

More than Sundays

**Discussing the contribution of the Church to the Children's Workforce in England.
Examining and building on positive engagement in workforce reform.**



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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is evidential success of the CWDC's Local Workforce Strategy Partners Programmes (WSPP) in engaging the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in the Workforce Reform agenda. Nevertheless, workforce reform amongst "noncommissioned services" such as those provided by the Christian Church in England is not robustly addressed. The Christian Church provides a large volume of noncommissioned, early intervention services.

Working with Christian Research and The Consultative Group on Ministry Amongst Children (CGMC), this pilot project has mapped the activities and levels of engagement with workforce reform amongst Churches.

Recent developments in Children's Workforce Reform have not yet established a pathway to effectively engage this sector, despite the declaration of value from the Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

"Government ... cannot ignore the rich resources of the Third Sector and must not marginalize the massive contribution of faith communities across the UK".

(July 2008 at a No. 10 reception celebrating the work of faith based community projects)

We have aimed to eliminate from our results all activities that are an integral part of practising religion.

Churches clearly provide More Than Sundays.

KEY FINDINGS

86% of churches provide activities for children, young people and families in the community. Given that there are around 37,500 churches in England, this suggests a possible 32,000 churches working across England to provide services in this context.

There is a substantial volunteer workforce involved, in addition to the paid workforce, with volunteers providing an average of 38 hours per church per week.

Of the churches who provide any activities for children, young people and families in the community, our research indicated that 94% access some kind of training.

Approximately 45% of these churches work with other VCS organisations and up to 86% work with schools and preschools. Other links identified were extended schools, health visitors, children's centres, youth offending teams, education welfare officers and social work teams.

Perception is that there has been no established route, either formal or relational for churches to engage with the wider workforce reform agenda. Efforts to remove the level of mutual uncertainty between statutory services and churches, about how their values can be respected, could bring together the diverse organisational cultures and provide this route.

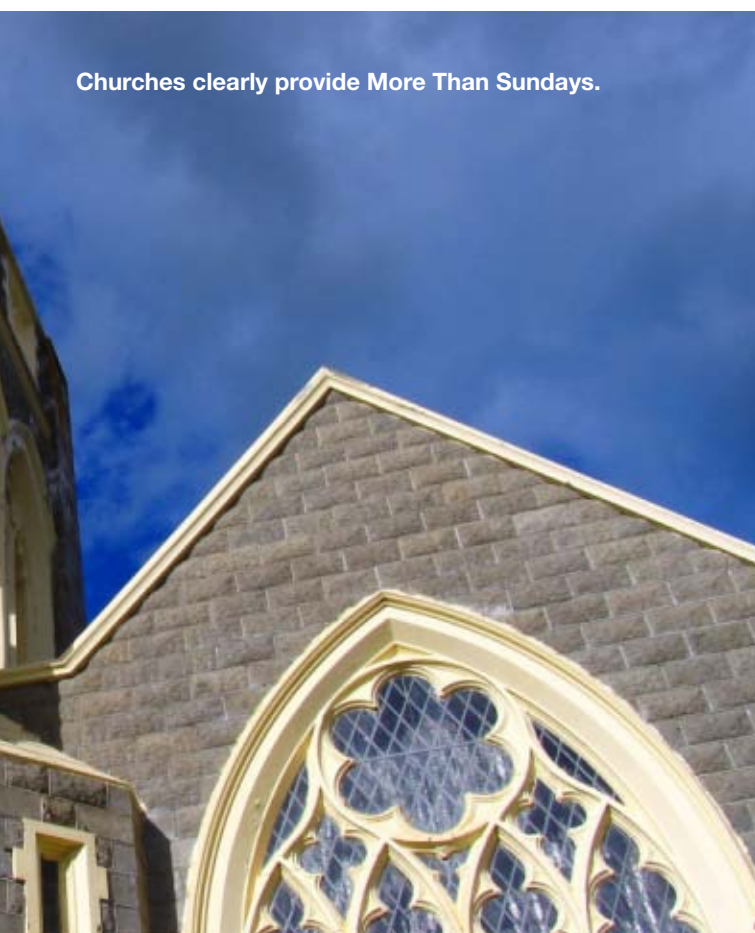
A huge 79% of churches receive no funding for their work with children, young people & families.

85% of all churches access safeguarding training to equip volunteers and staff. Approximately one third use the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), whilst two thirds commission or deliver their own safeguarding training.

Church-based projects have developed partnerships with statutory or VCS providers, enabling volunteers and staff to access quality training & supervision on a range of topics. This indicates a clear commitment and a proactive approach to workforce development.

In addition, there are several professional Christian-based agencies with which Churches partner in order to exchange ideas, good practice and access resources. The promotion and enabling of these agencies could address cultural differences between statutory agendas and Churches. The main partners identified include:

- CGMC (Consultative Group on Ministry amongst Children)
- CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service)
- Mothers Union
- CTF (Churches Together for Families)
- CCCF (Christian Child Care Forum)



SECTION 2: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Family Matters Institute is a national Christian-based charity working to address issues relating to and affecting children, young people and families. This is achieved through research, accredited training, supporting engagement and production of resources.

Working with Christian Research and The Consultative Group on Ministry Amongst Children (CGMC), the pilot project has mapped nationally, the activities Christian Churches are undertaking in the community, (including the levels of engagement with workforce reform initiatives). It has also undertaken case studies and unstructured interviews to form a scoping study of the possible development of interdenominational training resources based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Childrens Workforce (DfES, 2005)²

The Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce sets out the basic skills and knowledge needed by people (including volunteers) whose work brings them into regular contact with children, young people and families. By using a common language, it will enable professionals to work together more effectively in the interests of the child and underpins successful integrated working. Full information can be found on the Every Child Matters website³.

CHURCH WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Churches across the world have been providing services to children, young people and families since records began. Churches in England formed the basis of the delivery of money & services to children & families via 'outdoor relief' and continue today to provide 'relief' to those in need.

Historically, the agendas of Church work with families and social care agendas have intermittently converged and diverged with differences in views and motivations as well as distrust of one another's' value bases.

A critical issue in this relationship has been the appropriateness or otherwise of providing support alongside promoting a set of faith values and beliefs. Along with this, has gone discussion around issues of diversity and anti-discriminatory practice. This issue is addressed in modern commissioning by means of Church based providers being asked to provide evidence of policies and procedures which ensure commitment to equal opportunities and provision of services regardless of religious persuasion in a way which is culturally sensitive.

Three patterns have emerged, dating as far back as the 1800s:

The first is that of Churches delivering support to the community via charitable organisations which are registered separately.

On occasions, these projects are initially more integral to the church but find that in the interests of sustainability a move to a separate charitable trust is preferable. In some cases, the church retains little or no managerial contact and may provide some funding but not be fully responsible for the organisation. The organisation has good opportunities to access outside funding through grant-making trusts (either faith-based or otherwise). Such trusts are separately financially regulated. They tend to have a range of relationships with the Church and its values, and differing attitudes to and expressions of the promotion of those values within their support work.

In many cases, the relationship between the church and the organisation may become less close over time, unless the contact is maintained at a managerial level.

An example from our case studies of this arrangement can be seen in the Open House Youth Drop-in. The project began in 2000 and moved over to having its own Trust in 2004. The trustees are a combination of members of that church and other people chosen for their professional status and commitment to the project.

The project is entirely run by volunteers who vary in age and background and give between two and fifteen hours a week to the work. Some of these volunteers are from the founder church and others are from the wider Christian community with a minority who come from non-church backgrounds and whose contribution is valued and included.

The overall management is carried out by a group of volunteers which includes the founder of the project.

An additional, nationwide example is that of the Street Pastors initiative. Street Pastors is an interdenominational Christian response to today's social problems. The Ascension Trust oversees Street Pastors who work in partnership with churches, local government and the police.

Further information for Open House and Street Pastors can be found in the case studies section.

The second pattern that emerged is that of an individual starting up a project or work alongside their own faith perspective but separate from the organised church in any formalised way, where any relationship with the Church would be incidental because of the individual's own membership of a local Church.

In this instance, the Church itself would not have any direct role in the provision. It is proven to be easier for these services to access funding and also to engage with activities of workforce reform in a local setting. The extent to which this occurs will inevitably be affected by the pathway that the project takes during its development. The structure of a work will quickly grow outside the remit of one individual and although many of the services interviewed had begun in this way, they had quickly moved on to other models of organisation.

Early examples of this can be seen in Barnardo's and Action for Children.

In the formation of Action for Children (formally NCH), Thomas Stephenson, a young minister in the Methodist Church, in 1886, was shocked by the plight of children in the city of London, who were sleeping on the streets and decided to take action. Initially he converted a disused stable block into a Children's Home with a very counter-cultural attitude to children. Stephenson's vision was of a family-style system of childcare which would be disciplined but loving – unlike the hated workhouses.

Professional from the start, Stephenson's recognition of the importance of professional training was a significant contribution to the development of childcare in the UK. This illustrates that the extent to which Workforce skills are valued in this model is reliant initially on the values of the individual who is responsible for the formation of the work.

