

**Monitoring report on the Level 3
Diploma for the Children and Young
People's Workforce**



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Executive summary

The *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* report (DCSF, 2008) requires the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to define which level 2 and level 3 qualifications are full and relevant to meet sector registration and regulation requirements. From 1st January 2011, new learners who wish to achieve a level 3 qualification that is deemed by CWDC to be relevant for these purposes will need to undertake the level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Early Learning and Childcare Pathway) which has been developed by CWDC with awarding organisations.

Ofqual was made aware of concerns from colleges and awarding organisations about the fitness for purpose of the qualification. Learning and placement time was considered insufficient for full-time learners to gain necessary competence and it was felt that the qualification did not adequately support learner progression.

We found that the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce contains sufficient content to allow the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to be assessed appropriately.

However, we found that the new qualification is unsuitable for younger and less experienced learners who are not in the workplace and who require greater time to demonstrate competence.

We also found that the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce does not adequately support learner progression.

Finally we found that the roles and responsibilities of awarding organisations and CWDC in the lead, development and accountability of the qualification had become confused.

Recommendations

- To allow full-time learners sufficient opportunity to develop the necessary skills and competencies, awarding organisations and Skills for Care and Development should work with CWDC to develop qualifications that include a requirement for a minimum number of hours of work placement.
- To provide appropriate opportunities for progression, awarding organisations should consider the development of a larger two-year qualification, based on the new level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce, which will include greater opportunity to demonstrate higher order skills, such as analysis and evaluation, through extended writing and research.

- To allow sufficient time for the development of these new qualifications, awarding organisations may need to request an extension of CWDC support for the legacy level 3 provision. This support should include a recognition that legacy qualifications meet the minimum qualification requirements for employment as stipulated by the statutory framework.
- Awarding organisations should lead on the detailed development of Qualification Credit Framework (QCF) units and rules of combination because they have been recognised as having appropriate skills and expertise to do so. In this development work, they should work with CWDC so the views of both government and employers are represented.
- Awarding organisations should only upload the units and rules and combination when they are prepared to be accountable to Ofqual for their quality.

Introduction

This report considers the development of the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce and evaluates its fitness for purpose. A qualification regulated under the *Regulatory arrangements for the Qualifications and Credit Framework* (QCF), published in 2008, is made up of units and rules of combination, developed by organisations that meet the regulatory requirements (paragraph 6.1b), and is approved by the relevant sector skills council (SSC) (paragraph 6.2b). Within the care sector, CWDC is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Education and an employer-led body, part of the Sector Skills Council 'Skills for Care and Development'. It is not a QCF unit or a rules of combination submitter. CWDC clearly has a role in defining the requirements of the children's workforce but Ofqual holds the unit and rules of combination submitters responsible for the quality of the qualification components and awarding organisations for the assessment and awarding of the qualification.

The *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* report (DCSF, 2008) requires the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) to define which level 2 and level 3 qualifications are full and relevant to meet sector registration and regulation requirements. From 1 January 2011, new learners who wish to achieve a level 3 qualification that is deemed by CWDC to be relevant for these purposes will need to undertake the level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Early Learning and Childcare Pathway) which has been developed by CWDC with awarding organisations.

Awarding organisations that now have an accredited QCF level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce are ABC Awards, CACHE, City & Guilds, Edexcel, EDI, NCFE and OCR. These qualifications are based on shared units and rules of combination submitted and owned by the awarding organisations (see Appendix 1 Schemes of assessment). It appears that much of the development work was carried out by CWDC, but it is the unit owners' responsibility to ensure that the units are fit for purpose and awarding organisations may only use such units within their regulated qualifications.

