider types, the percentage had increased considerably since 2003 when the figure was just 16%. However, the survey report notes that this increase may be due to confusion among childminders as what counts as a Level 3 qualification. There is a suggestion that some childminders may count one unit towards the Level 3 qualification as a Level 3 qualification; therefore this increase should be treated with caution:

**Table 5: Proportion of paid staff with at least a Level 3 qualification**

	2005	2003	03/05 change
<b>Full day care providers</b>			
All paid staff	63%	57%	+ 6
Senior managers	90%	85%	+ 5
Supervisory staff	84%	73%	+ 11
Other paid childcare staff	17%	24%	- 7
<b>Sessional providers</b>			
All paid staff	55%	44%	+ 11
Senior managers	86%	77%	+ 9
Supervisory staff	74%	62%	+ 12
Other paid childcare staff	13%	13%	0
<b>After school providers</b>			
All paid staff	52%	37%	+ 15
Senior managers	83%	64%	+ 19
Supervisory staff	67%	47%	+ 20
Other paid childcare staff	9%	13%	- 4
<b>Childminders</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>+ 27</b>

Source: 2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES

*Level six or above childcare qualification*

108. The Government's ambition, as set out in its Children's Workforce Strategy, is to have a graduate-level early years' professional in every full day care setting by 2015.
109. The proportion of staff with at least a Level 6 qualification (ie. graduate level) was low across all the provider types.
110. Overall, just 4% of staff working within full day care and sessional day care providers and five per cent within out of school providers held a relevant Level 6 or above qualification. 13% of senior managers within full day care and out of school providers held at least a Level six qualification, while the figure was lower for sessional day care providers at 8%.

111. 2% of childminders held a graduate level childcare qualification.

**Table 6: Proportion of paid staff with a relevant Level 6 or higher qualification**

	2005
<b>Full day care providers</b>	
All paid staff	4%
Senior managers	13%
<b>Sessional providers</b>	
All paid staff	4%
Senior managers	8%
<b>After school providers</b>	
All paid staff	4%
Senior managers	13%
<b>Childminders</b>	<b>2%</b>

Source: 2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES

#### Staff training

112. Nearly all providers helped their staff to receive training – 97% of full day care providers, 93% of sessional day care providers and 95% of out of school providers.
113. The majority of group providers had a written training plan. Full day care providers were the most likely to with 70%, out of school providers were second with 64% and sessional day care providers were the least likely with 61%.
114. Around half of all providers had a specific training budget – 53% of full day care settings, 44% of sessional care settings and 50% of out of school settings.
115. The most common sources of funding for staff training across all provider types were Government sources (such as Sure Start, the EYDCP and free local authority courses) and the Learning and Skills Council:

**Table 7: Funding sources for training**

	Full day	Sessional	Out of School
Government sources	90%	86%	76%
Learning and Skills Council	17%	7%	15%

Source: 2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES

116. In general, providers thought the amount of training that their staff had received was sufficient. Four fifths (81%) of full day care senior managers thought the amount of training their staff had received was 'About right', 84% of sessional day care managers and three quarters (75%) of out of school care managers said the same:

**Table 8: Whether amount of training received was sufficient**

	Full day	Sessional	Out of School
Too little	16	13	20
Too much	1	2	2
About right	81	84	75
Don't know	2	*	3

Source: 2005 Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES

117. Providers who helped staff to receive training were asked what types of training they helped their staff to receive. First aid training was by far the most common, with 67% of full day care settings, 65% of sessional day care settings and 75% of out of school settings saying their staff received this sort of training. The other common types of training across provider types were childcare training, child protection and food hygiene.
118. Most childminders (84%) had attended a preparatory course when they first registered as a childminder, a slight increase since 2003 when the proportion was 77% and continuing an upward trend since 2001.
119. Childminders were asked how many days training they had received over the last 12 months. A third (34%) had received no training at all, 36% had received one to five days, 12% 6 to 10 days and 18% 11 days or more.
120. Those childminders who had received no training were asked what they felt about not receiving any training. The majority (70%) thought this was 'About right' and 23% said they thought this was 'Not enough'.
121. A separate source (The State of the Social Care Workforce 2004, Skills for Care, April 2005) notes that the numbers of *Early Years NVQs* awarded nationally virtually doubled between 2001 and 2004 (2001: NVQ2 4,893, NVQ3 5,747, NVQ4 0; 2004: NVQ2 8,712, NVQ3 10,844, NVQ4 89).

*Summary: skills supply at national level*

122. A national analysis of qualifications and training suggests:
- The proportion of the childcare workforce with a childcare-related qualification is high and is increasing at a significant rate.
  - Substantial proportions of the workforce, particularly managers and supervisors, hold at least Level 3 qualifications, though proportions are lower in some groups (below supervisory level in full day care providers, sessional providers, registered out-of-school settings and amongst childminders).
  - The proportions of managers holding a degree level qualification (Level 6) remains low across the sector as a whole.

- Staff training is widespread in the sense that nearly all providers help their staff to receive training and the great majority of providers thought the amount of training available was adequate. Much training is directed to special courses (such as food hygiene and first aid) but childcare training is also common and statistics show that training towards Early Years NVQs is accelerating.

### Local skills supply

123. Turning now from the national context to the local position, labour and skills supply in the BDPS area depends, broadly, on two factors. Firstly, the general availability of labour and, secondly, the scale and success of mechanisms to generate relevant skills.

### Broad labour supply

124. Thus, a first issue concerns the availability of labour in general. Of course, the childcare sector is in competition with other sectors for the supply of labour – particularly at lower levels and for generic skills which are readily transferable between sectors. The question is one of whether the local labour market is ‘tight’ (ie. fairly competitive for labour or skills) or not.
125. There are a number of indicators of ‘tightness’ in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.
126. Firstly, the working age employment rate in Dorset and Poole is higher than in England and the SW as a whole though Bournemouth has a lower rate than both. Since 2001/02, the rate has grown in Dorset, but fallen in Poole and in Bournemouth. The national rate has remained static, and the SW rate has fallen slightly:

**Table 9: Employment rates in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole**

Percentage of working age population	Jun 01-May 02	Jun 04-May 05	% point change
Dorset	79.4	80.9	+1.5
Bournemouth	73.0	68.1	-4.9
Poole	80.3	77.2	-3.1
South West	78.9	78.8	-0.1
England	75.1	75.1	0

Source: ONS Quarterly Labour Force Survey 4<sup>th</sup> quarter average May 05

127. Thus, although there has been some slackening, local employment rates in Dorset and Poole (though not Bournemouth) remain higher than national levels – suggesting that the number of people available to enter the labour market is lesser than elsewhere.
128. Secondly, the latest annual unemployment rates are 3.9% for Bournemouth, 2.4% for Dorset and 2.3% for Poole (SW: 3.6%, Eng: 4.7%). Bournemouth’s 12-month average claimant count rate of 1.7% is higher than the South West average of 1.4%. The rates for Dorset (0.9%) and Poole (1.0%) are below. All

are less than the England rate (2.4%). Again, therefore, labour market tightness is evident. Unemployment rates (though recently moving upwards) remain very low in historical terms and local unemployment may be reduced to the minimum of people in 'transitional' unemployment – between jobs – or who are difficult to employ because of low abilities and/or low motivation.

129. If these factors suggest that local labour supply is constricted, then data on *house price* data emphasises the difficulty for prospective applicants for lower paid/lower skilled occupations to move into the area.
130. Thus, in Q3 of 2005, the average house price in Poole (£254,959) was the highest (out of 15) among SW county and unitary authorities, and was 29.3% above the English average (£197,201). (SW: £202,396). Dorset had the third highest average house price in the region (£230,261), and Bournemouth the ninth highest (£196,367).
131. More particularly, lower quartile housing affordability ratios show that lower quartile house prices are approximately 9.1 times lower quartile resident earnings in Bournemouth, and 9.6 times in Poole (SW: 8.5, England 6.8). For Dorset districts, ratios range from 9.2 (Weymouth and Portland) to 11.9 (Christchurch). The latter is the highest lower quartile ratio of any local authority in the South West. (*House Prices: OPDM Mean House Prices Q3 2005 (provisional)/ Affordability: HM Land Registry house prices Q1-Q2 2005/ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2005.*)
132. Data on *Somerset* is less comprehensive but it can be noted that:
  - Somerset's economic activity rate (81.6) remains higher than that of the South West (80.8) or the UK (78.1)
  - Unemployment (claimant count) is lower in Somerset (1.4) than the South West average (1.7) or the UK average (2.6).
  - House prices are below the average for England and Wales. However, because of relatively lower wages, their affordability is also less than average.
133. Overall, these statistics, for the BDP area and Somerset, suggest that the labour market in both sub-regions is still quite tight and that the childcare sector, given prevalent low wages, has to offer other advantages if it is to recruit and retain its workforce.

### **Work-based learning (WBL)**

134. Statistics for WBL participation in the BDPS area show that 238 Apprentices ended a period of training within the childcare sector in 2004/05. These were distributed by age and gender as:

**Table 10: 'Completing' WBL trainees in child development and well-being in the BDPS area, 2004/05; numbers**

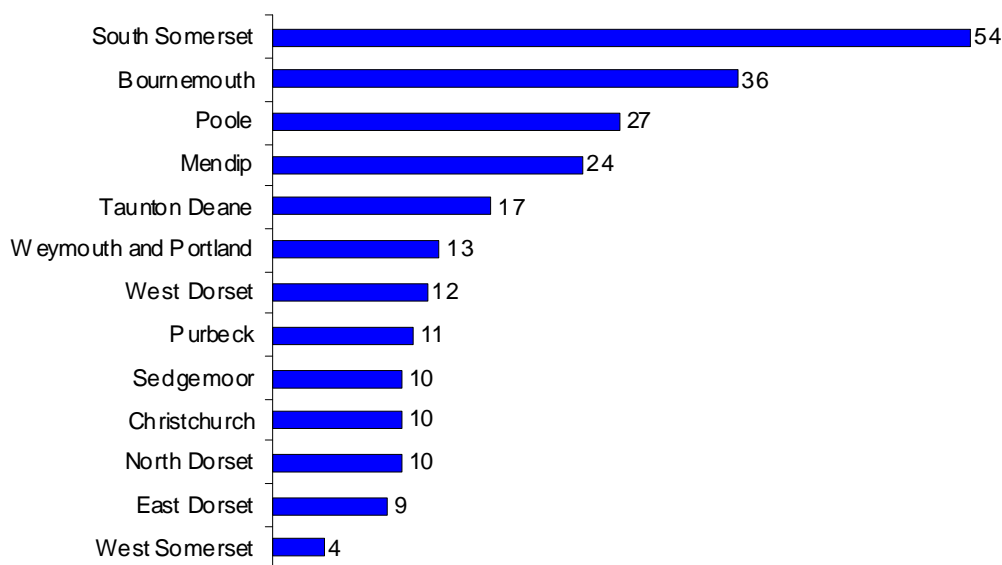
	F	M	Total
16-18 years	135	7	142
19-20 years	58	0	58
21-24 years	35	3	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>228</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>238</b>

Source: ILR 2004/05

135. It can be seen that the structure of Work Based Learners perpetuates the strong bias towards female employment in the sector.