Over time, the work has shifted away from children's homes towards community based projects such as children's centres, supporting vulnerable families and trying to prevent potential problems.

A further example would be Bridge Street Church (see case studies) who state that they have written a child protection policy and access safeguarding training due to the professional background of the project manager.

Finally, we see local Churches developing programmes, groups or services which meet the need in their own local area.

These provisions often use volunteers to deliver support in a lay setting, but it is interesting to note that 54% of hours worked are undertaken by paid staff. Evidence suggests that these paid staff will oversee the volunteer workforce. This model is more likely to have little or no interaction with the statutory sector. There is a spectrum as to what extent they interact with other Churches and voluntary organisations in their area which is likely to be dependent on the training and professional background of paid staff.

In this model, the Church maintains some role in management of the project, by means of an internal board of reference which is formed from the Church leadership (pastoral team). These provisions tend to use largely church volunteers and therefore face significant challenges in promoting quality in the workforce.

This represents the model in use for the majority of mother and toddler groups and youth groups. These two provisions form 46% of the total services provided by Churches who responded to our survey, to Children, Young People and Families in the Community. As such, it is reasonable to assume that many Church-based provisions to Children, Young people and Families in the Community work on this model.

An unusual case study of interest in this area is that of FamilyLink. This was an entirely church-managed provision which was under the charity number of the church itself and yet was able to establish commissioned funding status with its Local Authority. This was achieved largely by having qualified volunteer staff from health and social work backgrounds, who later became paid staff, and who were able to build infrastructure which was substantial enough to find a gateway into voluntary sector forums and statutory partnerships. The case study highlights the challenges and opportunities in accessing funding and in building partnerships if you are a fully church-based provision. Whilst this is unusual, our research indicates that there are other fully church based projects which establish commissioning relationships with local authorities and serve large numbers of families.

During our research we examined these three approaches in different environments, rural and urban, ethnically mixed and socially diverse. These case studies form the basis of some qualitative results which inform us as to the “ground-level” realities of these different approaches.

The extent to which these services then interact with workforce reform in general and specifically activities which integrate the Common Core of Knowledge and Skills for the Children’s Workforce is affected to some extent by the model of relationship between the church and the provision itself. In the case of church-based provisions which register as a separate charitable trust, the registration itself brings certain measures which cause it to be more likely that the provision will interact with statutory bodies. This, in turn, increases the likelihood that agendas affecting the wider Children’s Workforce have an impact also on that provision. There is incidental evidence of this in the case studies.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Funding sources also have an impact on the extent of interaction with statutory services for children, young people and families. If a project intends to apply for any commissioning funding or indeed any grant funding, it will be required to have some awareness of the wider issues facing the Children’s Workforce. This involves the need to write policies and procedures which ensure a minimum standard of practice within the provision.

The extent to which a project can financially afford to employ staff who are qualified is affected by their access to funding. Many church-based provisions do not have the necessary level of organised infrastructure, nor the capacity or knowledge to achieve this, which would be needed in order to provide services with sufficient professionalism to gain access to statutory or grant-funding. This is somewhat of an endless cycle.

79% of churches who provide services to churches, young people and families in the community receive no external funding at all. When there is funding, this comes mainly through grants from trusts or charities.

Organisations which are separately registered as charitable trusts are more often likely to be included in local Voluntary Sector Forums and partnerships, which is in turn a route to access Workforce Reform activities.

In the view of many of those interviewed, there are barriers to inclusion for church-based projects. Reports of difficulties in accessing voluntary sector forums and supportive networks were identified. Inclusion in statutory sector funding streams was stated to be highly challenging. The perception amongst those interviewed for case studies was that there is a level of opposition to fully church based services being included and engaged with VCS and statutory partnerships. This was identified as contributing to difficulties in accessing training and building capacity.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development could be described as ‘developing the people in an organisation, whether volunteers, employees or trustees, so as to improve the delivery of services’. Workforce development aims to produce ‘a motivated, skilled and diverse workforce which delivers high quality services to all its users.’

In practical terms, workforce development often means training, but also includes other ways of gaining knowledge, such as mentoring schemes and work placements. Workforce development may also include activities which increase the recruitment and retention of high quality people to an organisation.

WORKFORCE REFORM

Following the tragic death of Victoria Climbié in 2000, there was a public enquiry headed by Lord Laming, out of which came the Laming Report and the green paper “**Every Child Matters.**” In a further document, “**Keeping Children Safe**” there were developments on the thinking and responses in detail to the practice recommendations made by Lord Laming. These documents made recommendations about workforce reform which if followed, may have saved the life of this little girl and others at risk of abuse by adults. This raised the profile of the agenda of Workforce Development and the need to ensure that the children’s workforce possess high level skills and robust practices.

Further documents of particular relevance would be:

The **Children Act 2004** provided an update and some additional duties upon the Local Authority, which aim to contribute to the wider strategy for improving children’s lives in England. This covers the universal services which every child accesses, and more targeted services for those with additional needs.

It is relevant to Workforce Reform as its overall aim is to encourage integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of services as well as improve multi-disciplinary working.

Details about the implementation of the Act and the wider reform programme are available in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004)*.

The Children’s Plan: Building Brighter Futures (2007) aims to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up, it sets out plans for the next ten years under each of the Department for Children, Schools and Families’ strategic objectives for children in England.



Effectively delivering the vision set out in the Children’s Plan requires system-wide reforms to the way that services for children and young people work together. This will be achieved by:

- Locating services together
- Working in integrated ways
- Investing in all of those who work with children (workforce reform)
- Building capacity to work across professional boundaries.

Joining up services in this way thus provides a safety net for the vulnerable as well as unlocking the potential of every single child. Regional Children’s Workforce Action Plans were drawn up in 2008, covering everyone who works with children and young people, which will strengthen integrated working across all services.

2020 Children and Young People’s Workforce Strategy

published in December 2008 sets out the Government’s vision that everyone who works with children and young people should be:

- **Ambitious** for every child and young person
- **Excellent** in their practice
- **Committed** to partnership and integrated working
- **Respected** and valued as professionals

Whatever their role, the aim is to ensure that the workforce has the skills and knowledge to do the best job they possibly can to help children and young people develop and succeed across all the outcomes which underpin Every Child Matters.

The strategy sets out how the Government will work with partners, and people in the workforce, to ensure that every part of the children and young people's workforce achieves this vision⁴.

The pervasive theme of workforce reform throughout policy making is an indicator to its centrality in the government's current strategy for improving the lives of children in England.

“ The single most important factor in delivering our aspirations for children is a world class workforce ”

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families Children's Plan: Building Brighter Futures, 2007

Engaging church providers is entirely consistent with this approach.

CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The CWDC was set up in 2005 as a result of one of the recommendations in Every Child Matters. The aim of the CWDC is to improve the lives of children, young people, their families and carers by the implementation of the new Every Child Matters approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to age 19. The outcomes which services must work together to achieve for all children in Britain, are as follows:

- Stay Safe
- Be Healthy
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Wellbeing

By focussing services on achieving these outcomes for all children, we ensure that services are child-focussed and “wrap around” the child with co-ordinated aims.

This is done by ensuring that those who work with children and young people have the best possible training, qualifications and support, and by helping organisations to work together more closely to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is at the heart of what they do. Therefore, intrinsically there is a focus on reform of the children's workforce to ensure it supports the five outcomes more effectively. With a stronger focus on early identification and prevention, and requiring action at national and local levels.



The Department for Children, Schools and Families continues to work with partners to identify good practice with a view to developing guidance and toolkits, to support new ways of working locally as part of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme.

A clear, supportive national framework needs to be put in place to underpin this vision.

To this end, CWDC has developed:

- **The Children's Workforce Strategy** which sets out action to be taken nationally and locally to ensure that there are the skills, ways of working and capacity in the children's workforce to deliver change for children
- **Practical guidance on multi-agency working**
- **The Common Assessment Framework**
- **A common core of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce**
- A better infrastructure for employer-led reform - CWDC is one of five bodies forming the **UK Skills For Care and Development Sector Skills Council** and it coordinates the **Children's Workforce Network** which works in the interests of about 500,000 workers, including early years and childcare, education welfare and social care for children and young people.

THE FAMILY MATTERS INSTITUTE

Family Matters Institute is a national Christian-based charity working to address issues relating to and affecting children, young people and families and has been working in partnership to address issues of Workforce Reform and Development alongside the Children's Workforce Development Council since 2006, at local, regional and national level.

The CWDC 'Workforce Strategic Partners Program' (WSPP) has enjoyed a level of success in engaging commissioned VCS services. Services provided by the Christian Church in England represent a valuable contribution to noncommissioned early intervention services. It is such services which have not so robustly been integrated by local WSPP programmes. Family Matters Institute has developed an interest in equipping and up-skilling this sector, which is in its early stages.

Working with Christian Research and The Consultative Group on Ministry Amongst Children (CGMC), this pilot project has mapped the activities and levels of engagement with workforce reform amongst Churches.

The Family Matters Institute (FMI) enjoys a unique position in this context; with a proven record of partnership and commissioned work for the CWDC at national, regional and local levels. FMI has an established reputation in the Christian world, for working in a research-based way to affect policy making as well as developing ground-level training which addresses Children's Workforce Reform. In Bedfordshire, FMI holds a key position in the VCS locally and has excellent working relationships with church and voluntary sector deliverers of direct services.