Ofqual was made aware of concerns within the sector from colleges and awarding organisations that the qualification was unfit for purpose and invalid. The number of guided learning hours for the qualification had been reduced from over 1,000 in the full-time legacy provision to 442–565 in the new Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. Work placement duration recommendations had also been reduced and there were concerns about a lack of suitable progression routes for learners due to the removal of CWDC support for other level 3 and all level 4 and 5 qualifications. It is a specific requirement of the QCF Regulatory Arrangements that suitable progression opportunities are offered to learners (paragraph 4.2).

To address these concerns, we carried out a review of the new qualification and the legacy provision to determine whether or not the new qualification is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the sector.

Background

The awarding organisations offering the new Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce outlined their main concerns in a joint letter sent to CWDC in May 2010 and reiterated to Ofqual more recently. These were primarily that:

- a 'one size fits all' approach was inappropriate, given the diverse range of learners taking a variety of legacy qualifications
- the new Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce would not allow sufficient access to employment and education.

With the exception of ABC Awards – its qualification is due to begin in January 2011 – all the awarding organisations submitted qualifications for regulation from 1 August 2010.

The awarding organisations indicated that they believed the new level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce was unable to meet the needs of learners in the sector as a whole. They believed that there was a need for a range of provision at level 3 that met the needs of the diverse range of learners in the sector, including:

- learners wishing to undertake a substantial programme of study as a precursor to progression to higher education, particularly for 16- to 19-year-olds
- adult returners to education who wish to undertake a substantial programme of study as a precursor to starting work in the sector; they need this programme to carry 'occupational recognition', for example, through a licence to practise, so that they can gain employment in the sector
- employees who have their personal development opportunities reduced because the Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce cannot provide progression to higher education.

In their response, CWDC stated that employers found the number of legacy qualifications to be confusing and that the range of qualifications should be rationalised to clarify the number of sector-specific qualifications, to ensure they are fit for purpose and to support career development and workforce mobility.

In CWDC's opinion, the main progression route for the children and young people's workforce is through foundation degrees and on to honours programmes of learning. To aid this progression, CWDC is developing level 4 units that will be available in the level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. Currently there are no level 4 or level 5 qualifications.

Methodology

The qualification review was conducted through a number of different activities, including:

- scrutiny
- centre survey questionnaire
- evaluation by awarding organisations
- employer engagement.

Scrutiny

A comparison of unit and qualification requirements was carried out by independent subject specialists with many years of sector, delivery and assessment experience.

We reviewed the core units of the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce early years pathway and compared the unit content to the units from both the BTEC National Diploma in Child Care, Learning and Development and the CACHE Diploma in Childcare and Education (see Appendix 1 Schemes of assessment). We also reviewed the number of guided learning hours, work placement hours and progression routes for the qualification as a whole.

The comparison focused on:

- coverage of the national occupational standards for child care, learning and development¹
- the content of the units, to determine whether there was any content in the legacy qualifications that had not been carried forward to the new Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce and if this represented a gap in the necessary skills, knowledge or understanding
- the total number of guided learning hours required for completion of the qualifications
- the differences between the required (or suggested) amount of work experience that learners should complete in order to achieve the qualification and any likely effects on learners' readiness for the workplace and their fitness to practise.

¹ www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/nos/ccld-level-3

Centre survey questionnaire

Awarding organisations that offered the new and legacy qualifications were asked to provide contact details for their centres. These centres were then sent a questionnaire to gather their views. The questionnaire was designed to gather evidence to gauge whether the concerns that had been reported to Ofqual by awarding organisations and centres were common across the sector more generally.

The survey was sent to approximately 750 centres and generated 62 individual responses, mainly from colleges but also from other centre types.

Evaluation by awarding organisations

Awarding organisations were asked to provide a written commentary of evidence detailing their concerns about the fitness for purpose of the new qualification and its suitability as a replacement for the legacy provision.

Employer engagement

A small number of telephone interviews were conducted with employers who had been identified by respondents to the centre survey questionnaire. These employers were asked for their views on the need for the new qualification and the streamlining of legacy provision, the suitability of the number of guided learning hours and work placement requirements and the available progression routes.