136. Locationally, Apprentices were resident in all BDPS Districts/UAs with the largest number being in South Somerset:

**Figure 2: Numbers of WBL trainees ending training in child development and well-being per District/UA, 2004/05**



Source: ILR 2004/05

137. The majority of WBL trainees were Apprentices at Foundation level (148 cases; 62%) with a smaller number at Advanced level, Level 3 (90 cases, 38%).

138. In 2004/05 success rates were moderate, particularly in terms of completion of the full framework but improved markedly in 2005/06:

**Table 11: Success rates in WBL in child development and well-being in the BDPS area, 2004/05 and 2005/06**

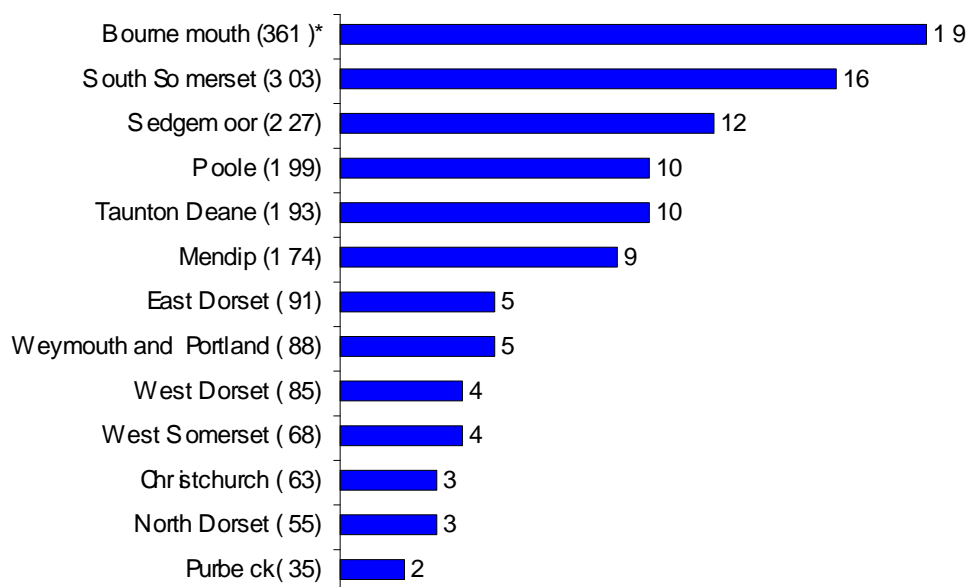
	2004/05		2005/06	
	Some achievement	Full framework completion	Some achievement	Full framework completion
Apprenticeship (Level 2)	72%	53%	75%	72%
Advanced Apprenticeship (Level 3)	59%	37%	76%	50%

Source: ILR 2004/05 and 2005/06

### Further Education

139. In total, 1,943 learning aims in child development and well-being were pursued in Further Education by residents of the BDPS area during 2004/05. Of these:
- 771 (40%) were pursued by people aged 16-18, 1,172 (60%) were pursued by people aged 19 or over.
  - 1,839 (95%) were pursued by females and 104 (5%) were pursued by males.
140. These students were resident in all Districts and Unitary Authority areas in the BDPS area with proportions of learning aims being roughly in proportion to the underlying populations of the different areas:

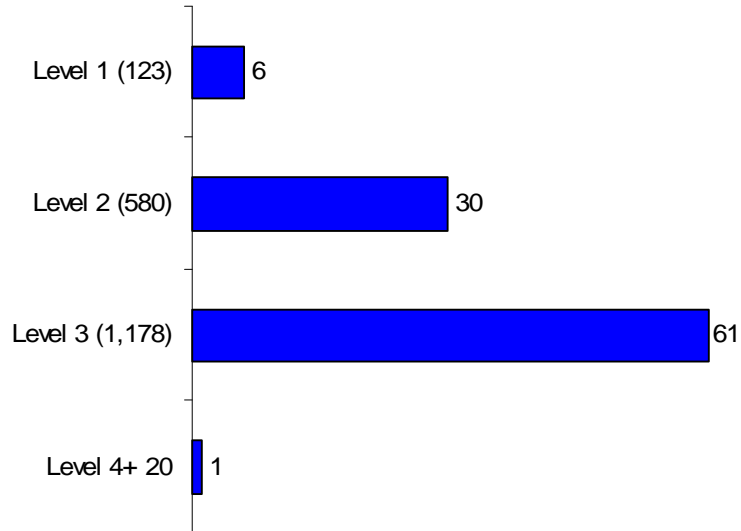
**Figure 3: Place of residence of those with learning aims in child development and well-being, 2004/05; percentages**



Source: ILR 2004/05

141. The *levels* at which students pursued learning aims are set out below. It can be seen that the majority are at Level 3:

**Figure 4: Level of learning aims pursued by BDPS area students, 2004/05; percentages**



Source: ILR 2004/05  
\* Actual cases

142. The learning aims pursued by 16-18 year old FE students were:

**Table 12: Learning aims of 16-18 year old FE students; numbers and percentages**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Award in Caring for Children	38	4.9
BTEC First Diploma in Early Years	23	3
BTEC National Certificate in Early Years	1	0.1
BTEC National Diploma in Early Years	194	25.2
Certificate in Child Care and Education	151	19.6
Certificate in Creative Development for Early Years	40	5.2
Certificate in Early Years Practice	7	0.9
Certificate in Effective Parenting	32	4.2
Certificate in Playwork	1	0.1
Certificate in Pre-School Practice	1	0.1
Certificate in Preparation for Childcare	20	2.6
Diploma in Child Care and Education	207	26.8
Diploma in Early Years Practice	1	0.1
Diploma in Pre-School Practice	5	0.6
Foundation Award in Caring for Children	1	0.1
Level 2 Certificate in Basic Care	1	0.1
NVQ in Early Years Care and Education	38	4.9
NVQ in Playwork	5	0.6
PLA Getting Started in a Pre-School Setting	3	0.4
Progression Award in Early Years Care and Education	2	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ILR 2004/05

143. It can be seen that the Diploma in Childcare and Education, BTEC National Diploma in Early Years and the Certificate in Childcare and Education account for 72% of all study in childcare for young students.
144. The learning aims of 19+ year old students were:

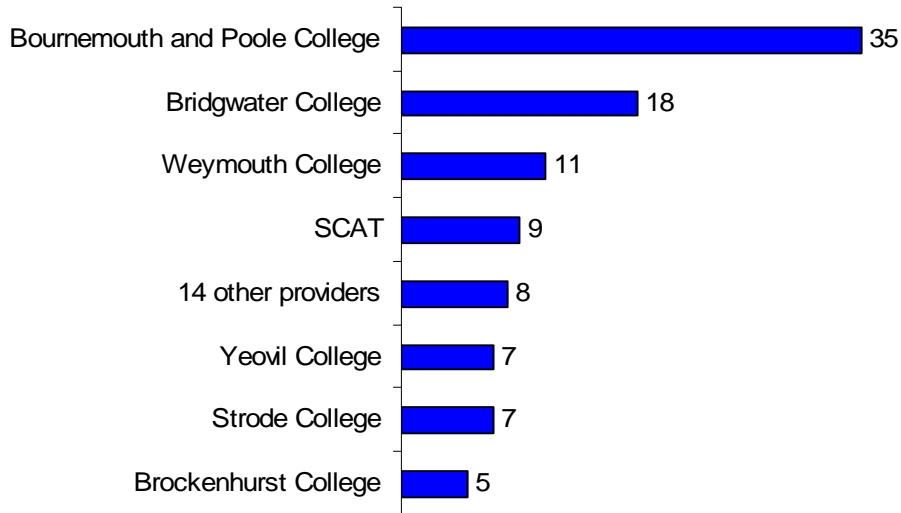
**Table 14: Learning aims of 19+ year old FE students; numbers and percentages**

	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Advanced Diploma in Child Care and Education	8	0.7
BTEC National Certificate in Early Years	15	1.3
BTEC National Diploma in Early Years	15	1.3
Certificate in Child Care and Education	4	0.3
Certificate in Childminding Practice	4	0.3
Certificate in Creative Development for Early Years	6	0.5
Certificate in Early Years Practice	18	1.5
Certificate in Effective Parenting	6	0.5
Certificate in Playwork	34	2.9
Certificate in Pre-School Practice	75	6.4
Certificate in Work with Children	5	0.4
Diploma in Child Care and Education	26	2.2
Diploma in Early Years Practice	10	0.9
Diploma in Playwork	2	0.2
Diploma in Pre-School Practice	50	4.3
Family Learning Foundation	21	1.8
Foundation Certificate in Care Workers	2	0.2
Level 2 Certificate in Basic Care	1	0.1
NVQ in Caring for Children and Young People	140	11.9
NVQ in Early Years Care and Education	650	55.5
NVQ in Playwork	34	2.9
PLA Getting Started in a Pre-School Setting	39	3.3
Progression Award in Early Years Care and Education	4	0.3
Take 5 for Play	3	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1172</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: ILR 2004/05

145. Thus, in the adult learner case, two qualifications accounted for over two-thirds of all 19+ study:
- NVQ in Early Years Care and Education (56%)
  - NVQ in Caring for Children and Young People (12%)
146. Of 16-18 year FE students, 76% either completed their learning aim or were continuing working towards it; 24% failed to complete. Of 19+ year old students, 84% either completed their learning aim or were continuing working towards it; 16% failed to complete.
147. Key FE providers for 16-18 year old students are:

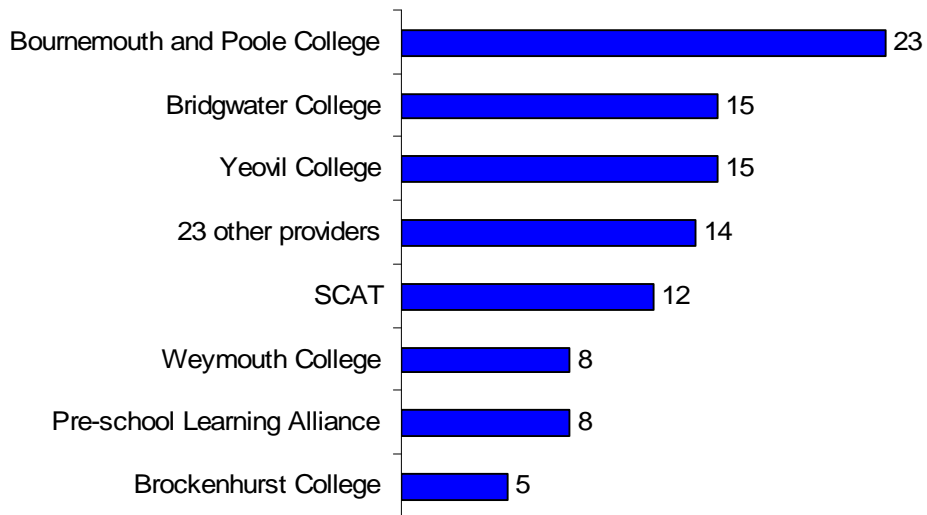
**Figure 5: Percentage of all 6-18 year child development and well-being learning aims in FE pursued in each location; 2004/05**



Source: ILR 2004/05

148. Key providers for students aged 19 and over are:

**Figure 6: Percentage of 19+ year child development and well-being learning aims in FE pursued in each location; 2004/05**



Source: ILR 2004/05

**WBL and FE in the childcare sector: summary**

149. What this data suggests is that local public training provision makes a significant contribution to the skills base of the childcare sector. Though Apprenticeship has clearly not made great inroads into the sector, with only 238 'completing' Apprenticeships in 2004/05 and only 260 in 2005/06, the FE sector instructed towards over 1,900 relevant 'learning aims' in 2004/05 of which at least two-thirds were at Level 3 or above.
  