The Family Matters Institute benefits from professional Christian management, trusteeship and workforce at every level with a range of training, writing, teaching, management, funding and social care experience and qualifications. As such it is in a very strong position to develop and disseminate materials through partnerships with CGMC and CCPAS as well as relationships with individual professionals who have agreed to contribute during the process of the pilot.

The eventual aim of the "More Than Sundays" research would be to provide a "bridge" to enhance the relationship between the church sector and the statutory and wider third sector, in working with children, young people and families in the community and to increase engagement of the church sector with Workforce Reform. In this way, the capacity of the Church sector to provide services would be built and the quality of their contribution enhanced.

It is envisaged that this could be achieved by developing training materials for the church sector which incorporate the faith perspective and the core skills as recognised by the CWDC, exploring the management of these two agendas by focussing on the similarities and ways of working together which respect diversity.

SECTION 3: METHODOLOGY

The pilot project under the CWDC Workforce Strategic Partnerships Programme, which has become known as “More Than Sundays” originated with three outcomes in mind:

OUTCOME 1: MAPPING

To map both the activities churches are undertaking in England with children, young people and families in the community, and the level of engagement with workforce reform initiatives and local infrastructure.

This pilot project provides research based analysis at both the national and local levels of:

- The nature and level of the work Christian churches are undertaking with children, young people and families in the community.
- The level of engagement of these churches in workforce reform initiatives; analysis of likely barriers and possible solutions.
- An indication as to the possible size of the overall workforce.
- Engagement with local infrastructure (e.g. Schools, Extended Schools, Children’s Centres, VCS infrastructure organisations, WSPP local programmes, Children’s Trusts) and with regional and national infrastructure, including denominational resources.
- Engagement in work in the community with children, young people and families specifically by Christian groups not represented by the CGMC e.g. Black Majority Churches & New Churches both of which are growing compared to the mainstream denominations (according to the last English Church Census ⁵) and whom, anecdotal evidence indicates, are highly involved in working in the local community.

The survey was circulated to a representative sample of c.4000 churches, with responses from 677 churches giving a 95% confidence limit of around $\pm 3.7\%$ points against the total number of churches in England (approximately 37,500). The research was then weighted to the context of size and external environment of the church in England; knowledge unique to Christian Research.

Responses were collated by Christian Research which is a professional statistical research company of many years standing in the Christian sector, and is a section of The Bible Society. The data was analysed on an anonymous basis by IDA (Independent Data Analysis Ltd) in accordance with the code of conduct of the Market Research Society.



The research that we have undertaken does not include any activities where the primary aim is to promote the values, practice or expression of the Christian faith. The focus is on provision of community activities which would be seen to have value in a mainstream social care context and which contribute to the promotion of the five ECM outcomes for children. In addition, activities which promote positive parenting skills and enable adult relationships which form a basis of a family, able to sustain security and wellbeing for children, have been incorporated.

The outputs from the study give a national overview of the activities of churches, as well as a localised picture. This local understanding, along with key messages from 'More Than Sundays', is available to WSPP Local Programmes as an aid to understanding their local Church sector.

The full report of this pilot is to be distributed to the following groups:

- Head of Regional Support, Children's Workforce Development Council
- Directors of Children's Services
- Commissioning Managers and/or Partnership Managers in local Children's Trusts
- Survey respondents who requested the report
- Denominational heads of children's provision within the Christian Church
- Christian organisations who work in related fields

In addition, an accessible summary report has been distributed to all WSPP local projects and is available as a downloadable PDF from the FMI website.

OUTCOME 2: SCOPING STUDY

A scoping study of the existence of current interdenominational training resources for work by Churches in the community with Children, Young People and Families was carried out. Available resources were investigated, based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce.

Concurrent to the survey and working with some of the expected early qualitative outputs, this project also examined the potential partners and pathways for development of interdenominational training resources for churches who work with children, young people and families in the community.

The Consultative Group on Ministry among Children has produced "Core Skills for Children's Work" training material aimed at supporting church based children's work. The resource addressed key skills and areas of expertise, some of which overlap to some extent with the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce. The materials are supported by web resources⁶ and updates. The focus of these materials is church based children's work, which differs from the focus of this pilot study.

A SWOT analysis of this course was undertaken and it was mapped against the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge to identify commonalities and the extent to which it met those skills as training objectives. It was also examined in comparison to other materials aimed at supporting work within Churches with children and young people.

The project has explored other resources on the market and has failed to identify any resources which seek to equip the Church to work in the community with children, young people and families, or which sufficiently address the Core of Skills and Knowledge to be adapted easily for that purpose.

The conclusion of this exercise was that the materials are effective in equipping those who already have experience with children, to apply their existing skills to the context of Church work with children. These materials were not designed to teach basic foundational skills to volunteers, or to be applied in the community.

These materials tended to make three assumptions:

1. They assume that volunteers have a level of experience with children. This is born of the fact that in Churches, there is a high incidence of parental volunteers, and often children will know adults already from another context (e.g. families will be friends outside the church setting).
2. There is an assumption that the children will share the same moral and beliefs framework in the majority of cases.

It is assumed that most families in that context will have a good level of parenting skills and a discernable level of security and safety will be in place for the children involved.

Where it is the case that these assumptions are true, then the resources meet the need for supplying ideas and activities and skills for group leader. This does not seek to meet the needs of the young person where one or all of the above assumptions are not true.

In addition, a series of case studies were undertaken, a sample of which are included as appendices. These included extensive unstructured and informal interviews with programme leads, project managers and Church leadership (dependant on the style of the programme).

It was necessary to undertake interviews in this way in order to circumnavigate the noticeable level of anxiety about giving information to a project which is in any way funded by sources linked to government. There were considerable barriers to overcome in this arena, which required skilled negotiation and thorough relational work.

Similarly, some Local Authority Commissioning Managers were contacted to seek projects which may deliver services through Churches, and the same skills were needed in order to have those discussions. Undoubtedly, there is a level of anxiety about Churches' capacity to deliver quality professional services, yet only limited steps to address routes to equip or engage these projects with Core Skills Workforce Reform.

During the pilot, we have met widely with CGMC and with professional sociologists, child psychologists, social workers and programme leads for Christian programmes which train youth workers and Children's workers accredited through universities. We have discussed plans to produce training and to accredit it through NOCN (National Open College Network) and the option of this forming part of a foundation degree or access to university course. The responses have been overwhelmingly positive and we have several individuals and organisations already willing to contribute as a result.

We have used existing networks, including the Anglican networks of Churches Together for Families in England, the Mother's Union and Christian Childcare Forum, which are well respected networks with a high level of professional membership. In addition, we have met with Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) who are the largest provider of training to Churches working with children. It is the desire of all of these organisations to work to support our production of resources. CCPAS are keen to contribute on the safeguarding issues and will allow us to use their publications to market the product, and endorse it with their approval.

OUTCOME 3: FINAL REPORT

This final report is prepared primarily for the CWDC but is also to be circulated to denominational heads within the Church, in England as well as allied organisations and networks. We seek to summarise the outcomes of the quantitative research, and qualitative scoping work.

It has been completed by the two staff who worked on the research, who have social work, professional writing and financial statistics qualifications backgrounds, using the information gathered in the Christian Research report which we commissioned, and incorporating a summary of the findings. It has been overseen and managed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Family Matters Institute (FMI).

This report seeks to enhance understanding of the contribution of churches, both at national and local level, who work with children, young people and families; and to support the increased engagement of those churches in workforce reform activities.

We have developed a longer term proposal for an interdenominational national programme which "bridges the gap" between statutory services/agendas and the Church-based interventions. The proposal is based on the early findings from 'More than Sundays' and utilises FMI's experience and relationships.

Summary reports, in a more user-friendly format have already been produced and circulated to other WSPP Local Programmes by the CWDC.

SECTION 4: ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY CHURCHES

The modern Christian Church builds on a heritage of providing support activities to children, young people and families in the community. Churches were integral to the development of frontline community & social welfare work in England. Our research shows that this theme is still very much alive in the modern Church.

Churches across England undertake a wide range of activities which are open to children, young people, and their families in their local community. Our research indicates that up to 86% of churches in England do provide such activities. Given that there are around 37,500 churches in England, this suggests there are over 32,000 churches working all over the country to provide services in their community.

Some denominational patterns were observed in survey responses which indicated that values and perspectives will have an impact on the type of provisions which may develop and the funding that they may gain access to. Most notably, Methodist churches make the largest contribution to parent & toddler group provision whereas Baptist churches are known for the provision of community youth groups. Further analysis of our findings in this area could be undertaken, which may inform churches who wish to consider developing provision for children, young people & families in their community.

In analysing the data provided by Christian Research, we have separated activities into those primarily for children and young people, from those aimed at parents and carers.