Findings

Content

We found there to be no significant gaps in the unit content of the new qualifications, specifically with reference to the current national occupational standards and when compared with legacy provision.

Learning time

For regulated qualifications, learning time is defined as the amount of time a learner, on average, is expected to take to complete the learning outcomes of each unit to the standard determined by the assessment criteria. This is made up of teacher supervised or directed study time known as guided learning hours and undirected learning. The amount of learning time required to demonstrate competency is dependent on the age and experience of the learners.

From our review of the unit and qualification requirements, we found that 484 guided learning hours, delivered in less than 12 months, is insufficient to provide the depth of knowledge and understanding needed for 16-year-olds or adults with no previous experience of the workplace or the sector.

A total of 71 per cent of centre survey respondents also stated that they did not consider the number of guided learning hours sufficient for young and less experienced learners. Statistics also show that 77 per cent of respondents believed that the qualification was unsuitable for young learners because it did not provide sufficient opportunity to develop the necessary competencies.

However, our comparison of the units found the guided learning hours to be sufficient for those learners already in the workplace. For these learners, the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce allows for the appropriate assessment of knowledge and skills at level 3, based on evidence that key concepts of care and development are understood and are being applied. This was supported by 82 per cent of respondents to our centre survey who believed the qualification was suitable for more experienced learners.

Placement time

From our scrutiny we found that a full-time student, having only two days a week in a work-based setting, is unlikely to have sufficient time in one year to reach the required level of competency or to gain the breadth of experience needed. The employers we spoke to shared this view. We also found that the placement time, required to meet learning outcomes, had been excluded from the calculation of learning time and credit value.

Credit value

The credit value is the number of credits awarded to a learner for the successful achievement of the learning outcomes of each unit. The Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce has a total credit value of 65 and this is based on a calculation of both directed and undirected study but excluding placement time. A total of 65 credits equate to 650 learning hours, of which between 484 and 525 hours is guided, leaving only a maximum of 166 hours for undirected learning and placement time.

We found that for full-time students, a credit value of 65 is insufficient because it does not allow enough guided learning hours and placement time to develop the necessary competencies.

Progression opportunities

Due to its size and structure, we found that the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce in itself does not adequately support learner progression to higher education. This is because it does not allow those learners sufficient opportunity to demonstrate higher order skills such as analysis and evaluation through extending writing and research, and for this attainment to be graded. There is no alternative provision in the early year's sector for 16- to 18-year-olds wishing to enter higher education.

Roles and responsibilities

Regulatory criteria require that the lead role for the detailed development of QCF units and rules of combination lies with those organisations recognised by the regulators as having the appropriate skills and expertise to do so. However, in this case we found that CWDC were allowed to take the lead role for the development of the qualification.

It is disappointing that the concerns raised in the joint letter from awarding organisations in May 2010 were not addressed sooner and that the awarding organisations still felt able to put these qualifications forward for regulation.

Northern Ireland

Although many of the units in the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce are also used in Northern Ireland, it had previously been decided that the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce was unsuitable for Northern Ireland because of the following:

- Northern Ireland did not need the pathways contained within the Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. This is because the jurisdiction for the children and young person's agenda sits within the country's Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety and so comes under the health and

social care qualifications. The early years agenda, however, sits within the Department of Education and needs to be aligned with Department of Education policies. In Northern Ireland it was, therefore, important to keep the distinction between the two.

- There was a desire for progression from level 2 to level 5 with one level building on the other.
- The Northern Ireland Social Care Council, in consultation with the equivalent body in Wales, decided a later start date than September 2010 was necessary to allow time for awarding organisations to develop the provision. Hence the retention of NQF provision until 2011 with the possibility of an additional year.

Conclusions

We found the level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce has valid content to meet national occupational standards. However, the new qualification is unsuitable for younger, less experienced and full-time students who will require greater learning and placement time to meet the necessary competency requirements of the Diploma.