150. Of course, it is important that the teaching available in the institutions offering childcare-related courses is of high quality. This latter issue can, to a degree, be assessed via Ofsted inspection reports of relevant departments in local Colleges. Where these reports are available, we set out relevant extracts below whilst noting that, in some cases, the inspections took place some time ago and that the inspections tend to be of wider social care departments rather than just of early years courses specifically:

## **Bournemouth and Poole College: inspection date March 2003**

### *Health and social care*

Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

#### *Strengths*

high pass rates on many courses  
good teaching  
good support for students  
strong management of the programme area  
wide range of courses with good provision.

#### *Weaknesses*

some unsatisfactory pass rates in 2002  
insufficient checks on students' learning in some lessons  
internal verification system for NVQ courses not fully implemented.

#### *Scope of provision*

The college provides a good range of full-time courses at foundation, intermediate and advanced levels in early years' education, care and health and social care for some 300 full-time students mostly aged 16 to 18. There are internal progression opportunities to HE courses. Some 120 adults follow access to HE and pre-access courses. NVQ courses are offered to almost 600 part-time students who are mostly adults. Part-time courses cover early years, care, playwork, childminding practice, welfare studies, parenting, learner support and counselling. The college has franchise arrangements with two organisations, mainly offering first-aid courses to nearly 600 adults. Additional qualifications are offered to full-time students.

#### *Achievement and standards*

Pass rates are high on many courses. They are above national averages for welfare studies at diploma and certificate levels, advanced health and social care, access to HE and the national diploma in early years. Similarly, they are above national averages for the advanced diploma and certificate in childcare and education, the certificate in welfare studies, counselling courses at all levels and certificate courses for learning support and support assistants. The GNVQ intermediate and the diploma in childcare and education had good pass rates until 2002 when they fell below national averages. In 2002, NVQ assessments were delayed when the awarding body withdrew the college's approval for certification. The situation had been resolved at the time of the inspection.

Most students develop sound habits of independent study and effective research skills. They use computers, the Internet and the college intranet confidently in their learning. Adult students work well together in a supportive manner and show sensitivity towards each other's views. Students on the advanced diploma in childcare and education, for example, were able to re-evaluate their working practice on the basis of the new knowledge they had gained.

They presented their conclusions to other students in lively and imaginative ways using an appropriate range of early years teaching techniques. Students on counselling courses achieve a high standard of personal development and display good levels of skills. Full-time students achieve a good range of additional qualifications. These include an imaginative college-devised certificate in creative development for early years. Students produced a valuable resource pack for a range of creative activities involving music, art and drama.

Success in these qualifications helps to develop students' self-confidence. Students' written work is satisfactory and often better. Wall displays indicate they acquire good practical skills for application in early years' settings. Full-time students on the national diploma in early years achieve a high proportion of merits and distinctions for their work in placement units. There is good internal progression, particularly from the first steps in care and child care courses and the foundation course in welfare studies.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in Health and social care, 2000 to 2002*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
First steps in childcare	1	No. of starts	***	14	26
		% retention	***	79	46
		% pass rate	***	57	50
Intermediate GNVQ in health and social care	2	No. of starts	17	18	17
		% retention	53	78	65
		% pass rate	78	69	45
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	19	36	29
		% retention	97	**	66
		% pass rate	88	**	84
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	35	33	32
		% retention	71	82	91
		% pass rate	86	100	54
Advanced GNVQ/AVCE* in health and social care	3	No. of starts	39	34	21
		% retention	74	71	90
		% pass rate	86	100	100
Access to social care	3	No. of starts	102	90	80
		% retention	87	**	88
		% pass rate	82	**	84
Advanced certificate on therapeutic counselling	3	No. of starts	49	38	40
		% retention	80	84	88
		% pass rate	84	100	89

\*AVCE in 2002

\*\*data unreliable

\*\*\*course did not run

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

#### *Quality of education and training*

There is much good, well planned teaching. Many teachers use group or practical work effectively. In a few lessons, group work is allowed to continue for too long and some students lose interest. Teachers are usually careful to check students' progress on tasks, but do not always check learning, understanding or application to the occupational setting. In some lessons, teachers do not question students directly and do not know the extent to which they are learning. Teachers provide effective role models and exemplify well the skill levels students are working towards in courses such as early years and counselling. Full-time early years' students, for example, benefited from a lively drama session where the teacher demonstrated a wide variety of techniques for use with children. In early years and playwork, attendance is good. However, on NVQ care courses attendance is poor. Many students choose not to attend workshops or are not able to be released from work. Telephone, postal contact and emails are used in these cases.

Teachers are appropriately qualified and have relevant experience. They have good opportunities for professional development. Accommodation is satisfactory or better. It is used to good effect to provide a range of classroom activities, including practical work. Rooms are well maintained and have vibrant, relevant wall displays. Computers are available in most classrooms. Counselling students gain good experience as practitioners through a community counselling service organised by the college.

Students are well supported and teachers have good understanding of the support needs of individual students. Learning support assistants are used effectively during lessons to support full-time and part-time students. Specialist support is provided for students with disabilities.

Full-time students have well-organised group tutorials and students' progress is monitored through regular individual tutorials. Realistic targets are set to help individual students improve their performance. Part-time students have individual tutorials and progress reviews, and some have group tutorials in addition. On welfare studies courses students support each other well and an 'SOS' card is used to provide immediate support from staff if it is needed outside the scheduled tutorials. Students also value the support in the IT centre. Careers education and preparation for HE are well established. In a national diploma health studies course, students assessed their own strengths and weaknesses as preparation for work on personal statements.

The revised internal verification system for NVQ courses had only been recently established at the time of the inspection and was not fully implemented. Assessment varies between the courses, and is more thorough on early years' courses than on care courses. Coursework is set regularly. It is marked and returned quickly, usually accompanied by feedback sheets which most students find helpful. However, feedback varies between teachers as to how much detail is provided to help students to improve their work. Most students' progress with assignments is very carefully monitored, and is linked to action planning. Some assignments are strongly linked to placements or the occupational setting. Monitoring of placements is sound. Most key skills assignments are linked to students' vocational work. Key skills in communication are developed through main vocational programmes.

The college provides a good range of courses, additional qualifications and enrichment opportunities for students. These enable good internal progression and boost students' self-esteem and confidence. Courses for part-time adults are arranged at times which suit domestic responsibilities. These courses enhance students' work practices, but also provide a springboard to further study. Full-time students value the out of college activities such as rag week, adventure of a lifetime and millennium volunteers. The college works with local partnerships including the European Social Fund initiative in early years. Many courses include a series of visits and arrangements for visiting speakers, which help to broaden students' knowledge of occupational specialisms.

#### *Leadership and management*

The area is well managed. Managers build effective teams and ensure that staff are well informed. The work of the teams is generally well monitored and there is an emphasis on the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Staff appreciate the support given by senior managers in the area. There are useful systems to evaluate the effectiveness of staff performance and appraisal takes place regularly. Lesson observations occur annually for teaching staff but observations for work-based assessors are not established. There is a responsive system for dealing with full-time students' immediate concerns through student representatives.

**Somerset College of Arts and Technology: inspection date May 2003**

*Health, care and public services*

Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

*Strengths*

high pass rates on the GNVQ health and social care and counselling courses  
effective links between theory and practice  
good achievement of additional qualifications by full-time students.

*Weaknesses*

poor retention rates on some courses  
insufficient attention to the individual learning needs of students  
low pass rates on the national diploma course in public services.

*Scope of provision*

The college provides a wide range of full-time courses in care and early years education from level 1 to degree level courses validated by the University of Plymouth. There are currently 81 full-time and 24 part-time students on care and early years programmes funded by the LSC.

There are 70 students following part-time courses in counselling and 11 students enrolled on the national diploma course in public services. The full-time students are predominantly aged 16 to 18 and the part-time students aged 19 and over.

*Achievement and standards*

There are some good pass rates on courses at all levels, but retention rates on a number of courses are below national averages. In 2003, the retention rate on the national certificate early years course has continued to decline and retention rates on the first diploma early years course and the national diploma course in health studies are below national averages.

There are good retention rates, but there is some slow progress in achieving NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in care, which are provided through a franchised partnership.

There is good progression from levels 1 and 2 to higher-level courses and from level 3 to related employment and HE. In 2002, 91% of students who achieved the national diploma in early years and 90% of students who achieved the national diploma in health studies progressed to HE or to vocationally related employment.

There are good pass rates on a wide range of additional courses taken by full-time students, including those leading to qualifications in first aid, food hygiene and counselling skills.

The standard of students' work in most lessons is good. The students' contributions to class discussion indicate a thorough understanding of vocational issues. National diploma students maturely discussed issues relating to the protection of young children from abuse. The students following a level 4 course for managers skilfully identified how a range of government initiatives would influence the services they provided. In counselling skills lessons, students worked with care applying good practice within a clear and explicit ethical framework.

Students at all levels are able to apply theoretical concepts to practical health and care issues. The foundation and intermediate GNVQ students and the national diploma students are able to discuss and make clear notes on how a range of socio-economic factors may affect the health and well being of individuals and communities. Students on the counselling skills course are able to apply introductory theory to their skills practice in lessons.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in health, care and public services, 2000 to 2002*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
GNVQ foundation health and social care	1	No. of starts	17	10	7
		% retention	65	80	43
		% pass rate	82	71	100
GNVQ intermediate health and social care	2	No. of starts	19	17	18
		% retention	84	88	89
		% pass rate	94	73	81
National diploma in early years	3	No. of starts	15	14	15
		% retention	73	86	73
		% pass rate	100	75	67
National diploma in public services	3	No. of starts	17	16	13
		% retention	47	69	46
		% pass rate	88	91	50
National certificate in early years	3	No. of starts	10	15	7
		% retention	70	53	57
		% pass rate	80	100	100
Advanced certificate in therapeutic counselling	3	No. of starts	20	12	7
		% retention	85	92	100
		% pass rate	94	73	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

*Quality of education and training*

Lessons are carefully planned and well matched to course requirements. Some schemes of work, however, lack detail, and are little more than lists of topics to be covered, with little reference to the range of teaching and assessment methods or resources to be used.

In some lessons, teachers rely too heavily on questions directed at the whole group to reinforce learning. In a minority of lessons, students spent too much time copying notes from overhead projector slides. In these lessons, individual students' understanding of the subject matter was not carefully checked.