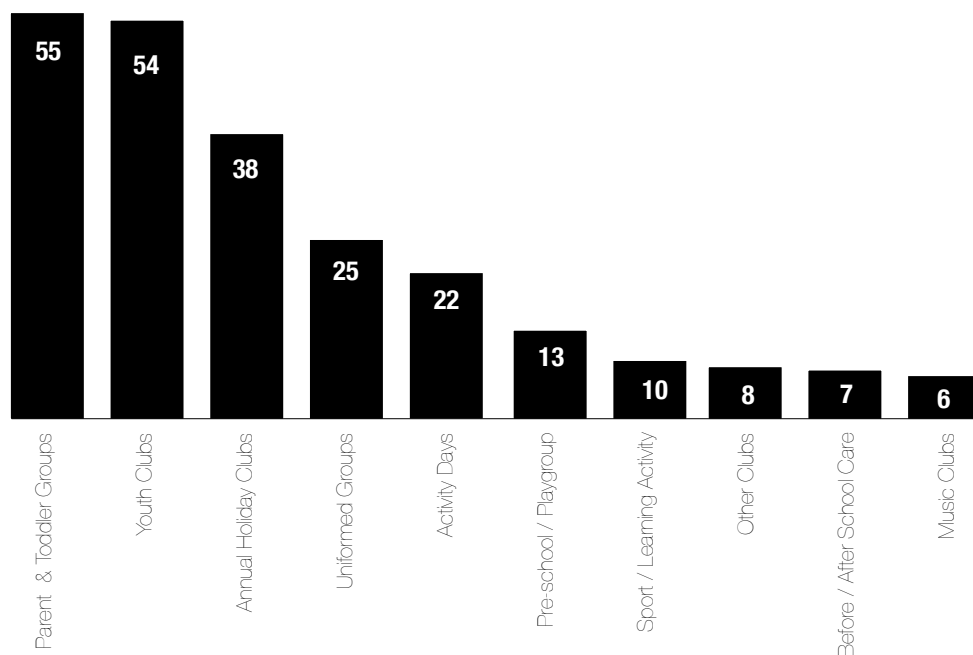
We found 84% of churches providing activities for children and young people and 43% providing activities, courses and information for parents and carers. For examples of how churches provide these activities, please see the list of Case Studies.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The following chart illustrates the breakdown between different types of activities provided for children and young people.

It should be noted again that these activities are those which are open to all in the community, the aim being to improve the welfare of children & young people.

CHART 1. Percentage of Churches in England Providing These Activities



PARENT & TODDLER GROUPS

Parent & Toddler groups are a well established route for churches to provide open access provision for children and parents in the community. Results of the survey suggest that in England, 52% of children under four years old access some form of parent & toddler group via Churches.

These parent & toddler groups are provided by 55% of Churches in England. The format usually involves access to toys and games, refreshments and an interactive singing time. Parents attend with their baby or toddler, with churches providing volunteers for general assistance. It is usual for parents to attend these groups even when a baby is very young in order to forge social links. Attendance often lasts until a child attends school, with some groups providing more learning targeted activities for these older toddlers.



There is a spectrum of the level to which these groups interact with parents and families in a community in order to build parenting capacity. Linked to this, there is a range of relationships with the local authority, children's services & workforce reform. As an illustration, it can be seen in the case studies that Brickhill Baptist Church run a baseline parent & toddler service whereas King's Arms FamilyLink had developed a group specifically designed to work with parents with a high level of social isolation & a low level of parenting skills.

Also notable from Brickhill Baptist Church is the diversification of the parent & toddler group into specialised groups for children under one, aged 1-4 and a further provision for dads and their toddlers. This work with fathers indicates a response to changes in society and that churches are both aware and engaged with wider agendas in a social care context. The church is able to respond and express commonalities with wider social care agendas. This is a positive indicator for future engagement of church based providers into the children's workforce.

"We cannot continue to ignore one half of the parental partnership that is so crucial to our joint ambitions. We owe it to our children – and mums – to 'Think Fathers'." Children's minister Beverley Hughes speaking at the 5th Annual 'Reaching Out' Conference March 2009⁷

YOUTH CLUBS

The context for providing youth services in England is wide and varied, involving local authority youth workers, targeted services, children's centre provision and voluntary sector provision. In addition, individuals or committees within a community will create their own provision in response to local need. In this context it is difficult to measure what input the voluntary sector, and more specifically the church sector contributes.

Notwithstanding, our research indicates that 54% of churches provide open access youth clubs which exist in order to meet the needs of young people in the local area rather than primarily to promote the practise of faith. In addition to this, many more churches run youth clubs/groups which are designed to promote Christian faith amongst young people. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that there is also a body of young people from outside the church community attending these groups. Our research has not addressed this area.

Youth provision by the church is further enriched by annual holiday clubs, uniformed groups, music/sport/learning activities which were measured separately.

Our research suggests that 21% of young people (aged 10-18) attend youth clubs run by Churches in England.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

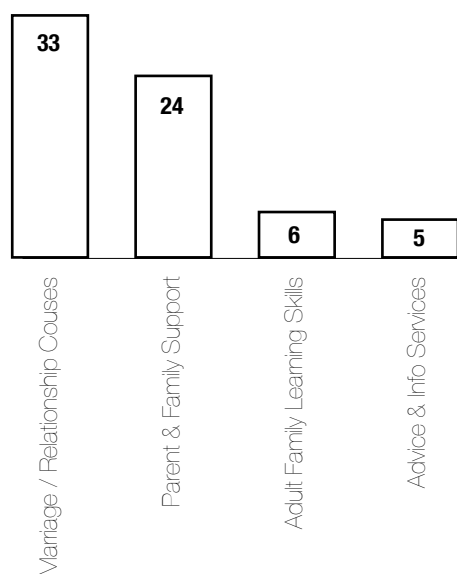
Churches are providing a range of further activities, the largest of which are annual holiday clubs and uniformed groups. The specification for these activities being included was that the Church must itself have a level of leadership or provision of workforce in these activities rather than simply providing a venue for the activities.

'Other clubs' includes weekend (Saturday/Sunday) clubs along with 'kids clubs.' Figures not included in the chart are Childminder networks (provided by 1% of our sample); day nurseries (1.4%) and Children's Centres (1.5%)

ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Churches also provide activities for parents & carers – aiming to meet the needs of the family as a whole. This chart shows the breakdown in types of activities provided specifically for adults in the community.

CHART 2. Percentage of Churches in England Undertaking Parenting & Couples Support Activities



Extrapolating this data across the churches in England would suggest there are over 12,000 churches providing marriage and relationship courses and around 9000 churches provide parenting and family support. Both these activities focus on upholding and strengthening the family unit.

SECTION 5: WORKFORCE

There is a substantial volunteer workforce involved in providing activities and support for children, young people and families in addition to the paid workforce. Paid workers, in those churches engage with children, young people & families in the community, provide a total average of 45 hours per week per church. Volunteers in the same cohort provide an average of 38 hours of engagement per week per church.

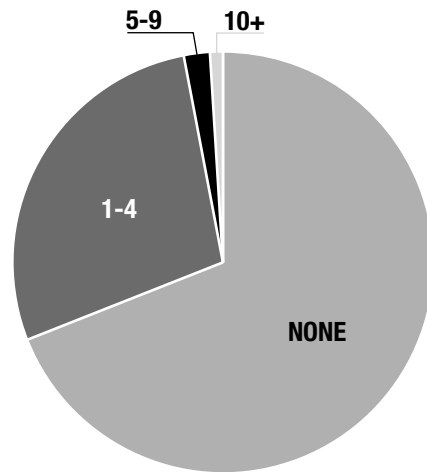


Ratio of Volunteer/Paid Workforce Hours

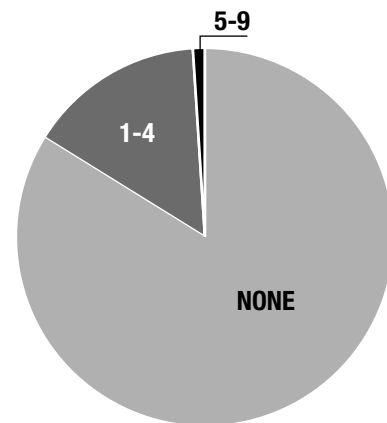
Where churches work with children, young people and families in the community, 67% of the working hours are provided by volunteers.

Our research indicates that 80% of churches providing these activities for the community involve volunteers in the work.

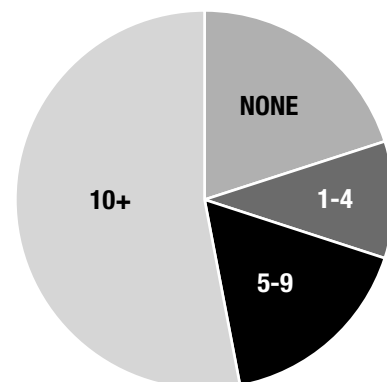
Indicators from the case studies suggest that even where church based projects are providing a significant service to a large volume of families, the express knowledge of national and regional workforce reform strategies and their local outworking is often scant. Examples of this can be seen in the case studies of the Bridge Street Church and the Oasis Family Centre. In both cases, they proactively access training through professional contacts but have not been offered the opportunity to engage with a local framework for workforce reform.