We found that the reduction in the number of qualifications approved by the CWDC does not allow the flexibility in progression routes for learners that have previously been available.

We also found that the roles and responsibilities of awarding organisations and CWDC in the detailed development of the qualification became confused.

Recommendations

- To allow full-time learners sufficient opportunity to develop the necessary skills and competencies, awarding organisations and Skills for Care and Development should work with CWDC to develop qualifications that include a requirement for a minimum number of hours of work placement.
- To provide appropriate opportunities for progression, awarding organisations should consider the development of a larger two-year qualification, based on the new level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce, which will include greater opportunity to demonstrate higher order skills, such as analysis and evaluation, through extended writing and research.
- To allow sufficient time for the development of these new qualifications, awarding organisations may need to request an extension of CWDC support for the legacy level 3 provision. This support should include a recognition that legacy qualifications meet the minimum qualification requirements for employment as stipulated by the statutory framework.
- Awarding organisations should lead on the detailed development of QCF units and rules of combination because they have been recognised as having appropriate skills and expertise to do so. In this development work, they should work with CWDC so the views of both government and employers are represented.
- Awarding organisations should only upload the units and rules and combination when they are prepared to be accountable to Ofqual for their quality.

Appendix 1 Schemes of assessment

Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (QCF) is offered by ABC Awards, CACHE, City & Guilds, EDI, Edexcel, NCFE and OCR. The qualifications are ABC Awards Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce, CACHE Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce, City & Guilds Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce, EDI Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce, Edexcel Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce, NCFE Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce and OCR Level 3 Children and Young People in the Workforce.

For each of these qualifications a total of 65 credits are required. Learners take 11 mandatory or core units, worth 27 credits, then one of three optional pathways worth 13 or 22 credits. The remaining credits are selected from the list of optional units.

Core unit name	Unit code	Credit value	Optional unit name	Unit code	Credit value
Promote communication in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	J/601/1434	3	Early Years Pathway – min of 22 credits Context and principles for early years provision.	J/600/9781	4
Engage in personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	A/601/1429	3	Promote learning and development in the early years	L/600/9782	5

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Core unit name	Unit code	Credit value	Optional unit name	Unit code	Credit value
Promote equality and inclusion in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	Y/601/1437	2	Promote children's welfare and well being in the early years	Y/600/9784	6
Principles for implementing duty of care in health, social care or children's and young people's settings	R/601/1436	1	Professional practice in early years settings.	H/600/9786	3
Understand child and young person development	L/601/1693	4	Support children's speech, language and communication.	T/600/9789	4
Promote child and young person development	R/601/1694	3	Social Care Pathway– min of 13 credits Assessment and planning with children and young people	M/600/9760	5

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Core unit name	Unit code	Credit value	Optional unit name	Unit code	Credit value
Understand how to safeguard the well being of children and young people	Y/601/1695	3	Promote the well being and resilience of children and young people	F/600/9780	4
Support children and young people's health and safety	D/601/1696	2	Professional practice in children and young people's social care	F/601/0315	4
Develop positive relationships with children, young people and others involved in their care	H/601/1697	1	Learning Development and Support Services Pathway—min of 13 credits Support children and young people to achieve their education potential	D/600/9785	4
Working together for the benefit of children and young people	K/601/1698	2	Support children and young people to make positive changes in their lives	M/600/9788	4
Understand how to support positive outcomes for children and young people	M/601/1699	3	Professional practice in learning, development and support services	D/600/9799	5

Core unit name	Unit code	Credit value	Optional unit name	Unit code	Credit value
The list of 40 optional units also contains the pathway units and has credit values ranging from 3 to 6					

CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Child Care and Education (NQF)

Nine mandatory or core units. Plus optional units to an overall total of 1,009 guided learning hours (GLH) and work placement.