In several effective lessons, students used ICT to find policy documents and other sources of information to support their research. First diploma students used the Internet to find out about childhood illnesses. Links between theory and practice are appropriately emphasised. Teachers draw on their professional experience in nursing, counselling and in the mental health services to illustrate theoretical issues. A student on work placement was able to describe how knowledge and understanding gained on college-based courses had been valuable at work. She referred specifically to college work on children's diet and health, creative studies and to the professional practice unit.

Staff are well qualified and have considerable vocational experience in the health and care services, but many are inexperienced teachers. There is a well-planned and systematic mentoring programme to support unqualified and inexperienced teachers, but this has not fully overcome the weaknesses in the teaching.

The library resources in health and care are good, but students do not have adequate access to ICT and make insufficient use of ICT in the preparation and presentation of assignments.

Students speak highly of the academic and personal support they receive from teachers.

Tutorials take place regularly and are well structured. Individual learning plans are agreed, clear targets are set, and progress towards previously agreed targets is reviewed. Any additional learning needs of full-time and part-time students are carefully identified. Adapted computers are made available to students with epilepsy, students who are dyslexic or dyspraxic are supported during lessons and additional time in examinations is arranged when required.

*Leadership and management*

Management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. Team meetings are held regularly, but the records of some meetings are insufficiently detailed and fail to specify clear timescales for implementing decisions. Clear targets are set for all courses and progress towards them is monitored by teachers and managers. The self-assessment report lacks detail and pays insufficient attention to students' achievements and the quality of teaching, training and learning. There is no action plan to address the weaknesses identified. Internal verification is systematic and thorough. Internal verifiers give clear and focused feedback to assessors. The verification processes have been used constructively to provide support and assistance to new teachers.

**Yeovil College: inspection date February 2005**

*Health and social care*

Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

The contributory grade for work-based learning is **unsatisfactory (grade 4)**

*Strengths*

high pass rate on AVCE health and social care course  
high retention rates on most courses  
good work experiences that develop students' skills  
highly effective support for students.

*Weaknesses*

low pass rates on diploma in childcare and education, GNVQ intermediate and key skills courses  
poor framework completion for work-based learners  
insufficient planning of lessons to meet the diverse needs of all students  
inadequate resources.

*Scope of provision*

The college offers a good range of full-time and part-time courses in health and social care and early years education. Full-time access to HE courses are offered in social work and health. Full-time courses are also available in childcare from levels 1 to 3 and in AVCE single and double awards in health and social care. Some level 1 courses and a GCSE course have recently been introduced under the IF programme for school pupils aged 14 to 16. There are also a number of short courses including first aid.

There are approximately 100 students enrolled on full-time courses and 500 part-time enrolments within this area. There are 92 students on work-based learning programmes. Of these, there are 60 apprentices on childcare courses and 14 on care courses.

*Achievement and standards*

With the exception of the AVCE in health and social care, students aged 16 to 18 do not achieve well: pass rates are low, below the national average, and are declining. The pass rate for the diploma in childcare was very unsatisfactory at 18%. Adult students on access to HE courses achieve high standards and pass rates are high. Students on part-time NVQ courses take too long to achieve their qualifications. Work-based learning is unsatisfactory.

Completion rates are low for care apprenticeships and the early years advanced apprenticeships, with no learners having yet achieved the framework. Retention rates are satisfactory for work-based apprentices, but low on the advanced apprenticeship in care.

Retention rates for other courses have improved significantly to rates well above the national average. Students produce work of a satisfactory standard, but some students take too long to complete tasks. Full-time students work supportively and confidently in groups, and are keen to share personal experiences of childcare. They show good understanding of the links between theory and practice. They readily explore ideas and represent them in charts and diagrams that are shared with the whole class. Adult students use computers with confidence and demonstrate good research skills. Work-based learners undertake the review of books with enthusiasm and insight, but make little use of the Internet for research purposes.

Students grow in confidence and develop their knowledge of care. For example, they gain a good understanding of children's development, medical conditions and the use of specialist equipment for the care of disabled people.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care, 2002 to 2004*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
Basic health and safety	1	No. of starts	90	62	42
		% retention	99	100	100
		% pass rate	100	100	100
First aid at work	1	No. of starts	90	62	53
		% retention	99	100	100
		% pass rate	63	84	*
Access to HE	3	No. of starts	46	44	39
		% retention	61	70	69
		% pass rate	82	84	85
NVQ early years care and education (2 year)	3	No. of starts	29	76	53
		% retention	93	74	94
		% pass rate	52	57	*

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* incomplete data

*Quality of education and training*

Teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons, students are encouraged to draw on their own experience. Adults learn through exploration and discussion of new ideas and readily share knowledge with each other. For example, in one early years lesson, students produced a variety of collages that they then used to analyse the skills that children develop through creative play; they identified examples of fine motor skills, use of texture, language development and social skills through describing the work they had done on their collages. Teachers make good pedagogic use of students' direct experiences from their work placements to enable them to make confident analytical comments about children's development. Practice and theory are skilfully linked. For example, one teacher rewarded students with merit stickers as an introduction to a discussion on how to promote desirable behaviour in children. Students then moved on to consider theories of infant behaviour modification and gave examples from their work placements. In another lesson, adult students considered child protection issues and discussed signs and symptoms of abuse in examples from their work. They gained a good understanding of how to identify signs of possible abuse and how to treat such situations with caution and sensitivity.

Poorer lessons lack planning and teachers often fail to provide a range of tasks to meet the wide ability spectrum of students in a lesson. The teaching of work-based learners is satisfactory, but does not often challenge or inspire them. Teachers make little use of paints, textiles, clay or artwork to provide a model of good practice for care workers, particularly those working with young children. Teachers often provide ideas and answers to questions rather than encouraging students to explore and express their own creative solutions to problems.

Staff are suitably qualified and have recent relevant vocational experience. Many classrooms, however, are under-resourced and restrict learning opportunities, and resources are not always well used. For example, in practical craft lessons in a classroom, the lack of space and materials inhibited students' capacity to explore creative play and practise skills for use in childcare settings. The college provides a toy library for students, staff and members of the public, but currently students do not use it. Noise from adjoining classrooms adversely affects students' concentration.

Assessment is thorough and regular, and guidelines to students are clear. Most students receive work back promptly with detailed comments on what to do to improve. There is a planned programme of assessment and progress reviews of work-based learners and students on NVQ courses, and employers are closely involved. Workplace supervisors observe practice and provide witness testimonies to support assessment.

Students are very well supported. High and improving retention rates for most courses bear testimony to the effectiveness of the personal and welfare support given to students. Students place a high value on the generosity and efficacy of the support they receive from tutors. Most tutors use group and individual tutorials well, maintain up-to-date records and set and review targets effectively. Work placements are well managed.

The college has good relationships with employers and works well to secure high-quality work placements for students. NVQ courses are very well organised and supervised. Clear explanations are given in taught sessions and assessors provide good support in the workplace. When required, assessors visit learners in the workplace outside normal working hours.

#### *Leadership and management*

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly-appointed manager has introduced measures to address previously identified weaknesses, such as the clarification of staff roles and responsibilities, temporal targets for the completion of NVQ qualifications, and new procedures for internal verification. It is too soon to evaluate the impact of these changes. Communication is effective. Course reviews inform the self-assessment process, but most actions for improvement are imprecise as to what needs to be done, by whom and when. Evidence from the few lesson observations that have been carried out has not yet been used systematically to begin to improve teaching and learning. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Teachers are aware of issues that students need to understand when dealing with diverse client groups. There is no strategic plan to widen participation to under-represented groups.

## **Bridgwater College: inspection date February 2002**

### *Early years education*

Overall provision in this area is **outstanding (grade 1)**

#### *Strengths*

high retention and pass rates  
very good internal progression  
excellent early years skills of students  
very good, often imaginative, teaching  
an excellent range of opportunities for working with children  
excellent resources for integrating theory and practice  
very good individual support for students  
effective curriculum management.

#### *Weaknesses*

no key weaknesses.

#### *Scope of provision*

The college offers a wide range of courses from level 1 to level 4. At the time of the inspection, there were over 150 full-time students, mainly aged 16 to 18. There were 93 part-time NVQ level 3 students and a further 51 part-time students studying pre-school practice at certificate or diploma level, and the award for classroom assistants. The college also offers a locally devised 'Forest School' award that is validated by a national examination body. NVQ provision is offered at several centres in the community. Full-time students may take additional qualifications in first aid, food hygiene and deaf awareness. Additional qualifications are also offered to part-time students on pre-school practice courses.

#### *Achievement and standards*

Pass rates are high. On all courses, except the diploma in nursery nursing in 2001, pass rates were above national averages. The retention rate on all courses is also above national averages. On many courses, a high proportion of students achieve high grades. For example, 25% of pre-school practice diploma students obtained a grade A in 2001, compared with a national average of 4%. Full-time and pre-school practice students are successful in gaining additional qualifications in first aid, food hygiene and deaf awareness. There is very good internal progression; 77 % of full-time students progress from foundation to certificate level and 88% from certificate to diploma level.

Students acquire sound theoretical knowledge and demonstrate excellent practical skills with children. They establish good relationships with the children and they understand how to foster children's' development. For example, foundation students each collected a child from the college nursery and supervised them making a pizza. The students encouraged the children's' independence and language skills. All students work effectively in groups. They assist each other in planning and managing the work and exchange ideas with confidence. Timetabled lessons in the learning resources centre enable full-time students to develop effective research skills. Their written work is good.

A sample of retention and pass rates in early years education, 1999 to 2001

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	1999	2000	2001
Foundation award in caring for children	1	No. of starts	*	*	16
		% retention	*	*	69
		% pass rate	*	*	82
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	11	10	31
		% retention	64	70	87
		% pass rate	86	83	89
Intermediate award for classroom assistant	2	No. of starts	18	19	23
		% retention	100	100	91
		% pass rate	100	100	100
National diploma in childhood studies	3	No. of starts	26	21	27
		% retention	92	100	85
		% pass rate	100	95	96
Pre-school practice diploma	3	No. of starts	38	45	60
		% retention	95	89	88
		% pass rate	94	93	93
NVQ early years care and education	3	No. of starts	7	13	33
		% retention	86	92	88
		% pass rate	80	100	83

Source: ISR (1999 and 2000), college (2001). \* course did not run

#### Quality of education and training

Teaching is very good. Often it is exciting and imaginative. Appropriately detailed lesson plans identify individual support needs and students' preferred learning styles. Whenever possible, teachers use the teaching methods of the early years curriculum to produce lively and active opportunities for learning. Early years teachers work closely with the Early Excellence Centre - the college's day nursery for the children of staff and students. These close links ensure that many of the skills that are developed in the classroom can be put into almost immediate practice. For example, diploma students selected stories and toys from a good range of story sacks, which included three-dimensional models, glove puppets and model animals to accompany the storybooks. They practised their story in front of their peers. Following supportive and effective evaluation by other students, they told the stories to small groups of children in the centre. In many other lessons, there was a 'buzz' of lively interest as teachers involved students in an imaginative range of practical activities. Teachers make regular checks to ensure that their students understand the work and often ask them to identify whether the learning objectives have been met. There is a comprehensive programme of visiting speakers to ensure that the latest good practice is shared.