Workforce paid for 16+ hours per week



Workforce paid for <16 hours per week



Volunteer Workforce

SECTION 6: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

85% of all churches access safeguarding training to equip volunteers and staff working with children and young people. Approximately one third use the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), whilst two thirds commission or deliver their own safeguarding training.

Many church-based projects have developed partnerships with statutory or VCS providers to enable volunteers and staff to access quality training & supervision on a range of topics. This indicates a clear commitment and a proactive approach to workforce development. In addition, there are several professional Christian based agencies with which Churches partner, in order to exchange ideas, good practise and access resources. The promotion and enabling of these agencies could address cultural differences between statutory agendas and Churches. The main partners identified include:

- CGMC (Consultative Group for Ministry amongst Children)
- CCPAS (Churches Child Protection Advisory Service)
- Mothers Union
- CTF (Churches Together for Families)
- CCCF (Christian Child Care Forum)

Our research indicates that approximately 45% of churches providing activities for children, young people and families in the community work with other VCS organisations. Up to 86% work with schools and preschools, where there is some excellent partnership practice including an example where there is co-funding of a school Family Support Worker - see case study of Grace Community Church.

Other links identified were extended schools, health visitors, children's centres, youth offending teams, education welfare officers and social work teams.

CGMC

The Consultative Group on Ministry among Children was constituted in its present form in 1972. It is an official network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

It exists to bring together all those with national responsibility for work with children in denominations and Christian agencies who are in sympathy with the aims and objectives of CTBI. Main roles include:

- Evaluating and promoting good resources for those who are involved in Christian education
- Developing support material for children's ministry
- Training for children's work leaders

CCPAS

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS) is the only independent Christian charity providing professional advice, support, training and resources in all areas of safeguarding children and for those affected by abuse.

CCPAS resources and training are used not only by churches across the denominational spectrum, but increasingly by other faiths as well as non-faith based organisations. CCPAS are linked with approximately 7000 local churches and has over 15,000 subscribers to its 'Caring' magazine. The organisation also gives advice to Children's Services Departments, Police and other agencies across the UK.

MOTHERS UNION

Mothers' Union is a Christian organisation with more than 3.6 million members in 78 countries worldwide. The backbone of Mothers' Union is its worldwide network of community volunteers. In addition, the Mothers' Union employs over 300 paid workers around the world. Mothers' Union workers provide vital leadership for efforts in the community, enabling people to gain essential skills, develop sustainable self-help projects, providing funding grants, and run training seminars.

Mothers' Union is also involved in campaigning and lobbying on a number of worldwide issues such as parental rights, international debt relief and child poverty.

CTF

Churches Together for Families is a 'family' of denominational representatives and family organisations, which has grown over time. Although it has a programme of work of its own, its member organisations and churches work directly with families. For example, Marriage Care offers counselling and support to couples and families; the National Association of Child Contact Centres offers 'neutral ground' where children of separated families can enjoy contact with one (or both) parents. CTF exists to share what churches and organisations are doing and to attempt to encourage churches to work with each other.

CCCF

Christian Child Care Forum operates by bringing organisations, individuals and families together with issues of concern through its Annual Forum, its Newsletter and various working groups.

By providing a means of sharing experience and insights, and increasing understanding and co-operation on matters of policy and practice, the Forum seeks to sustain and develop the contribution of Christian resources to the well-being of children and young people.

SECTION 7: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Christian Church in England is engaging in a meaningful way with children, young people and families in the community. A significant amount of their intervention is not primarily concerned with promoting their faith and constitutes a positive contribution to the VCS provision of services in England.

The various models of church provision have different levels of interaction with workforce reform and joined up working in statutory and VCS partnerships.

Most church provision falls into the noncommissioned services bracket and faces significant challenges in accessing training, mentoring, partnership working, and funding. 55% of church based provisions for children, young people and families in the community, have not established partnerships with other VCS organisations.

Activities and services for children, young people and families provided by Christian churches are able to engage with wider social care agendas and to respond to local need.

Church based projects both provide and access training from Christian sources more widely than from mainstream sources. Nevertheless a considerable number of projects do use partnerships with health or social care services in order to access workforce reform.

Resources which understand and respect a range of values and perspectives and which are suitable to equip church based projects with the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce, in the community, are not clearly identifiable.

Family Matters Institute would value CWDC support to develop quality, accessible training materials and pathways for churches who provide activities for children, young people & families in the community. This material should be clearly mapped to the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce and should build capacity in the church sector, in order to provide high quality services in an anti-discriminatory way. These resources should respect the values base of the church as a provider, and the value base of the social care sector, focusing on commonalities. The resources should promote safe child-centred working which respects diversity.

Resources should be targeted towards volunteers as well as staff in recognition of the 'added value' brought to the children's workforce in this context.



CASE STUDIES

A sample of the churches & projects researched for this report are found below. Case study research included the use of unstructured and informal interviews with programme leads, project managers and Church leadership.

Interviews were conducted in this manner to reduce a level of anxiety about giving information to a project which is funded by sources linked to government. This methodology also enabled projects to speak more freely and to illustrate the reach and diversity of their services, as well as to discuss challenges and vulnerabilities.

BRIDGE STREET CHURCH

OUTLINE

Bridge Street Church has a Pentecostal tradition and has been operating in Leeds since 1910. The Church is currently located in the centre of Leeds but will soon move to new premises in an old school located in the Burmantofts area. The new location will allow the Church to expand its services to the community. The area in which the Church is looking to move to is seen as severely deprived but this is not seen as negative. The Church has already built a good reputation with the services provided and presents as forward looking and excited about the new opportunities within the community.

WORKFORCE

Two full-time workers – a children's leader and a youth leader, oversee community activities. In addition, approximately 80 volunteers are involved.

ACTIVITIES

In its current location, the following services are available to children, young people and their families:

- Kidz Klub - children aged between five and eleven meeting on Saturday mornings. The club is attended by 300 to 450 children and the Beeston Satellite club by 80 to 150 children. Minibuses are used to collect children and return them home from around the city. All children who attend the group on a Saturday are visited at home by volunteers and relationships are built with the family. Workers can help families' access services and a more formalised 'trouble shooting' approach is being put in place.
- School Assemblies are held in 26 Primary Schools covering topics such as behaviour and bullying.
- Youth Club – targeted at children aged eight to eleven, mostly attended by Church children but friends are welcome.
- Sunday School – open to the community, in the past the church has sent minibuses to collect children & plan to start this again after the move to the new building.
- Parent-toddler group – meets four times a week with approximately 90 families accessing the group, the majority of whom do not attend the Church.

FUNDING

The Clubs are free of charge and funded by a group of churches along with donations (no government funding). The Saturday Club is set up as a self-funding charity.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Due to the background of the current children's worker, issues surrounding Child Protection (CP) and safeguarding have been assessed and formal policies are now in place. The Church accesses training from CCPAS but feels not all Churches (e.g. smaller ones) would be able to afford this resource. The CORE resource had not been heard of but details of this resource were requested (& given). Training for work in the Community was acknowledged as an issue, particularly with the move to the new location and the planned development of the Church's community work. The Church was not accessing any VCS training and there was no awareness of the CWDC.

OASIS FAMILY CENTRE

OUTLINE

Oasis Family Centre opened in September 2006 and aims to be a venue for others to use for activities which promote healthy and happy family life as well, as being a direct provider of support services to families. It was developed in response to concerns about local vulnerable families who do not access more statutory services due to a level of anxiety and suspicion associated with such services.

It is positioned in an annexe to the church building in the town centre, an area which is identified as high deprivation. There is no Sure Start provision in the immediate area.

WORKFORCE

The church employs a finance/admin assistant and an outreach worker part-time. Previously it also had a project manager and another family worker but the funding for these posts has ended and not been re-identified. Volunteers also work in the project and it is now managed directly by the church minister.

ACTIVITIES

The Family Centre currently runs an under five parent and toddler support group with informal parenting training and support by an outreach worker embedded. There will also be a specialist parent and toddler group for children with disabilities in the new school term.

There is a health visitor drop-in and a foster carer support group which use the building. The Family Centre building includes a fully equipped computer suite and provides computer, literacy and numeracy courses to parents in the community.

FUNDING

The centre has had its activities cut considerably recently because of loss of funding from the European Regional Development Fund, meaning that staff positions have been lost.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Safeguarding (termed as Child Protection as the term was not recognized) was accessed through CCPAS and access to training from PCT and local voluntary services has been available in the past in a limited way by way of personal relationships with people in the statutory sector who have secured some access for the project. Unfortunately, this has not been sustained when staff personal contacts have moved on geographically or professionally to other roles or locations.

There was very little knowledge of the role of CWDC, Common Core of Skills and Knowledge or indeed of wider agendas regarding extended schools or Children's Centres.

There appears to be an organisational culture of ongoing informal supervision with open access rather than formalized supervision. Training is accessed in terms of the qualifications of the staff recruited and any contact they make through their own professional bodies, there was no formal internal plan for training and development of staff.

Some Christian publications were discussed which had relevance to work with children in the church and the church were members of the CGMC and as such knew of the CORE resource but had not used it.



