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Children's Workforce
Development Council

Clear progression 2008

The next steps towards building an Integrated Qualifications Framework for the Children and Young People's Workforce



www.IQF.org.uk

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The Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) will be a set of approved qualifications that allows progression, continuing professional development and mobility across the children's workforce.

It will be a comprehensive set of qualifications that are agreed to be appropriate for people who work with children, up to and including degrees and postgraduate qualifications. It will support shared values and learning approaches across the children and young people's workforce.



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Foreword from Paul Ennals

“ We are now seeing some real progress in reshaping services around the needs of children, young people and families. Across the country, people are working together in new and integrated ways to provide better services, putting children and young people at the heart of delivery.

Central to this task is the integration of the workforce itself – helping all those working with children to work better together, with common values and a common approach. Right at the centre is the Integrated Qualifications Framework.

The IQF will ensure that qualifications systems underpin these reforms. It will be a coherent set of carefully developed, integrated qualifications that will support the whole children and young peoples' workforce. It will help the workforce understand how each other work and underpin improved career opportunities for people who work in different parts of the children and young people's sector. It will improve confidence in qualifications and their clarity and will reinforce the inter-professional values that are shared by all the groups of people who work with children.

The development of the IQF is now gaining momentum. Over the past year, a series of well-attended consultation events with the sector were held across England. These resulted in the agreement of a set of IQF inclusion principles, which are now being applied to emerging qualifications and evaluated for their impact, ready for the IQF to begin to 'go live' in Autumn 2008.

We cannot achieve our vision without your continued support and participation. We appreciate the valuable contributions from all those who are participating in the development of the IQF, and we look forward to an exciting year ahead. ”

Paul Ennals

Chair
Children's Workforce Network



Introduction

The Integrated Qualifications Framework is one of a range of workforce initiatives designed to support the delivery of the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (2003), which aims for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk>

To help achieve these five outcomes, people who work with children and young people need the right knowledge and skills, including the ability to work together to provide integrated services. The IQF aims to support integrated working by ensuring that the workforce is suitably qualified to work in this way.

The IQF will provide a number of benefits for the children's workforce. It will improve mobility and career choices, making it easier for people to develop and update their skills, and to move from one job to another within the workforce. It will also provide information on the qualifications available for new entrants to the workforce considering a career with children, young people and their families.

Work began on the development of the IQF in 2006, and will be complete by 2010.

In November 2006, the Children's Workforce Network (CWN) published its first IQF implementation plan. This second document provides an update on IQF developments to date, and outlines the next steps towards delivery. This publication also explains how the IQF supports the aims and objectives of the Children's Plan (December 2007).



What is the IQF?

The IQF will be a set of approved qualifications that allows progression, continuing professional development and mobility across the children and young people's workforce. It will be a comprehensive set of qualifications that are agreed to be appropriate for people who work with children and young people, up to and including degrees and postgraduate qualifications. It will support shared values and learning approaches across the children and young people's workforce.

IQF qualifications will be underpinned by the *Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce*, the essential competencies, skills and knowledge identified for the widest possible range of workers in children's services.

Topics include:

- effective communication and engagement with children and young people
- child and young person development
- safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child
- supporting transitions
- multi-agency working
- sharing information.

The IQF has been developed for anyone who currently works with – or would like to work with – children, young people and their families. It will provide enhanced continuity and quality of qualifications, training and skills across all occupational groups in the children and young people's workforce.



Who is developing the IQF?

The IQF is being developed by the Children's Workforce Network, a strategic alliance of twelve organisations committed to creating and supporting a world-class children and young people's workforce in England. The members of the CWN include Sector Skills Bodies, professional regulatory bodies and local authority representatives who are directly involved in the development of improved skills for the children and young people's workforce.

Members of the CWN

- Children's Workforce Development Council
- Creative and Cultural Skills
- General Social Care Council
- General Teaching Council for England
- Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government
- Lifelong Learning UK
- National College for School Leadership
- Nursing and Midwifery Council
- SkillsActive
- Skills for Health
- Skills for Justice
- Training and Development Agency for Schools

Collaboration and close working will be one of the key success factors of the IQF in ensuring it meets the needs of the wider children's workforce across England.

CWN members are working together nationally, in the same way that children and young people's services are working together at a local level, to provide integrated services.

CWN is also working closely with other groups who have an interest in the aims of the IQF. These include employers, learners, trainers, qualification regulators, funding agencies and awarding bodies. This is vital because the benefits of the IQF will only be realised if it is supported by other policies and practices designed to achieve the same outcomes, including:

- integrated activity and policy making;
- employer support for ongoing learning for their workforce;
- clear funding arrangements that support the IQF and are fully understood by employers and learners;
- flexible, accessible training opportunities, for example opportunities for training to take place in or near the workplace;
- trainers who are up to date and highly skilled;
- quality assurance systems to ensure that training is reliable and consistent;
- advice and guidance on qualifications across the workforce.