Full-time students have an excellent range of opportunities to gain experience of working with children which include: family placements; residential courses and visits; and work in the college children's centre and at the Forest School. The Forest School, which won a Queen's Anniversary prize in 2000, is an imaginative development that enables the students to work with children in a forest environment. The children carry out woodland tasks, learning how to use tools safely. The students work with them, promoting their own and the children's self esteem and competence. Residential activities provide students with an insight into childcare in different settings and cultures. Students have visited London for a residential conference on working with travellers. Visits to European cities have also been arranged.

Teachers work together as an effective team. They understand the importance of promoting their students' self-esteem and giving them strong support. They have good knowledge of individual students' educational, social and emotional needs, which helps them to plan appropriate lesson activities. Staff encourage their students and value their contributions. Their approach builds up the confidence of students and maintains high levels of motivation. Courses are well structured. There are timetabled portfolio, assignment and key skills sessions. The monitoring of students' progress is thorough. Detailed individual reviews identify areas for improvement and lead to effective action planning. There is careful monitoring of attendance and punctuality. Assignments and homework are set and marked regularly. The assignments are linked to the placements. Teachers use sound assessment methods including those suitable for students with support needs.

The college has excellent accommodation and resources. The location of well-equipped teaching rooms next to the children's centre helps in the integration of theory and practice. An observation booth enables the children in the centre to be observed without disturbing them. Excellent guides to observation are located in the booth. Teachers have produced a very good range of study guides and handbooks. Students are enthusiastic about the use of virtual babies. These electronic model babies are loaned to individuals, usually for 48 hours. They are programmed to require attention at different intervals. The students are not aware of the programming. They stay with their virtual baby at all times. They find this experience useful in helping to prepare for family placements. Teachers are appropriately qualified, and have a wide range of relevant, vocational expertise. There are good staff development opportunities, including a planned programme of vocational updating.

#### *Leadership and management*

There is strong leadership and effective management of the programme area. A cohesive team achieves constant improvement through regular reflection on their work. Issues raised by students, employers and examination bodies are responded to and acted upon quickly. Links with placement providers, the community and early years professionals are very good. The team is active in a range of initiatives in the local community, for example, training programmes for young mothers. Early years professionals are involved in reviews of the curriculum and student interviews.

**Weymouth College: inspection date April 2004**

*Health, social care and early years*

Overall provision in this area is **satisfactory (grade 3)**

*Strengths*

good teaching  
wide range of provision  
good curriculum management.

*Weaknesses*

low pass rates on most courses  
insufficient use of initial assessment to inform teaching and learning.

*Scope of provision*

The college offers a wide range of full-time and part-time courses in care and early years from level 1 to level 4. There are 79 full-time students on early years programmes. In health and social care, there are 102 full-time students on GNVQ and AVCE courses. Part-time courses in both early years and care are offered in NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4. There are 57 students on the NVQ early years programmes and 37 on care programmes. Part-time courses in counselling are followed by over 50 students. Over 50 pupils aged 14 to 16 from local schools attend college to take either the foundation award in caring for children or a GCSE in health and social care. A wide range of short courses is available to full-time students, including British sign language, toy making and creative crafts, first aid, food hygiene and drug awareness.

*Achievement and standards*

Pass rates on most full-time courses are unsatisfactory. For example, in 2004, the pass rate on the intermediate GNVQ in health and social care was 33%, and on the certificate and the diploma in childcare and education it was 68% and 43% respectively. The pass rate on the foundation GNVQ was 100% in 2004, although of the 17 students who started the course, only 9 completed it. Pass rates on short courses are high. Retention rates are below national averages on the GNVQ foundation and AVCE health and social care courses. At the time of inspection, there was evidence of improvement in retention rates.

The standard of work of current students is satisfactory with appropriate activities completed in lessons. Level 2 childcare students, having chosen a suitable venue for an outing, were writing letters to inform parents of the arrangements. The necessary information was expressed clearly and all errors of punctuation, spelling and grammar corrected. Foundation students in a first aid lesson were correctly bandaging a simple hand wound and fitting an elevation sling. Advanced level students demonstrate a good grasp of the link between theory and practice. In an unsatisfactory numeracy key skills lesson, students struggled to understand basic mathematics. There is very good progression from the Increased Flexibility programmes for pupils aged 14 to 16 to full-time college courses.

A sample of retention and pass rates in health, social care and early years, 2002 to 2004

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2002	2003	2004
GNVQ health and social care	1	No. of starts	16	17	17
		% retention	81	65	53
		% pass rate	85	73	100
Certificate in childcare and education	2	No. of starts	*	18	30
		% retention	*	78	83
		% pass rate	*	71	68
Diploma in childcare and education	3	No. of starts	*	24	18
		% retention	*	0	78
		% pass rate	*	0	43
AVCE in health and social care	3	No. of starts	19	51	41
		% retention	95	82	59
		% pass rate	83	90	71
Diploma in counselling	3	No. of starts	51	15	*
		% retention	82	73	*
		% pass rate	60	91	*

Source: ISR (2002 and 2003), college (2004)

\* fewer than 15 starters enrolled

#### Quality of education and training

Teaching and learning are good overall. Schemes of work and lesson plans are focused and detailed. They are clearly matched to the specification requirement and the level of award. Students make clear links between college-based work and their vocational practice. In many lessons, teachers make good use of small group work, pair work and question and answer techniques to involve students in learning. Student contributions to lessons are focused and thoughtful. For example, in a very good early years lesson, students were selecting and costing appropriate equipment for a nursery. They were able to discuss their choice of equipment in terms of its contribution to children's development. In a good AVCE lesson, skilful teaching enabled students to hold a productive discussion on the links between inequality and access to scarce resources. In several lessons, teachers used new technology effectively to present topics and to record students' contributions.

All students complete an initial assessment, and many complete a learning styles questionnaire, during their induction period. These are designed to inform both teachers and students of individual learning needs. However, the results of the assessments are not clearly used by teachers in planning their lessons, and students are unaware of the use made of the information gathered through initial assessment. Students' work is marked with care, strengths are identified and there is clear guidance for improvement. Students' progress is carefully recorded and monitored.

Overall, resources are satisfactory. Serious staffing difficulties over the last two years have been resolved and suitably qualified teachers are now in place. Classrooms are generally well suited for curriculum delivery including practical care and craft activities. Occasionally, students are taught in inappropriate accommodation. For example, a first aid lesson was in a room too small for all the necessary practical activities. Teaching and learning activities were limited by the size of the room for the few occasions when students from different courses were taught as one large group.

Support for students is satisfactory. All full-time students have a personal tutor and regular tutorials. Individual tutorials provide support on a wide range of personal and learning needs. However, there are no monitored individual learning plans in place. Targets are not set routinely to monitor and review academic and personal progress. NVQ candidates do not have a personal tutor.

The range of courses offered is wide and there are good progression routes between levels. Full-time students follow a range of short courses wider than is normally associated with care programmes, including British sign language, toy making and creative crafts as well as first aid, food hygiene and drug awareness. A new foundation degree in early years is offered in partnership with Bournemouth University. An increasing programme of full cost courses is being delivered for a range of local care and early years services throughout Dorset. The provision for school pupils has been very successful, with many students coming to the college after leaving school to take full-time courses.

#### *Leadership and management*

Curriculum management is good. Roles and responsibilities within the programme areas are clear to staff and students. The minutes of meetings clearly identify and record actions taken. Retention and pass rates and equality of opportunity are standing items on the agenda. Staff, through their course reviews, contribute directly to the area self-assessment process. However, the centrally held data on attendance, retention and pass rates do not match that held within the department. There is very good support for new staff. All new teachers have a mentor and are supported in writing schemes of work and lesson plans. There are productive links with a wide range of community organisations. Work placements in care and early years are managed very effectively.

**Strode College: inspection date March 2003**

*Health and social care, and counselling*

Overall provision in this area is **good (grade 2)**

*Strengths*

much good teaching, particularly on level 2 courses  
high retention and pass rates on most courses  
well-planned and organised work experience placements for students  
very good teaching accommodation  
well-motivated and confident students  
good curriculum leadership.

*Weaknesses*

inappropriate enrolment of some students on the GNVQ foundation level course in health and social care  
insufficient provision in childcare at level 1  
lack of materials and teaching methods for students with differing abilities.

*Scope of provision*

There is a wide range of health and social care, childcare and counselling courses. The vast majority of the courses run during the day and there are some evening classes. Although there are a few courses leading to NVQs, these are not yet well established and they attract low numbers of students. There is a range of short courses in first aid. Approximately 500 students aged 16 to 18, and 800 aged 19 and over, are enrolled on the courses. Most full-time and level 3 counselling courses include some work experience for students in order to enable them to develop skills in the workplace and to make connections between theory and practice. The college has well-established and effective links with several local high schools and provides pre-vocational courses for students aged 14 to 16.

*Achievement and standards*

The pass rates on most courses at levels 2 and 3 are high. Retention rates are also high on most courses. Students on some counselling courses do not complete their qualifications within the target time because they are slow in completing their development portfolios. The college is improving this by insisting that all students have a work placement before starting the course. Similarly, the small number of NVQ students, at both levels 2 and 3, are not achieving their qualifications within the target period. The college has started to address this shortcoming. Standards of students' behaviour and attainment in most lessons are very good. Most students exhibit good independent learning and research skills. They also display good understanding and awareness of difference and diversity in society and are fully conversant with current practices in the health, social and childcare professions. Many students progress from level 2 to level 3 courses at the college. Most health and social care students on level 3 courses progress to HE or enter relevant employment. However, few childcare students go on either to HE or to relevant employment, and some remain at the college to study other level 3 courses or they enter employment that is unrelated to their studies.

*A sample of retention and pass rates in health and social care, and counselling, 2000 to 2002*

Qualification	Level	Completion year:	2000	2001	2002
Introduction to pre-school practice	2	No. of starts	9	7	18
		% retention	100	100	100
		% pass rate	89	86	100
National diploma in caring services	3	No. of starts	16	13	12
		% retention	100	92	92
		% pass rate	93	82	91
National diploma in childhood studies	3	No. of starts	9	12	*
		% retention	78	83	*
		% pass rate	83	100	*
Combined certificate in counselling skills	2	No. of starts	28	28	27
		% retention	79	**	81
		% pass rate	95	85	95
Certificate in counselling	2	No. of starts	28	28	27
		% retention	100	100	90
		% pass rate	100	75	100

Source: ISR (2000 and 2001), college (2002)

\* course did not run

\*\* data unreliable

#### *Quality of education and training*

Overall, teaching is good. Teachers are adept at developing students' confidence. Students engage in lively class discussions, are articulate and demonstrate good understanding of relevant terminology and concepts. Teachers enable students to make clear and meaningful links between theory and practice. There are good workshops, which allow students to learn at their own pace. During these sessions, many students build their investigative and research skills by, for example, compiling case studies on family and friends to promote health and well being. On level 2 childcare courses, teachers take care to develop the confidence of students to use correct terminology by devising tasks that enable them to practise these both in written work and class discussions. In the more effective lessons, teachers' mastery of their subjects successfully captivates students' enthusiasm for new ideas and information. On counselling courses, teachers treat students as co-tutors. This enables students to practise their developing skills as counsellors. Teachers ensure that students are aware of different cultures.