ST CHRISTOPHER'S CHURCH: THE SPRINGFIELD PROJECT

OUTLINE

In 2003 the Church was approached by Birmingham City Council to consider entering into a partnership to deliver extended services to the community under the umbrella of a Children's Centre. Unfortunately, timescales proved to be unrealistic and the Church was not able to proceed for this phase.

Towards the end of 2005 they were once more approached by Birmingham City Council for inclusion in Phase 2 of their Children's Centre build programme. A period of consultation with the staff, stakeholders and Church fellowship was undertaken to ensure that the partnership proposal was the right direction for the Project to take. Material from these consultation sessions was fed into a proposal which was discussed by the Project Management Committee and St. Christopher's PCC in June 2006.

Subsequently, in July 2006, a formal recommendation was made to the PCC to proceed with partnership arrangements with Birmingham City Council via funding and the provision of a purpose-built building for the delivery of dedicated children's and families' services to the community. With the approval of this recommendation, came the capacity not only to achieve sustainability for existing services, but to extend these services into a holistic provision for the community.

The Children's Centre Agenda is a central government initiative and links into Workforce Development primarily through the Learning Skills Councils of the professionals employed there.

Children's Centres are the Government's key to the development of 'joined-up' services for children and their families. This means bringing together education, care, and health and family support services under one roof. It is hoped that this integrated approach will provide holistic support for children's development and support to families with young children. The Government also hope that this initiative will facilitate the return to work of those parents who are currently unemployed.

The Project's new building enables voluntary and statutory sectors to come together sharing expertise on both sides to deliver better quality services to the community. Initially, core services have been targeted at children under five and their families, but it is anticipated that in time services will be developed to include disabled children and young people, along with older adults.

The delivery of all child-centred services, including family support, is focussed around the Five Outcomes as identified within the Every Child Matters framework (Children Act 2004):

- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being
- Every Children's Centre has to deliver the services set out in the Children's Centre Core Offer. The Springfield Project is already delivering some of these services, but will expand and develop over time to deliver all of them.

Springfield Children's Centre has a designated catchment area in the Moseley area of Birmingham. As one of the early phase Children's Centres it is located in an area of high deprivation.

WORKFORCE

The Children's Centre is used as a base for a number of professionals including a GP and Health Visitors. In addition, the Centre employs a Project Director and Operations Manager along with two part-time outreach/family workers. A body of volunteers supplement the services of the paid staff.

ACTIVITIES

Early education:

- Early education integrated with day care for babies and children until they reach school age.
- Day-care suitable for working parents, 5 days a week, 48 weeks a year, 10 hours a day.
- Nursery places will be open to all, not just families in the immediate area, to provide the best educational outcomes for all children.
- Support for childminders, who may also offer wrap around care.
- Early identification of children with special needs and disabilities with inclusive services and support for their families.

Family support and parental outreach:

- Visits to all children in the catchment area within two months of birth.
- Access to specialist services.
- Parenting support and information as well as specific support for families in need and 'hard to reach' families.
- Providing information and advice on parenting skills at significant transition points for the family (e.g. pre birth, early days, settling into childcare).
- Increasing parents' understanding of their child's development.
- Increasing the involvement of fathers.

Child and family health services:

- Antenatal advice and support for parents.
- Information and guidance on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety.
- Identification, support and care for those suffering from maternal depression, ante-natally and post-natally.
- Speech and language and other specialist support.
- Smoking cessation interventions.

Links with schools and Children's Information Services (CIS):

- Links to local schools, extended schools and out of school activities (holiday play schemes, before/after school play & learning)
- Information to parents/carers about CIS.

Links with Jobcentre Plus:

- Linking in with local arrangements (e.g. via the local authority's service level agreement) for collaboration with Jobcentre Plus Childcare Partnership managers.
- Encouragement and support for parents who wish to consider training and employment. Children's centres can also offer parents help with accessing training, work, advice and information and may well offer a range of other services, including:

- Effective links with further and higher education institutions, and local training providers.
- Training for parents, including English as an Additional Language where relevant, Basic Skills, or parenting classes.
- Specialist services for children with disabilities.
- Benefits advice, including maternity benefits.
- Childcare and other services for older children.

FUNDING

Core activities are government funded, this is topped up with grant and co-funded initiatives for other work.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Staff have access to their training through their own professional bodies (PCT or DCSF) in the area. Training is provided by Birmingham City Council, as well as safeguarding training provided by the Diocese of the Church of England. The project provides its own in-house training days where issues of faith and spirituality are integrally addressed alongside current workforce development issues. There has been no interaction with local voluntary sector organisations in terms of workforce development.

There was no awareness at a senior management level of the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge or the role of the CWDC.



GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

OUTLINE

Grace Community Church is an independent church with an Evangelical-Baptist background. The church was founded in 1972 (previously known as Kempston Evangelical Church) and is based in the Kempston area of Bedford. The Church was one of the founding partners of 'Project 229' – an old laundrette which is being transformed into a community resource that is 'anti-discriminatory, concerned with the needs of a whole community without prejudice and working primarily to help improve and develop lifestyles and community relations'. There are currently over 80 groups now involved in the project, although Grace Community Church is the only Church partner.

The 229 Project began with a questionnaire to assess and meet the needs of the community – and this policy continues to permeate through the links made in the community. Instead of relying on other Church 'contacts', Grace has focussed very much on building relationships and partnerships within the community in which it works.

Because of the links in the community and the location of the project in a non-threatening environment, the Church is able to interact with families and children in a largely informal way.

One of the greatest challenges highlighted are the changes in the Government view on the voluntary sector and the impact this may have on projects such as these. The volume of paperwork that may be involved was described as a 'maze' and any advice or training for Christian's working in the community would be very welcome. Many of the referrals for their work are currently received from Health Visitors who welcome the fact that there is little paperwork and the knowledge that Grace will work with families. Grace is seen to work 'under the radar' but questions whether they will be able to continue to work in this manner or will have to move to becoming 'more official'.

The impact of the Children's Centres was also raised. There are now two new Children's Centres in Kempston and the impact on the projects run by Grace is currently unknown. As the Children's Centres target 0-5 year olds, Grace is unsure of the effect on groups such as The Net. Once again they will be assessing whether there is a 'gap in the market' and looking at how they can work together with the community.

WORKFORCE

The projects are run by two part-time staff members along with a large team of volunteers drawn from within the Church. The Church also part-funds a family support worker at Balliol Lower School.

ACTIVITIES

The Church operates four projects within 229:

'The Net' is a project designed to help support isolated women and their children. A small toy library has also been set up for parents and their children to enable families to borrow toys and equipment. The group is not advertised & only accepts new women by referral. 'Isolation' is the main criteria for referrals – mainly as new to the area, or for economic or mental health reasons.' Although represented on the MAAG panel, referrals from the panel have tended to be unsuccessful as the families are difficult to contact and often did not engage. Around 90% of the women referred come via a Health Visitor referral and staff/volunteers are involved in multi-agency meetings along with contact with other statutory workers. The group is multi-ethnic and many are non-English speaking when they first join. Most stay for up to two years before moving on from the group.

Practical Courses such as 'How to drug-proof your kids', marriage preparation, money management and debt advice, are run on a regular basis. Help in parenting skills using a seminar style course called 'Parent Talk' is offered annually. Well Woman is a course run in partnership with Hastingsbury Upper School. The course runs twice a year and targets women who have been out of education or work for a long time who are encouraged to move into training or work.

'Gateway', is a support group for people trying to overcome addiction problems.

'Movies at 229' is run by volunteers to give teenagers in the community an enjoyable evening watching movies as an alternative to 'nothing to do and nowhere to go'. The group watch a movie then spend time discussing issues raised.

FUNDING

The projects themselves are primarily funded from within the Church and in partnership with other community groups. The Local Network Fund provided initial funding for equipment at The Net and the Church works with Hastingsbury Upper School to fund 'Well Woman' courses.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Finding relevant resources for Churches working in the Community was a problem, Grace has dealt with this by 'finding their own way' and through partnerships in the community. Resources that have been helpful include those produced by Care for the Family and the Family Matters Institute.

CLAPHAM PARISH CHURCH AND METHODIST CHURCH HOLIDAY CLUB

OUTLINE

Clapham is a small Bedfordshire village where an Anglican and Methodist Church are working together to provide a holiday club for the village children. The club has been running for a week during the summer holidays for the last fifteen years and is open to all village children between the ages of 5-13. It is common for the week, known as 'PowerPoint', to be attended by around 80 children from the village.

WORKFORCE

A paid member of staff from each of the churches is involved in the project along with a volunteer workforce of up to 45 adults. The volunteers are from within both churches and often take time off work to be involved in the project.

ACTIVITIES

Each year has a different theme; in 2008 they will be focussing on Jesus' life, death and resurrection along with a range of fun activities. The week culminates in a family barbecue open to all children and their parents along with a special Church service on the Sunday.

FUNDING

The club is almost entirely funded by the donations from both Churches, this is sometimes supplemented by anonymous donations or other local sources e.g. funds raised from a nearby Panto production.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Each Church has its own individual who is responsible for co-ordinating Child Protection issues and training. In addition a training & planning day is held in June along with a second day at the beginning of the week. All volunteers are CRB checked, and many already work with children in other settings.