Core unit name	Unit code	GLH	Optional unit name	Unit code	GLH
An introduction to working with children	D/500/6066	30	Research into child care, education and development	T/500/6736	60
Development from conception to age 16 year	H/500/6067	90	Care of sick children	A 500/6737	60
Supporting children	J/500/6725	90	Nutrition and healthy food for children	F/ 500/6738	60
Keeping children safe	L/500/6726	90	Child, family and outside world	J/500/6739	60
The principles underpinning the role of the practitioner working with children	R/500/6727	60	Working with children with special needs	A/500/6740	60
Promoting a healthy environment for children	D/500/6732	60	Developing children's (3–8 years) mathematical skills	F/500/6741	60

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Core unit name	Unit code	GLH	Optional unit name	Unit code	GLH
Caring for children	K/500/6734	60	Working with babies from birth to 12 months	R/500/6744	60
Development of professional skills within children's education	M/500/6735	259 plus 750 recommended practical training hours throughout the qualification	Multi-agency working with children	v/500/6745	60
			Children, parent and family needs	D/500/6746	60
			Supporting children with English as an additional language	H/500/6747	60

Edexcel L3 BTEC National Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development (NQF)

Learners take seven mandatory or core units and then three optional units worth 1,080 guided learning hours (GLH) in total plus work placement.

Core unit name	Core unit number	GLH	Optional unit name	Optional unit number	GLH
Positive relationships for children's care learning and development	H/500/4965	60	Research methodology for children's care, learning and development	J/500/4974	90
Positive environments for children's care, learning and development	K/500/4966	60	Promoting healthy development and living for children and their families	L/500/4975	30
Promoting children's development	M/500/4967	120	Promoting well-being and resilience in children	R/500/4976	30
Reflecting on and developing practice for children aged 0–8	T/500/4971	120	Diet and nutrition for children	Y/500/4977	30
Safeguarding children	T/500/4968	60	Physical activities for children	D/500/4978	60

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Core unit name	Core unit number	GLH	Optional unit name	Optional unit number	GLH
Promoting children's rights	A/500/4972	60	The impact of social policy on children's care, learning and development	H/500/4979	60
Children's learning activities and play	F/500/4973	90	Psychological perspectives on children's behaviour	Y/500/4980	90
			Managing an early years or play work environment	D/500/4981	60
			Coaching and mentoring children	H/500/4982	30
			Supporting children's numeracy skills	M/500/4984	60
			Supporting children's literacy skills	T/500/4985	60
			Supporting children's information and communication technology skills	A/500/4986	30

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Core unit name	Core unit number	GLH	Optional unit name	Optional unit number	GLH
			Design and technology for the early years practitioner	F/500/4987	60
			Combined science for the early years practitioner: life processes and living things	f/500/4987	30
			Combined science for the early years practitioner: materials and their properties	J/500/4988	30
			Combined science for the early years practitioner: physical processes	L/500/4989	30
			Environmental studies for the early years practitioner	F/500/4990	60
			Modern beliefs and religions for the early years practitioner	J/500/4991	60
			Specific learning difficulties: dyslexia and dyspraxia	H/102/5483	60

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Core unit name	Core unit number	GLH	Optional unit name	Optional unit number	GLH
			Information and communication technology for the early years practitioner	L/500/4992	60
			Meeting additional requirements for children's care, learning and development	R/500/4993	60
			Using specialist communication skills in children's settings	Y/500/4994	60
			Complementary therapies for children	60H/500/4996	60
			Introduction to play work	K500/4997	60
			The play work environment	M/500/4998	60
			Self-directed play	T500/4999	60
			European approaches to children's care, learning and development	Y500/5000	60

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Core unit name	Core unit number	GLH	Optional unit name	Optional unit number	GLH
			The development and care of babies and children under 3 years	D/500/5001	60
			Becoming an independent learner	H/500/5002	60
			Academic literacy in the children's care, learning and development sector	K/500/5003	60

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