Teaching rooms are attractive and provide a good learning environment for students. Students have easy access to, and make good use of, IT for class work and independent research. The learning centre has a good range of textbooks, journals and videos to support the curriculum area. While all full-time students undergo an introduction to the learning centre during their induction, not all part-time students have this experience, which inhibits their full use of this valuable resource.

All childcare students and most health and social care students attend relevant work experience placements. These are well managed, reviewed and evaluated. There are good links with local childcare and education providers, including families with babies under one year of age. Childcare students also invite the college's nursery children into their practical room to engage them in play activities, and the activity forms part of their coursework.

Teachers monitor students' work and progress regularly. Their written and verbal comments are clear and help students to improve their performance. Written briefs for assignment are clear. Students on NVQ courses are guided well and their work is assessed regularly but, at the time of the inspection, seven months from the start of the academic year, few or none of most students' completed study units had been assessed.

Students receive good guidance and support when choosing courses at levels 2 and 3. However, there is only one course at foundation level, which is in health and social care. Students are not able to begin their studies in childcare at level 1. Some, therefore, study at level 1 on the health and social care course and then change to childcare at level 2. There are a few part-time courses which attract small numbers of students. Full-time and part-time students receive very good tutorial support. Attendance at group and individual tutorials is good. In tutorials, students receive effective guidance on academic, pastoral and personal issues. While tutors set short-term targets for students, they do not set longer-term targets, based on the use of relevant data on students' previous attainment, for the end of the course.

All full-time students undergo initial diagnostic assessment of their learning needs. The results of this assessment inform tutors of any need for additional support and identify students' level of achievement in key skills. The small number of students identified as needing specific support is assisted well in the classroom and in the college's Backup area. However, the results of the initial assessment are not shared or used by course teachers routinely when planning lessons or teaching. As a result, individual students' learning needs are frequently not met. For example, most teachers provide the same teaching materials for all students, irrespective of their differing abilities and/or learning needs.

#### *Leadership and management*

Curriculum leadership and management are effective. Teachers meet regularly to review and monitor existing course provision and to plan future courses. Communication within course teams and the department is very effective. Teachers are dedicated to their work and support each other. They undertake regular training and professional development. The self-assessment report is clear, but the grades awarded by college staff to the lessons they observed are unrealistically high.

### **Childcare provision in BDPS FE Colleges: summary**

151. As we noted above, information on the quality of FE provision for childcare is somewhat tangential. The reports are mostly not very recent and they cover a wider spectrum of courses than just those concerned directly with childcare. We can, therefore, perhaps do no more than note that, at least at the latest date available, provision in the health and social care area including childcare was rated no better than Grade 3, 'satisfactory' in 3 out of 6 Colleges, whilst provision in two Colleges (Strode and Bournemouth and Poole) was rated at Grade 2 ('good'). Only in one College, Bridgwater, was provision rated as Grade 1, 'outstanding'. Since then, Bridgwater has been awarded Centre of Vocational Excellence status, reinforcing this College's status as a high quality provider of Early Years training.

### **Local partnerships**

152. The quality of local provision was also considered within overall inspections by Ofsted of Local Education Authorities. In each case these were carried out at a fairly early stage of the new national regime for childcare – in 2002 in each case – so can hardly be considered current.

153. However, as can be seen in the relevant report extracts set out below, local partnership arrangements, at least at that time, were regarded as satisfactory or good in all cases:

*Support for Early Years: Poole LEA*

154. Support for early years is very good. There is a well co-ordinated and coherent approach to ensuring appropriate early years and childcare provision within the borough. The LEA's strategy is clearly set out in the Education Development Plan and in the Early Years Childcare Development Plan. Both these plans are carefully monitored and very good progress has been made, in relation to the targets set.
155. The composition of the early years and childcare development partnership (EYCDP) is appropriate and there are effective working relationships between the providers involved. Elected members have taken appropriate action when issues have been raised by members of the EYCDP. There is a sufficient number of places for all four-year-olds. In addition, the partnership currently offers all children funded places for three terms prior to school entry. Plans to extend provision for pupils from nought to three years old have been delayed by difficulties of finding accommodation and of recruiting staff. However, the council has bid successfully for significant extra funding and extra nursery units are to be opened shortly. This acceleration means that the LEA is likely to meet the related Government targets for 2002.
156. Education and social services work well together to provide coherent and consistent support for children and parents at both school and pre-school phases. There is good support for children with special educational needs, including children with profound learning difficulties.
157. The LEA is making a very positive contribution to raising standards in early years settings through a strong focus on training and quality assurance. Particular emphasis is placed on ensuring that pre-school children have comparable experiences whatever settings they are in and that there is a continuity of experience as they transfer from the Foundation Stage to Year One. Ofsted nursery inspections for 1999 to 2000 showed that provision in Poole was of an acceptable standard in all the settings examined. Inspections of primary schools from 1996/1997 to 1999 showed that the progress made by under fives and the quality of teaching that they received were well above the average nationally and for similar authorities. The LEA is having a decided impact in this area. The support of the advisory service is held in high regard, as indicated by the school survey and in interviews with headteachers. Schools value the expertise, drive, enthusiasm and sensitivity of the staff concerned.

*Support for Early Years: Bournemouth LEA*

158. Support for early years is satisfactory with some significant strengths and is successfully led and managed by the Early Years' Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). A wide range of different providers make a contribution to learning and achievement in the community, particularly in areas of social deprivation. The effective partnership, now established, has overcome some initial difficulties regarding direction and vision. As result the leadership has become more sharply focused on raising the quality and quantity of the provision available.
159. Good progress has been made on the implementation of the early years plan. This is in keeping with the authority's vision on inclusive education and includes clear criteria for quality services. These are promoted and regularly monitored

by the partnership. There is a qualified teacher and special needs co-ordinator in every nursery setting. Consequently the identification of pupils' special needs is becoming more rapid. There is good training and support through a range of quality courses and network group meetings. This has led to improved teaching and care. Nearly half of the schools surveyed agreed that support for early years was good, although 8 per cent thought it poor.

160. The number of places for three and four year olds has increased although the ambitious local target for full provision for three-year-olds, was not met last year. Day care nurseries and privately run playgroups cater for the majority of three year olds and six primary schools have nursery classes which catered for 17.2 per cent of three year olds in 2000-1. Not all of the available places in these nursery classes were filled in 2000/01, but given that there is no LEA maintained day care provision, full time places for three year olds in the maintained sector are insufficient to meet parental demand. Further provision for childcare and early education places is planned through the development of community centres and nursery schools in five local areas. Funds have been secured for this development and will be targeted to areas of social disadvantage. As a result of these new initiatives, the authority should meet its target for three-year-olds by 2004.
161. Whilst children with complex special needs are identified early and good provision is made, the process of identifying pupils with learning needs is often delayed because confidential records are not being passed to receiving nursery settings. Some of the voluntary sector providers are uneasy about transferring records and, as a result, schools have to make further checks on this important information. In addition, a significant number of schools are frustrated by the lack of leadership from the authority in sorting out the current situation with regard to baseline assessment.

#### *Support for Early Years: Somerset LEA*

162. Support for early years is good and there is a well co-ordinated, coherent, approach to developing provision. There is clear strategic plan and the Education Development Plan contains a number of references to early years. These are well integrated into the priorities and activities such as management and leadership, quality of teaching and literacy. Staffing is well structured to meet needs.
163. A number of initiatives have been established including the early years development and childcare partnership. The partnership is working effectively and is meeting its targets for the provision of places; 98% of eligible children are now accessing provision. An effective early learning accreditation for providers has been set up and European Funding has been used to promote the training of special educational needs co-ordinators and all early years providers. Links with pre school and reception staff are well established.
164. The authority has made some promising developments in provision: for instance, it has established a Sure Start project and a children's information service. There is also an extensive training programme for schools, voluntary and private providers. A working party led by the manager responsible for early years has produced a very clear guidance document which has been distributed to all providers and is well linked to a good range of courses designed to assist the implementation of the foundation stage. There is also a childcare link website as part of the children's information service.

Support for Early Years: Dorset LEA

165. Support for early years education is satisfactory. Plans are well linked to the primary strategy in the Education Development Plan (EDP) and are in line with corporate priorities. They reflect the LEA's commitment to develop further joint work with health and social care agencies. Increasingly well-informed elected members provide challenge and support for early years through their active promotion of Dorset in national initiatives. Work with partners is improving the quality and coherence of support for early years. Ofsted inspection evidence indicates that standards achieved in reception classes are above those in similar authorities.
166. The broad membership of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) helps to ensure strong links with other providers and agencies. The LEA's officers keep the EYDCP well informed. The EYDCP has achieved its targets for funded education places for three- and four-year-olds and its strategic goals are aligned to national initiatives including Sure Start, neighbourhood nurseries and extended schools, although provision is still uneven. Projects such as Sure Start in Weymouth are building on a local history of good service-level links across sectors with health and social services.
167. Recent appointments and the restructuring of the Early Years team are resulting in better support for special needs, literacy and numeracy and small schools. Officers have developed new ways of working to improve communications and enhance the LEA's knowledge of all nursery education settings, including the voluntary sector. This includes the establishment of a cross-sector early years forum. New cross-sector quality review arrangements allow the LEA to target resources closely to settings with the greatest need. Training for use of the Foundation Stage Profile is underway, but the use of profiles is not yet fully developed for children entering Key Stage1 from non-maintained settings.

**Local qualifications stocks**

168. Information on qualification levels at a local level is limited. However, Dorset Sure Start's Transformation Fund Audit (Transformation Fund Audit Report, Dorset Sure Start, June 2006) suggests the following picture:

**Table 15: Level of qualification held by childcare staff in Dorset, 2006; percentages**

	Full day care		Sessional care		Childminders
	Leaders	Staff	Leaders	Staff	
Below Level 2/not known	23	18	16	9	64
% Level 2	1	21	5	33	6
% Level 3	61	55	69	57	26
% Level 4	11	3	9	4	2
% Level 5	4	3	8	5	2
	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Transformation Fund Audit Report, Dorset Sure Start, 2006

169. Comparison with national figures (Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES, 2006) suggests:

**Table 16: Level of qualifications; England and Dorset compared; percentages**

	All Day Care Staff	All Sessional Care Staff	Childminders
% with any childcare qualification			
England	80	76	65
Dorset	80	88	36
% with Level 3 or above childcare qualification			
England	63	55	43
Dorset	67	72	30

Sources: Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey, DfES, 2005; Transformation Fund Audit Report, Dorset Sure Start, 2006

170. The two sets of statistics (for England and Dorset) are not wholly comparable – the sources had different methodologies and occurred at different times. It seems unlikely that Dorset’s apparent shortfall in the qualification levels of its childminders is robust. However, other figures for group childcare settings suggest that Dorset’s childcare workforce is at least as qualified as the national one.
171. In general, the two tables above perhaps simply illustrate some general points:
- Leaders, obviously, tend to be better qualified than their subordinate staff.
  - Possession of Level 3+ qualifications is the majority condition in group childcare settings.
  - However, possession of high level qualifications, those which Early Years Professional Status seeks to develop, is quite rare.