CCPAS training & resources have been accessed in the past although the Church is now using their own internal training resources. The Parish Church is under the Diocese of St Albans and feels well supported for the current level of activity. There is a concern associated with extending activities, particularly to teenagers, over whether they would be equipped or able to find appropriate resources and training to work with this age group.

The CORE skills by CGMC had been heard of but this resource is not being used. There was no awareness of the CWDC.



OPEN HOUSE YOUTH DROP-IN

OUTLINE

This project is entirely focussed on the youth in the community local to the centre, which is on a main road in Royston (a market town in Hertfordshire) and is clearly signposted. The building is on a long-term lease.

The project began as a Millennium project of the local church, Trinity Life Church (TLC), formerly Royston Area Community Church. It was intended to run for a month as part of the Millennium celebrations. The project continued and after three months the team set about establishing it as a permanent, not for profit project.

The relationship with the local church is that the project was started by members of TLC with the support of the church leadership. TLC is a modern charismatic evangelical church associated with the Plumblin Ministries group of churches.

The project began almost seven years ago and moved over to having its own charitable trust separate from that of the church four years ago. The trustees are a combination of members of that church and other people chosen for their professional status and commitment to the project.

WORKFORCE

The project is entirely run by volunteers who vary in age and background and give between two and fifteen hours a week to the work. Some of these volunteers are from the founder church and others are from the wider Christian community with a minority who come from non-church backgrounds and whose contribution is valued and included.

The overall management is carried out by a group of volunteers including the founder of the project.

ACTIVITIES

The Open House is a youth drop-in for 12-18 year olds although it mainly sees young people in the 12-16 bracket. In school holidays, the age limit is relaxed to ten years of age and opening is extended to two evenings and four days a week 12-4pm.

It provides indoor activities, sporting equipment, games consoles, film evenings and free snacks and is open two evenings a week and all afternoon on Sundays. There is also a café where more substantial food can be bought.

The service has been involved in running a young carers group in partnership with local social services teams and also works with Youth Offending Teams to offer a placement for young people who are undertaking "reparation" as part of their support package.

FUNDING

Funding for the first few years came entirely from the founding church. It now comes mostly from Christian sources both individuals and churches, as well as from a local grant-making charity. In the past attempts have been made to access statutory funding but it was felt that there were too many strings attached in terms of monitoring and administration as well as lengthy application processes.

There were concerns about being limited by funding regulations as well as restrictions on the freedom to express their faith or being accused of proselytizing. The team feel that to be free to discuss Christianity as the way to meet core spiritual needs is central to their motivation and fully promotes the welfare of the young people as long as it is done in a non-pressured and respectful way. Consequently, there are no future plans at this stage to apply for funding from outside the Church.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The project does not follow any in-house training programme with volunteers but states that it has excellent relationships with other agencies and can access a wide range of training. The attitude to training would be that if it improves the ability of staff and volunteers to engage and support young people, then it is valuable. There was considerable objection to training of a nature intended to 'meet targets' or to 'tick boxes'.

The local Primary Care Trust (PCT) open up spaces on any of their training on sexual health and drug issues to the team at Open House and they also have open access to training in the Youth Service. The voluntary sector and PCT and Youth Offending Team (YOT) send training bulletins to the project regularly and volunteers attend training which they find useful.

They have not identified any specifically Christian materials which are directly useful for volunteer learning and development in their field and would welcome a workbook or on-line resource and the opportunity to contribute to the development of such a resource from their experience.

The project founder and manager was not aware of the CWDC, the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge, or the Common Induction Framework.

NEW LIFE CHURCH CONGLETON

OUTLINE

New Life Church is based in Congleton, Cheshire and was founded in 1983 by a group of Christians with a common vision to reach out to people in their neighbourhood who had no church background.

ACTIVITIES

The Church is involved in a wide range of services to the community including:

- Mums & Tots – meeting twice a week providing children space to play in safely and parents and carers time to make friends and relax together.
- Preschool – catering for 25 children each morning, aged 3-4. The preschool is OFSTED inspected and registered with Cheshire County Council to receive funding for three & four year olds.
- Holiday Club – for toddlers, one day a week for four weeks during the summer.
- After school club – including mentoring and counselling for children & young people.
- Rock Solid – Youth Club for year 7-9, following 'It's Your Move' course, which covers issues relating to transitions from Junior to Senior School.
- In School ministries – working in three local High Schools, and ten Junior schools including school assemblies, paired reading programmes, and one-on-one mentoring.
- Adullam Homes – working in partnership with this housing association which provides residential accommodation and support for vulnerable young people based upon Christian beliefs and values. New Life Church provides counselling services to young people (often having run away from home, or young mothers with babies) and helping in practical ways when residents are ready to move into their own homes.

WORKFORCE

The church employs a full-time Youth Worker and a Children's Worker. From within the Church, approximately 20 volunteers are also involved in these activities.

FUNDING

Funding of these initiatives is directly from the Church itself with the exception of the pre-school which is fee-paying and in receipt of statutory 3-4 year old government funding.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Safeguarding – child protection training is held by the Church's own trainer (CP Officer), also many of the volunteers are teachers or teaching assistants so receive training from outside the Church. Full time staff have accessed Council training on Safeguarding.

There was no knowledge of CAF, Common Core, CIS, or CWDC.

A current issue for the Church is the need to support children with special needs, vulnerable children and LAC. Training is being sought to support this, in the first instance from a church member who works for Cheshire Council in the provision of training to TA/ SENs. They are likely to initially begin with an informal in-house session but may also look to the Council for more formalised training in these issues.

Training has also been accessed via local voluntary services e.g. fundraising issues. Volunteers are open to doing training courses via CVS e.g. first aid, conflict resolution – these courses are also open to some of the young people whom the Church supports.

There is no known denominational training programme for work with children, young people and families in the community. A training resource which included professional knowledge with a Christian ethos would be valued.



KINGS ARMS FAMILYLINK

OUTLINE

FamilyLink was established in 1999 by a non-denominational church and was managed by a healthcare professional with long-standing management experience in the NHS. It was designed to provide services to vulnerable families across the urban area in which the church was based and to engage other local churches in tasks to this end.

WORKFORCE

The project aimed to use volunteers to provide basic, preventative support alongside statutory services. In addition, a staff team with childcare qualifications and experience was gradually developed, which included a childcare social worker. The staff team provided assessment skills, supervision and managerial oversight on a paid basis, to the volunteer workforce. At its peak the organisation had 5 paid staff (full and part-time), and 40 volunteers.

FamilyLink remained as part of the church's own charity number and governance lay with the church trustees. In the same trust there existed a separate project which provided residential care and community support to homeless adults. Through this work the trust developed a range of experience in project management.

FUNDING

The project was funded by a Local Authority service level agreement from 2002-2007. Small grants were also secured from grant-making trusts. In addition the church provided funding in the form of offices and management supervision services and ad-hoc financial donations.

The project closed down this year after facing significant challenges from the new Children's Centre agenda and other sources. The loss of the qualified social worker meant that the service was unable to operate as it had previously done. In particular the projects non-geographical approach did not fit with this national agenda and the church management team were not in favour of bidding to run a Children's Centre. This decision was largely influenced by the fear of legal liability and the size of the task.

ACTIVITIES

FamilyLink ran a range of services as follows:

- A group for parents and pre-school children where there is a level of social isolation and low level of parenting skills.
- Parenting courses and seminars on self-esteem for parents.
- Jigsaw Groups - small groups to promote self-

esteem in vulnerable children in school.

- Advocacy for parents with learning disabilities.
- Volunteer befrienders for families where social isolation identified as a factor.
- Social work support including attending child protection conferences and reviews and forming part of CP and CIN core groups and attending and contributing to family group conferences.
- Providing safeguarding training to churches locally.
- Accessing therapeutic services for children and carers by means of being a member of the local Multi agency allocation panel chaired by children's services management.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Development was sustained by attending local safeguarding board and local voluntary services bureau training as well as local authority training for social workers.

Volunteers had an annual review and access to informal group and regular supervision for those visiting families in their homes. There was an in-house training programme for volunteers which was reduced as the number of volunteers reduced. Volunteers were also able to access foster carer training.

Staff were provided with regular supervision and undertook Common Assessment training

The CWDC was known and staff were aware of the plans to develop Common Induction Standards. In addition, staff formed part of the Ever Child Matters sub-groups as representatives of the local voluntary sector.

BRICKHILL BAPTIST CHURCH

OUTLINE

Brickhill Baptist's history goes back to the Bunyan Meeting Church in 1793 but moved to its present site in a suburb of Bedford in 1965. Brickhill Baptist has good links both within the community and with other churches in the area. They have a long history in the area and a building that can be used for a variety of different activities.

Brickhill Baptist Playgroup is a government-funded group offering places to children in the local area. It is assessed by OFSTED and at the last inspection in 2007 achieved an overall 'good' rating. The playgroup is managed by the Church and has been operating for over thirty years.