Workforce reform and the IQF

The IQF is part of a much larger vision of public service reform with responsive, personalised delivery at its heart. The Government has delivered a number of policies that will impact on and support the need for an IQF for the children and young people's workforce including:

- Unit and credit-based systems for vocational qualifications. The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), which is currently being developed alongside the National Qualification Framework (NQF), will enable bite-sized units of learning to be put together in flexible groups to form qualifications. This will mean that learners who wish to move to a new role will have access to individual units to enhance their skills. It will reduce the repetition and duplication of learning. More information on the QCF is available at www.qca.org.uk/qca_8150.aspx
- Many higher education institutions are working with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to support a credit based system.
- Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are developing, or have already developed, Sector Skills Agreements and Sector Qualification Strategies. These documents are based on extensive workforce information, and set out the future skills and learning needs for the occupations they support. They also provide action plans illustrating how SSCs will work with colleagues to meet the identified skills and learning needs of their workforce. The Sector Skills Agreements and Sector Qualification Strategies can be found at www.ssda.org.uk.

The Leitch review of long term skills: Prosperity for all in the Global Economy (2006)

The Leitch review suggested a number of reforms to the qualifications system. The IQF is being integrated with, and is using, these changes and improvements. This will minimize any additional work to develop units and qualifications and avoid placing additional burdens or bureaucracy on collaborating partners.

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm



The Children's Plan and the IQF

The IQF is an integral part of the Children's Plan (2007), that sets out the Government's vision for children and young people, and children and young people's services for the next ten years.

www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan

The Children's Plan outlines a common vision, shared across central and local government, for the development of the workforce needed to deliver Every Child Matters, and to implement the Children's Plan. It also describes specific actions for everyone, from central government to front line providers, for the next three years to ensure we move further towards developing a world class workforce. The Children's Plan will be of interest to everyone working with children, young people and families, as well as those who lead and manage them.



Who will benefit from the IQF?

The IQF is being developed for everyone in the children and young people's workforce and anyone wishing to enter the children and young people's workforce. Employers, learners and training providers will all benefit from a clear, consistent and coherent qualifications framework.

The IQF will, most importantly, benefit **children and young people and their carers, parents and guardians** by helping to make sure that the people working with them have the right qualifications for the job.

Employers want to be sure that the children and young people their organisation works with are safe, and receive high quality care and services. This depends upon having the right staff with the right skills.

The IQF will bring clarity to the qualifications structure, so that employers can be sure that job applicants have the right qualifications for the job. They will also be able to identify which qualifications a member of staff needs so that they can progress in their career.



Learners are people working in children's and young people's services, or those wanting to enter the workforce.

The IQF is being developed in consultation with employers, training providers and employee representatives across all sectors, and will be a framework that will deliver the clarity about qualifications that learners need. The IQF will make sure that qualifications and their component parts have greater meaning and credibility, so that skills and experience will be recognised. Learners will be able to see how qualifications gained in one sector will be relevant to others and what qualifications they need to progress in their careers. This will help them to feel valued and confident about their future careers.

Trainers want to know what qualifications will be needed, so that they can plan ahead and make sure those qualifications are available for learners in the children's workforce. They need to know how qualifications compare with each other, whether qualifications gained in one sector are relevant to another and what qualifications will be in demand in the future.

The IQF will provide a clear map of qualifications both within and across sectors of the children and young people's workforce. Employers and learners will have the information they need to plan ahead.

How will the IQF work?

IQF qualifications and units will include new qualifications, as well as the most relevant existing qualifications. These are currently held on existing qualification regulatory bodies' databases.

The new Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF), being developed by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA), will provide the structure for developing and accrediting unit and credit based [vocational qualifications](#). The IQF is specifically for the children and young people's workforce, and aims to make sure the content of qualifications meets our sector needs. CWN is taking part in the QCF Test and Trial to ensure that the qualifications developed for the IQF are fully compatible with the QCF. Awarding bodies and other qualification developers will need sector 'approval' before their qualifications can be included on the QCF. The IQF will enable developers to seek 'approval' from different areas of the children and young people's workforce.

For [Higher Education qualifications](#), the IQF will work in a broadly similar way to the vocational qualifications process, taking into account the autonomy of institutions in designing and awarding qualifications. The details will be worked out in consultation with higher education institutions over the coming year, drawing on lessons learnt from the trial of new arrangements for vocational qualifications.

All IQF qualifications will need to meet the [IQF inclusion principles](#), drafted in consultation with employers, learners and trainers across England. These have been designed to make sure that any IQF qualifications and their components are:

- fit for purpose for the sector(s) concerned;
- meet regulatory requirements where appropriate;
- are developed through CWN members working together to identify and develop qualifications and components that can be jointly supported and shared across the workforce;
- reflect the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce.