**Local training: employers**

172. Local training behaviour by employers is estimated by the National Employers Skills Survey. The clarity of the picture provided by this survey is restricted by the fact that results are available only for a more general social care sector including childcare as a sub-sector. However, acknowledging this limitation, results show:

**Table 17: Employer training indicators: care sector in Bournemouth, Dorset, Poole and Somerset (SW Region data used as proxy), 2003 and 2005**

	Care sector in SW Region 2003 (%)	Care sector in SW Region 2005 (%)	All-sector average for SW Region 2005 (%)
Has a business plan	69	81	55
Has a training plan	73	77	44
Has a training budget	77	68	32
None of staff have a formal job description	0	4	26
Formally assess skill gaps	72	84	46
None of staff have an annual performance review	12	12	42
Have funded staff training in last 12 months	87	85	65
Trained staff towards an NVQ	NA	58	26
Average expenditure per training establishment	N/A	£2,930	£2,661
Training establishments used FE Colleges	47	51	30
% of those dissatisfied with FE provision	9	7	8

Source: NESS03 and NESS05

173. Broadly, this data shows the care sector as a whole as:

- One, as a 'high training' sector with virtually every indicator showing significant advantage over the all-economy average.
- Two, as a sector which is *increasing* its advantage with gains between 2003 and 2005 on several indicators.

174. Some more local insights into training are offered by Dorset Sure Start's 2005 Childcare Workforce Strategy.

175. Firstly, in a survey of managers, the training needs of staff were identified. These were for a mix of 'full' qualifications and for the development of specific expertise or knowledge, some of which is driven by regulation:

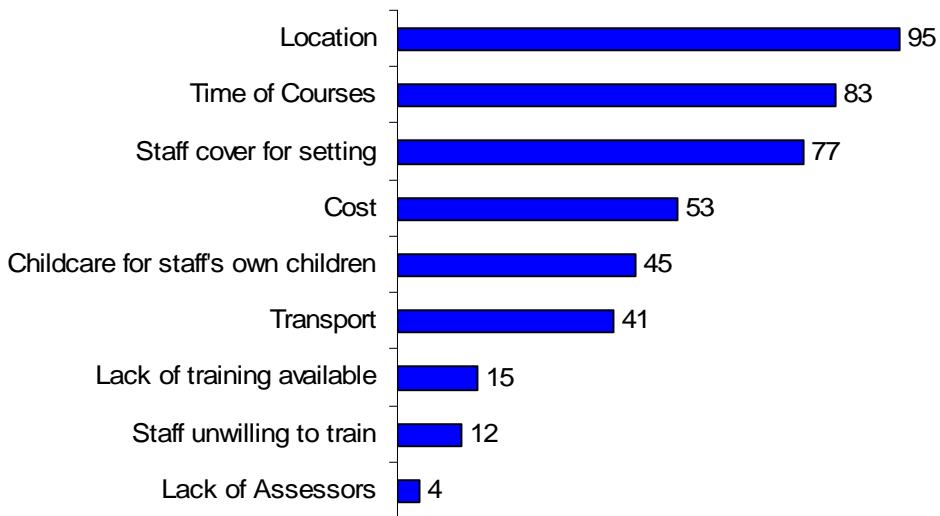
**Table 18: Current and future staff training needs in Dorset; numbers of childcare managers reporting each need**

	<b>Numbers</b>
First Aid	147
Child Protection	145
Behaviour Management	143
Special Needs Education	127
Health & Safety/Risk Assessment	126
Foundation Curriculum	123
Inclusion	119
Birth to Three	112
Equality	112
L3 Qualifications	110
Management/Leadership	106
Recruitment/Induction/Appraisals	95
L4+ Qualifications	94
Business and Finance	88
L2 Qualifications	82
Basic Skills for Staff	50
Entry Level Qualifications	32

Source: 2005 Children's Workforce Strategy, Dorset Sure Start

176. However, a very significant proportion of managers, 73%, said they had problems accessing training. The main difficulties concerned location, timing, and staff cover rather than that the training is not available:

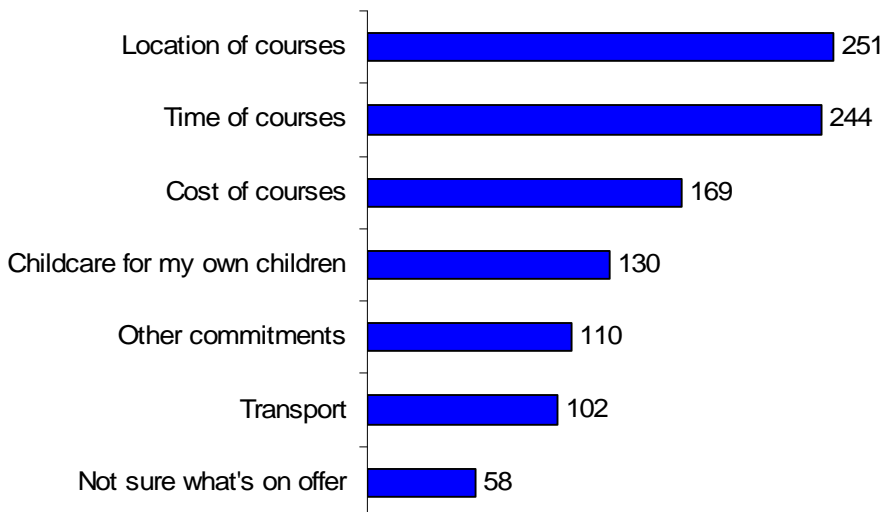
**Figure 7: Reasons for training difficulty reported by childcare managers in Dorset; numbers**



Source: 2005 Children's Workforce Strategy, Dorset Sure Start

177. When asked about the *quality* of different kinds of training provision, the number of managers reporting it as unsatisfactory were low (fewer than 10% in respect of each type).
178. When childcare *workers* were surveyed, again the barriers to training, experienced by 44% of staff, were, as with managers, concerned with location, timing and costs rather than with availability as such:

**Figure 8: Problems in accessing training reported by childcare staff in Dorset; numbers**



Source: 2005 Children's Workforce Strategy, Dorset Sure Start

## Summary: supply of labour and skills

179. National analysis reveals:
- A well-qualified workforce in which three-quarters of the total workforce has a relevant qualification and in which over half of the workforce in group settings has a Level 3 or higher qualification.
  - However, the proportions with a Level 6 (Professional Status) qualification are much lower.
  - The sector is a strong training sector with nearly all childcare providers offering training to their staff (either in the workplace or elsewhere) and the great majority believe that the amount of training supplied is equivalent to what is needed.
180. At local level, the general labour market is revealed as being quite tight. The childcare sector offers relatively low wages (particularly in relation to the levels of qualification which are increasingly required). It is evident that the sector has to have other attractions if it is to secure the workforce it needs.
181. Training supplied through LSC-funded Work Based Learning is only moderate in volume and completion rates, particularly of the full Apprenticeship Framework, are also moderate.
182. Much more training is supplied via Further Education which offers a mix of specialist short courses, foundation training, and NVQs. Nearly two-thirds of this training is at Level 3 or above.
183. Overall, the scale of training (around 240 Apprentices plus nearly 2,000 people pursuing learning aims in Early Years and Childcare subjects) looks approximately in balance with an estimated requirement for around 1,000-1,200 new recruits each year. However, a precise calculation, assessing training undertaken in relation to recruitment need, cannot be undertaken since the proportion of WBL/FE training which is undertaken by those already working in the sector as opposed to training in order to *enter* the sector is unknown.
184. It is also difficult to evaluate the *quality* of FE training on offer but inspection reports, albeit somewhat dated, of institutions and LEA early years provision, offer ratings at 'satisfactory' level or better and Bridgwater College has since been established as a centre of excellence in early years provision. A great majority of childcare providers in Dorset also report training provision as satisfactory or good with only smallish minorities reporting it as unsatisfactory.
185. The main issues with training provision, expressed both by managers and staff in childcare, concern its location, the times when it is offered, and its cost rather than its content or quality of delivery.

## 6. The balance between demand and supply

186. The key question in respect of the demand and supply of skills is, basically, does skills supply currently meet the needs of the industry, and will it do so in future.
187. One method of assessing this would be to consider the demand for skills and set it against an account of supply. However, as we noted above, any attempt to match these two analyses against each other in a reliable statistical sense is not possible. The problem has several angles:
- Firstly, data on demand is unreliable. Forecasting models cannot predict the future with any great precision; and the smaller the area to which they are applied, the less precise they become. And, in the case of the childcare and early years sector, there is no forecast available which applies to the sector particularly (but only a more general one addressing social care in general).
  - Secondly, data on supply is hard to interpret. It is not known, for example, which skills WBL trainees are training in, nor what level of employability they reach, particularly amongst the significant proportion of trainees who do not complete the full framework. FE data is also imprecise in that it deals with 'learning aims' rather than numbers of individuals (some of whom may pursue more than one aim) and again it is not clear how many trainees proceed to full qualification and are delivered into the workforce.
  - Thirdly, we have noted that a high proportion of employers in the sector train their staff. Many of these use FE. What the remainder do is largely unknown. Some of the training may not be productivity-related at all. Health and Safety training, for example, and induction training, though essential, doesn't necessarily improve the overall level of skills employed in childcare activity as such. But amongst the remainder must be a significant amount of training which formally or informally improves worker performance. But the scale or nature of that improvement and its contribution to the overall skills equilibrium in the sector is not measurable.
  - Fourthly, whilst people train towards and achieve qualifications, the quality of that training and the worth of the qualification is variable. Simply, we do not know how much of the training which WBL/FE delivers is regarded as adequate by the industry but it seems unlikely that all of it is.
188. Generally, therefore, *inferences* can be drawn from an examination of demand and supply. Some of these have been set out in previous chapters. However, a formal statistical account of the skills equilibrium, one which says, for example, that the area will need x people with formal childcare skills per year and is generating y people with these skills per year, cannot reliably or meaningfully be computed.
189. In order to comment on the skills equilibrium, therefore, we need to rely on evidence of *disequilibrium* – that is, of skills shortage and skills gaps. The following table uses data from National Employer Skills Surveys to generate some broad indicators of such difficulties. However, again it is not possible to disaggregate childcare figures from a more general picture concerning social care (including that of adults) as a whole and South West regional data is used as a proxy for the BDPS area (to avoid the problem of small sample bases):

**Table 19: Indicators of labour and skills deficiencies, South West Region, 2005; percentages of care establishments**

	2005		2003
	All sectors	Care	Care
Have at least one vacancy	17	29	39
Have at least one vacancy which is hard-to-fill	7	11	23
Have a skill shortage vacancy	4	5	*
Have a skills gap	15	18	21

\* Base too small for reliability  
Source: NESS05

190. What this data shows is that the care sector as a whole faces levels of recruitment difficulty and, consequently, has skills gaps in the workforce, which are more frequent than in the economy as a whole. However, the proportion of employers who are observed to have vacancies, hard-to-fill vacancies and skills gaps has reduced markedly between 2003 and 2005.