ACTIVITIES

Brickhill Church provides a range of services and groups, which are open to the community:

- New Mums & Babies Group – meeting once a week for mothers with a new baby at home, this group caters for children up to one year.
- Toddler Group – following on from the new mum's group, meeting the needs of toddlers through to starting school. Mothers also attend the group and get a chance to sit down & have a cup of tea.
- Toddlers with Dads – a group meeting once a month on a Saturday giving fathers a place to meet with their toddlers.
- Playgroup – available during term time from the age of two years nine months up to starting school. The Playgroup has good links with local lower schools as part of the transition from playgroup to school. There is currently little contact between the playgroup and the local Children's Centre but staff are kept aware of local issues through Area Network Meetings and Local Authority newsletters.
- Girls & Boys Brigade – meeting each Monday catering for children from 5-18.
- Kids Club – meets once a week during term time for after-school fun & games open to children from school years 2-6.
- Youth Group – Friday evenings during school terms, from school year 7+.
- Parenting Courses – advertised through local schools and playgroups. A new course is to run in partnership with a local middle school.

As part of their work, staff also attend Child in Need meetings and have links with Child Development Centre.

WORKFORCE

Other than the playgroup, these activities are coordinated by two full-time staff members along with a team of approximately 30 volunteers from within the church. All activities are funded mostly by the church with small contributions (e.g. 30p for Kids Club) from the user groups.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Playgroup staff have access to training and have all received safeguarding training.

Access to local safeguarding children training for volunteers is seen as a 'gap in the market'. The Church would particularly be interested in training from Social Services or Bedfordshire County Council but with an understanding of issues pertinent to the Church. This is especially an issue in relation to working with older children where there seems to be a lack of such training. Material from CCPAS has been used and internal training/awareness raising carried out for staff and volunteers.

The playgroup employs 10 members of staff. The majority of the staff members are qualified in early childhood; others are currently undertaking NVQ via BTEC. There seems to be a move towards the need for 'play work' qualifications, level three qualifications and Early Years degrees, with the introduction of the integrated qualifications framework. The full impact of this change is unknown.



CURBS

OUTLINE

The CURBS (Children in Urban Situations) project was initially formed in 1996 as a three-year pilot venture by the Missions and Media Resources Departments of Scripture Union. It obtained charitable status in 1999 and is now managed by a Steering Group and guided by an Advisory Group with Trustees overseeing the Project as a whole. CURBS aims to resource and train church-linked inner city children's workers. The charity works nationally non-denominationally, primarily within urban communities but the materials are also being requested and used by rural church projects. Resources are primarily aimed at the under-11 age group but new materials have been developed for 11-13 year olds.

A main focus is the production of resources and training for Churches working in inner-city communities but it also models the use of these resources through involvement on the ground. The link between provision of training/resources and actual practical work is important to CURBS, hence their involvement in a range of 'real-life' inner-city projects.

CURBS is about a different way of working with children, to this end, the philosophy underlying CURBS marries up three important strands of thought and practice:

- **Children's spirituality:** CURBS takes seriously and works with the belief that children are made in the image of God and therefore have an innate spirituality.
- **Understanding children:** CURBS values the insights to be gained from the processes involved in child development, and believes that we need to integrate these insights into the way we work with children.
- **Urban context:** CURBS seeks to understand and work with the pressures faced by children living in inner cities and on outer urban estates.

A major challenge for the Inner City Projects which CURBS support are to ensure the Church maintains its distinctiveness in a multi-cultural environment whilst still engaging with other faiths. Some Churches have responded to this challenge by compromising (e.g. holding a 'winter party' rather than a 'Christmas party') while others earn the respect of the community by holding onto their values & beliefs. For many Churches working in inner cities, children have no contact with the church other than through outreach projects – Churches need to be creative in designing such projects to appeal to those for whom the Church is not part of their lives.

WORKFORCE

CURBS currently employs one full-time employee and along with a team of volunteers working on different projects. There is also a strong group of users in Scotland where a church-funded part-time community worker has been appointed.

ACTIVITIES

The following projects demonstrate the practical application of the CURBS resources in the Community:

East London after school club – outreach to local children, meeting once a week after school and currently reaching 25-35 children who would otherwise have no contact with the Church. The Couple who lead the club live in the community and are known by the children and families. It is felt that building relationships in a non-formal manner such as this is vital to the success of the project.

Holiday activities – held in an area with a high Bangladesh/Muslim population, but meeting in a local church hall. In the past there has been reluctance by the families to enter a Church but this no longer seems to be an issue. A new program is to be introduced this summer looking at the common areas of the Christian / Muslim faiths. The staff and volunteers have a very good relationship with the local school. It is through such relationships that the project has developed particularly as CURBS office is in the local vicinity.

FUNDING

As CURBS publishes its own resources, publicity has been limited. Some projects have been worked in partnership with Scripture Union & are sold through SU shops, but the majority of the resources are only available via the Web.

As for most charitable trusts, accessing funding is a constant drain. Funding to cover administrative expenses is seen as impossible. Funding is generally sourced project-by-project from a variety of charitable trusts.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Child protection training for projects has been carried out by CURBS and all volunteers have undergone some form of safeguarding training. No major safeguarding issues have come up to date, but CURBS has good links with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the Church Safeguarding Network and always encourages networking within the local community e.g. with local schools. The CORE resources produced by CGMC are regarded very highly by CURBS and are seen as relevant to community work as the logical conclusion of its aims.

STREET PASTORS

OUTLINE

Street Pastors is an inter-denominational Church response to urban problems, engaging with people on the streets to care, listen and dialogue. It was pioneered in London in January 2003 by Rev Les Isaac, Director of the Ascension Trust, and has seen some remarkable results, including drops in crime in areas where teams have been working.

Each city project is set up by Ascension Trust and run by a local coordinator with support from Ascension Trust and local churches and community groups, in partnership with Police, Council and other statutory agencies.

WORKFORCE

There are now over 60 Street Pastor projects around the United Kingdom, and one in the West Indies.

ACTIVITIES

A 'Street Pastor' is a Church leader/minister or member with a concern for society - in particular young people who feel themselves to be excluded and marginalized - and who is willing to engage people where they are, in terms of their thinking (i.e. their perspective of life) and location (i.e. where they hang out - be it on the streets, in the pubs and clubs or at parties etc). Street Pastors will also be willing to work with fellow activists, church and community leaders, and with agencies and projects, both statutory and voluntary, to look at collaborative ways of working on issues affecting youth, and initiatives that will build trust between them and the Street Pastors.

As the Street Pastor gets to know people in the community he/she will find out what their needs are and what can be done to help. A presence of Street Pastors will earn credibility in the community, so that people know that the Church is there for them in a practical way. The role is not about preaching heaven and hell, but one of listening, caring and helping - working in an unconditional way.

Street Pastors talk of the 'urban trinity': we hear much about gangs from the media but three of the biggest gangs in any city are 'the Church', local government and the police.

- **The Church** has thousands of members that could be harnessed and challenged to contribute for the better good of the community. Churches in a locality are encouraged to work together to co-ordinate their local Street Pastor initiative.
- **Local government** has the resource to mobilise and help people who are vulnerable i.e. social services, housing, education etc.
- **The Police** are not only here to arrest people who have offended but to help prevent people from committing crime.

FUNDING

We were not able to ascertain whether any external funding is secured for this project although it may be that individual funding is sourced for each area project.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A comprehensive training programme has been designed to fully equip new Street Pastors to respond to the needs of all the people that they engage on the streets. Training normally takes place over a period of 12 days over 5 months. The training will raise awareness of today's social problems including drugs and youth provision and covers topic such as:

The roles & responsibilities of Street Pastors

- Child Protection
- Listening Skills
- Guns & Gangs
- Mental Health
- Drug & Alcohol awareness
- Communication Skills
- Working with Statutory Agencies

It was not possible to establish the potential for any 'sharing' of this training workforce reform.

(Endnotes)

- 1 www.christianitymagazine.co.uk July08
- 2 Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce. 2005. DfES. Ref : DfES/1189/2005
- 3 www.everychildmatters.gov.uk
- 4 <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/childrenandyoungpeoplesworkforce>
- 5 UKCH Religious Trends No. 6 2006/2007; Analysis from the 2005 English Church Census.
Peter Brierley 2006. Christian Research.
- 6 www.coreskillsforchurches.com
- 7 <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/index.php?id=3&clD=881> last accessed March 2009



Are churches really willing to attend training?

Yes – of the churches who provide any services to children, young people and families in the community, our research indicated that 94% access some kind of training.

Don't churches only want to work with each other?

No – our research indicates that almost half of these providers already work other VCS organisations and up to 86% work with schools and preschools. Other links identified were extended schools, health visitors, children's centres, youth offending teams, education welfare officers and social work teams.

Shouldn't churches be engaging with mainstream workforce reform?

Perception is that there has been no established route, either formal or relational for churches to engage with the wider workforce reform agenda. Efforts to remove the level of mutual uncertainty between statutory services and churches about how their values can be respected could bring together the diverse organisational cultures and provide this route.

Isn't it all about Sunday School?

No – we have aimed to eliminate from our results all activities that are an integral part of practising religion. Churches clearly provide more than Sundays.

With acknowledgement to CGMC & Christian Research Ltd.
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