The bodies responsible for standards and qualifications for the children and young people's workforce already work with employers and stakeholders to decide which qualifications are most appropriate for the sector. As those responsible for developing qualifications put together proposals for new qualifications, or revise existing qualifications, they will have the opportunity to submit them for inclusion on the IQF.

How is development progressing?

The IQF project is on target for completion by 2010.

The draft IQF principles, along with processes that enable joint working between CWN members, are currently being tested and evaluated as CWN members develop a number of new and revised qualifications and component parts.

CWN members are also working together to review relevant National Occupational Standards, and identify more common ground. This includes further work on developing shared cross-sector units covering the Common Core.

New transitional units will enable early years workers to become play workers and vice versa.

Research is under way on the contribution of foundation degrees in creating greater progression opportunities for learners (see www.IQF.org.uk for more information).

Research into the most useful ways of providing IT support for the IQF will lead the way to ensuring career development information is available to learners, employers and trainers.

How to propose a unit or qualification for the IQF

Individual SSCs will lead on the development of qualifications and units. If you believe there is a need for your qualification to be revised, or if you wish to develop a new qualification or unit, you should approach the most appropriate SSC.

The SSC will consider, in the light of its Sector Qualification Strategy, whether the suggested work is required for its sector and is a priority for development.

The lead SSC will enter priority qualifications for the children and young people's workforce into the test and evaluation of the draft IQF processes. These processes will ensure that each CWN member will have the opportunity to say whether, and how, this development is of value for its own sector.

Further information on the processes will be made available when the testing and evaluation is completed at the end of 2008.



Case study

Working with vulnerable young people qualification

Skills for Justice is leading on the development of a qualification for working with vulnerable young people across a range of sectors. The qualification development will utilise the results of a functional mapping report that will identify common functions between various roles of vulnerable young people workers within the children and young people's workforce. The proposal follows the identification of

a need for a qualification for people in a range of sectors who work with vulnerable young people, that may encompass areas such as sexual health, emotional intelligence, substance misuse etc. CWN partners will be invited to participate in the development, through the IQF processes, with the resulting qualification being submitted to the QCF for accreditation, and the IQF as a qualification that meets the IQF inclusion principles.

Case study

Supporting teaching and learning

Support staff roles in schools are changing as schools extend their services, personalise learning and work with a wider range of children's services. In 2007 the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) began working towards the IQF as it reviewed, in consultation with CWN partners, the National Occupational Standards for people who support teaching and learning in schools. As well as specialist units on supporting pupils' learning, the NOS now include units imported from playwork, health and social care, youth work and children's care learning and development, covering, for example:

- children's development and safety
- supporting pupils and families
- support during therapy
- Support for a range of special needs
- young people's welfare
- mentoring young people
- supporting play

This will increase the common elements in qualifications for the children's workforce and make it easier for staff to develop transferable skills.

Case study

Family Learning Qualifications

Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK), is working with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) on the development of a range of a qualifications for family learning.

These will be available for use from April 2008, and it is intended that units within the qualifications will be available to all sectors who want to use them through the IQF.

Next steps

By October 2008, the testing and evaluation of the IQF inclusion principles and processes will be complete. Qualifications and units will then be able to go through agreed IQF processes to ensure that they meet IQF inclusion requirements. This will enable them to become IQF qualifications and part of the Integrated Qualifications Framework.

Those developing new qualifications and units intended for use within the children and young people's workforce will, from October 2008, be able to use these principles to make sure that their qualifications meet the needs of the children and young people's workforce.

The IQF is not retrospective, which means that current qualifications will go through the IQF processes only when they are revised.

Employers will, in the long term, want to ensure that their teams have IQF recognised qualifications. During the development of the IQF, and while many qualifications have not yet been revised, employers will want to consider with their employees what further continuing professional development is needed, and how IQF units that will be included on the IQF from Autumn 2008, for example the shared cross-sector core units, could be used for this.

Learners will want to check, from 2010 onwards, that the qualification they are taking is an IQF qualification.

Trainers will want to make sure that they are providing IQF qualifications as they become available.

In the future, for example from 2015, parents and carers, professional regulators, funders and inspectors will be able to check that people who work with children and young people have IQF qualifications or have undertaken appropriate continuing professional development.



Further information

If you would like to subscribe to receive further quarterly email updates on the IQF please send your contact details to IQF@cwdcouncil.org.uk

If you would like to find out more about developments across the children and young people's workforce or to sign up to the CWN ebulletin, please contact Hilary Barnard, Policy and Project Management Services for CWN at hilarybarnard@aol.com.

For further information on the IQF

Visit

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The IQF is being developed by the members of the Children's Workforce Network (CWN). The IQF Project Board has representation from all CWN members. The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) is project managing the development of the IQF on behalf of CWN.



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