191. The occupational distributions of vacancies, skill shortage vacancies, and skills gaps are also clearly different from the average for the economy as a whole:

**Table 20: Indicators of skills difficulties; percentages of all difficulties associated with different occupational groups, South West Region, 2005**

	% of vacancies		% of skill shortage vacancies		% of staff not fully proficient	
	All sectors	Care	All sectors	Care	All sectors	Care
Managerial	5	4	4	4	11	9
Professional	7	4	9	0	8	4
Technical	16	27	13	21	3	2
Clerical	12	6	8	3	11	13
Skilled trades	10	2	26	1	9	2
Personal service staff	9	50	11	68	6	56
Sales/customer service staff	16	2	9	9	25	4
Operatives	11	0	13	0	7	6
Elementary staff	15	4	7	3	21	0
	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: NESS05

192. This data shows that most *vacancies*, *skill shortages* and *skill gaps* are for personal service and technical grades of staff. In the childcare context, these occupational groups would equate to nursery nurses and childcare staff at intermediate and lower grades.
193. However, whilst NESS allows only imprecise estimation of imbalance between skills needs and those which are available, a more particular survey of childcare providers in Dorset (2005 Childcare Workforce Strategy, Dorset Sure Start, 2005) reports that 37% of vacancies were hard-to-fill and that 45% of group settings had problems recruiting staff – a level of difficulty significantly higher than that experienced in general social care and reported in NESS.

**Summary: the balance of demand and supply**

194. This data suggests that the childcare sector faces levels of vacancy, recruitment difficulty and of skills gaps in the workforce which are above average (compared with the rest of the economy). Difficulties are likely to be associated with intermediate and lower skilled occupations where labour turnover is highest and wages are lowest.

## 7. Issues in the childcare sector

### Introduction

195. An analysis of the childcare sector reveals a range of issues concerning the development of a relationship between the LSC, childcare providers, their needs for skills, and training supply into the sector.

### Understanding the sector

196. Firstly, it is unusually difficult to get a clear picture of the sector:
- There appears to be no definition of the sector which is universally accepted as pinning down exactly what activities the sector is concerned with or which occupations constitute the sector's employment base.
  - Occupations themselves are not well defined or consistently titled.
  - Perhaps in consequence, the sector is not easily identified in the 'official' statistical series and datasets which allow various characteristics to be readily identified in the case of most other sectors.
  - Local Authorities have been encouraged in recent legislation to find their own paths towards statutory objectives. At local level, this appears to allow considerable diversity as to how and what information is collected and it is consequently difficult to build a comprehensive local picture across several areas which hold local data of different kinds and with different degrees of depth and specificity.
197. Undoubtedly, as the sector continues to develop under legislative pressure and as a Sector Skills Agreement for childcare is built, the position will improve. In the meantime, however, definite statements which can be made for other sectors using statistical sources remain somewhat ambiguous or elusive for this sector.

### The size of the sector

198. However, whatever the statistical limitations, it appears that the sector is quite a small one employing between 2% and 3% of the BDPS area workforce. If numbers of people employed in a sector were regarded as a principle reason for designating a sector as a 'priority' for the LSC, childcare would probably not appear as such.

### Change – regulation, growth, and professionalisation

199. One of the most obvious factors affecting the sector's trajectory is its sharp rise up the political agenda over the last decade. The government has simply pushed the sector toward rapid expansion and the adoption of much more formalised professional standards using legislation and regulation to do so. Inevitably, this has put pressure on childcare providers and Local Authorities to deliver more staff with higher levels of qualification. This pressure has caused some strain given the costs which minimum ratios of children to staff and training requirements generate in conditions where funding is limited and, in private nursery provision, parent's ability to pay is constrained.

200. Even where funding is clearly available – for example, Transformation Funding to support the development of Early Years Professional Status and other training – problems may not simply disappear. It is reported, for example, that EYPS is not progressing in Bournemouth simply because there is no local HE provider able to deliver the necessary training.

### **Barriers to training**

201. Whilst in the particular instance of EYPS development cost may not be the central issue because of the Transformation Fund, cost does remain a general barrier reported by significant numbers of childcare managers and staff alike.
202. But other barriers also remain. These variously include:
- Location – a major barrier for many childcare providers is that training, particularly for childcare providers in rural areas, is not easily accessible – especially for young women on low pay without easy access to transport.
  - Timing and covering for staff – if training is only available during the working day and there is no pool of ‘supply’ childcarers to cover for absences, it is simply impossible to release staff without breaking rules on staff/child ratios.
  - Quality and identification of quality – Ofsted reports on FE provision are rather inconclusive because of their lack of currency but suggest that, at least in the public sector, childcare training is mostly adequate; and childcare managers report only minority dissatisfaction. However, local sources report that childcare providers are ‘bombarded’ with offers of training; also suggest that amongst the plethora of public and private providers there are some weak ones; and report that, whilst young school leaver entrants are mostly happy to receive what they get, older entrants and those already in the workforce generate some level of complaint about quality. It seems, therefore, that there may be an issue concerning training quality in itself (probably in a minority of cases) but also an issue concerning the ability of childcare providers to assess the quality of training and to sort out the good from the less good.
203. Thus, the sector does not apparently suffer a shortfall in the volume or variety of training supply but, rather, the sector is prevented from accessing training as consistently and systematically as it might because, in some cases, of its complexity, its inaccessibility, its inflexibility, or its variable quality.

### **Low wages and high labour turnover**

204. It should also be recognised that one of the consequences for the childcare sector, as for social care generally, of being squeezed between regulatory imposed costs and limited funding/income, is that the sector generally pays fairly low wages for many or most of its staff. Given that fact, it is almost inevitable that the sector faces highish labour turnover and some recruitment difficulty. Indeed, one local source described the sector as trading on the dedication of its staff – who enter or work in the sector because of the nature of the job itself, working with children, rather than because of its financial rewards. However, this is a strategy which has its limits. Local sources suggest that motivated young women enter the sector enthusiastically but then leave to become mothers themselves or for better paid jobs; and that some mothers work in childcare whilst

their own children are in childcare but then are not sufficiently well-rewarded to stay thereafter.

205. Clearly, the development of better career progression and, thereby, of a ladder towards better wages, will bring significant improvement to this position, and the sector believes that the Early Years Foundation Degree and the concept of Early Years Professional Status are important in this respect. However, these developments are as yet in their infancy and will require considerable marketing effort if the image of the sector is to develop significantly. In the meantime, it remains the case that labour turnover will continue to reduce the impact of training efforts as a proportion of those trained leave the workforce after relatively short periods in it.

#### **Local variation in delivery: implications for inter-agency working**

206. Local discussions in the BDPS area revealed that the discretion awarded by the national childcare strategy as to how Local Authorities discharge their duties has not unexpectedly resulted in significant variation between authorities in this respect.
207. This is not in itself a particularly significant issue, though no doubt, over time, particularly effective approaches will emerge.
208. However, one local consequence was experienced when the separate childcare authorities for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole were partnered in an ESF-funded project which financed childcare training across the three Authorities.
209. Local reports suggest that the project was not easy to administer or discharge because of the variation in local approaches. Further, the bureaucracy attached to project administration and monitoring was not well-received by local childcare agencies. These factors have clearly left at least one of them in a position where they would be extremely cautious about participating in similar ventures again – simply, the ‘hassle factor’ of participation outweighed its perceived benefits.
210. The evident point is that whatever relationship the LSC seeks to develop in respect of the childcare sector in the area, it seems likely that it may need to do so in one-to-one relationships with childcare agencies for the Counties and Unitary Authorities concerned. The likelihood is that any joint action between the agencies which is sponsored or encouraged by the LSC would have to overcome the considerable hurdles of securing joint working by agencies which take somewhat different approaches and may, in future, be resistant to proposals in which the bureaucratic burden is high.

#### **Summary: opportunities for the LSC?**

211. In summary, a review of the childcare sector suggests that it is not an especially propitious one for LSC support:
- Some work (which the Sector Skills Agreement currently in preparation may undertake) is required to develop a consistent definition of the sector’s scope and its occupational structure.
  - The sector is a smallish one compared with others in the area.
  - Some of its skills difficulties (as with social care more generally) are caused simply by low wages which are an

inevitable product of the circumstances of the sector (constricted income and statutorily-imposed costs).

- Much of its current 'professionalisation' momentum concerns the development of an Early Years Professional Status where the focus is on Higher Education provision with which the LSC is not centrally concerned.
- There is no obvious shortfall of training provision – rather there are a series of barriers which limit access to that provision but of a kind which the LSC is not easily positioned to address.
- There may be limits on the LSC's ability to encourage inter-authority working and some reluctance by the different authorities to engage with initiatives which involve complexity and bureaucracy.

212. Nevertheless, the sector is important in that it underpins the efficiency and growth of many other sectors, particularly those that have traditionally been significant employers of women such as retail, health and social care, hospitality, and other service sectors and, hence, require an efficient childcare system.

213. It may, therefore, be worth examining the opportunities for intervention and support where these do exist. These may include:

- *Skills for Life.* It is recognised that skills for life provision is usually part of the basic foundation education of young people in childcare prior to their entry to the sector. However, the sector recognises that many people already in the workforce will need to progress up the qualifications ladder if targets for Level 3 skills are to be maintained. The sector would welcome assistance to improve the basic skills (literacy, numeracy, IT) of childcare workers, particularly if skills for life elements could be combined with training in other aspects of childcare (rather than being up-front training simply in basic skills).
- *Preparation Courses.* The sector welcomed the 6-week courses funded until recently by the LSC to help people move towards the Foundation Degree in Early Years. If the LSC were to resume support to such courses, that would be welcomed by the childcare authorities.
- *Image and marketing.* The sector is moving towards more formal progression routes and professional status for more staff. However, the sector recognises that the effectiveness of this change will be maximised not just by having a certain number of people moving towards professional status, but by wider recognition of the sector as one which is now able to offer higher status (perhaps ultimately higher wage) occupations. Basically, the sector wants to improve its image amongst young people considering their careers and stabilise the workforce by giving its junior members something to aim for. Any support which the LSC could give to efforts to upgrade the way the sector is viewed by young people (via Connexions, other Information, Advice and Guidance services such as those in schools) or to more general marketing of the changing nature of childcare's status and opportunities, would be viewed positively by the sector.

- *Encouraging flexible provision of training.* A particular barrier to training reported by childcare providers concerns the hours at which training courses run. It may be helpful if the LSC were to encourage its FE provider partners to consider whether and how further flexibility might be built into course schedules. Alongside this, support to staff cover for those in training would be helpful. Although the Transformation Fund is able to give assistance in this latter respect, it is reported that, in practice, the number of 'supply' childcarers is quite limited and that this barrier has not been widely broken down.

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