

Implementing the social pedagogic approach for workforce training and education in England

A preliminary study

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Lastly, we should say that the views expressed in the report are those of the authors. It should not be taken that the people mentioned in this acknowledgement, share our views.

Executive summary

Implementing the Social Pedagogic Approach for Workforce Training and Education in England is a study that was developed in conjunction with DfES and the Social Exclusion Task Force. It focuses on the potential for introducing training for social pedagogy in England, with special reference to children in care. The report covers (i) care leavers' perspectives on their carers, including the carers' need for training; (ii) summaries of 4 studies of social pedagogy conducted at TCRU; (iii) the perspectives of stakeholders from children's services and training institutions on the introduction of social pedagogy and on other proposals advanced in Care Matter; (iv) differences between Danish qualifications in social pedagogy and English social care NVQs and social work degrees and (v) a framework for introducing pedagogy education, in England, and a discussion of costs.

The study was conducted in accordance with the Ethical Code and Procedures of the Thomas Coram Research Unit at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Section 1: The perspectives of care leavers

Twenty four recent care leavers participated in five focus groups. It was not feasible to consult them about social pedagogy directly, because it was unlikely that they had knowledge of the concept. The discussions were based on responses to two vignettes, designed to reveal what young people required of their carers. The participants wanted carers to treat young people as individuals who gave priority to 'being there' for them and to be scrupulously fair and ethical in their use of information about young people. Carers' expectations of young people should be high and they should not collude with the social stigma attached to young people in care. They thought that their carers should be trained for the work.

The characteristics that young people valued coincided largely with those of social pedagogy, as identified in earlier TCRU studies detailed below.

Section 2: Summary of four earlier studies on pedagogy

Study 1: (for DH) What is pedagogy?

In much of continental Europe, the term pedagogy has a wider application than is usual in English. It relates to a system of theory, practice and training that can be defined as 'education in the broadest sense of the word'. Pedagogues work with all age groups and in a range of settings, including residential care for young people and adult services. They usually work in group settings and are trained to be conscious of the dynamics of group life, and to see everyday activities – play, meals, homework – as meaningful, not routine. Pedagogues also value the individual: listening to children, respecting their views and working with their talents as well as with their problems.

Training of pedagogues

Training for social pedagogy is usually associated with a high level of training and education – normally of three years, at BA degree level; there are also lower level courses, Masters degrees and PhDs.

The difference between pedagogy and social work

The biggest difference between pedagogy and social work is the extent to which pedagogues are trained for work in group settings and share the daily lives and activities of children and young people. Such work is less usual for people trained as social workers. Social work and social pedagogy do not appear to be in competition, they have different spheres of work.

Study 2. (for DH/DfES) How does residential care in England compare to that found in Denmark and Germany

The study was based on 49 residential children's homes in England, Denmark and Germany, with interviews with 56 heads of establishment, 144 staff and 302 young people. In Denmark, all the pedagogues held a high level¹ relevant qualification (predominantly in pedagogy), compared with half of those in Germany and one fifth of those in England. In Germany, staff were almost equally divided between medium and high-level qualifications, in pedagogy and related fields.

Practice

Workers in Denmark most frequently reported responding to young peoples' difficulties by listening to them. In England, staff reported listening least frequently. Staff in Danish children's homes most frequently suggested alternative strategies for dealing with a difficult situation (staff in German homes did so least frequently). Compared to staff in Denmark and Germany, English workers relied on talking and discussing, rather than listening and empathising; they referred more frequently to procedural or organisational matters and to short term behaviour management. Workers in Denmark reported more and more varied responses than other workers, and indicated a more reflective approach.

Are staff characteristics related to outcomes for young people?

Young people in England, compared to Denmark and Germany, were more likely to be out of education and/or employment, and at greater risk of teenage pregnancy and/or engagement in criminal activity.

Statistical analyses first considered whether care entry characteristics (such as the proportion of voluntary placements, or whether crime was a contributing factor in deciding on the placement) explained differences in outcome indicators. These care entry characteristics differed across countries, but did *not* account for significant variation in outcome indicators, once staff characteristics were taken into account. Rather, variance in outcome indicators was associated with a range of workforce characteristics², which considered as a whole, were reflective of a pedagogic approach to public care. The findings do not show cause and effect, but suggest that better life chances were associated with a smaller, more stable and professionalised workforce, and a reflexive, child-centred approach to work with children.

¹ Using SEDOC, the common frame of reference for training, adopted by the European Community (Van Ewijk et al., 2001)

² Factors associated with better outcomes included lower staff turnover, higher rates of in-service training, lower numbers of staff per young person in the home, and more flexible, information-seeking approaches to work with children.

The young people's reports

The English young people were less inclined than young people in the other countries to advise a new resident to approach staff for advice; they reported less involvement and less satisfaction as to how decisions were made about day-to-day activities. They went on holiday less frequently, and were more likely to report that they had not been on holiday at all during the last year. They said that they enjoyed activities with members of staff slightly more frequently than the children interviewed in Germany, but less so than those interviewed in Denmark. Fewer of them spoke of enjoying skills or creative activities with staff. In England, friends from outside visited young people less often and having a friend to stay overnight was very rare. Young people in Denmark consistently offered more positive replies about their experience in care than those in Germany and England. The accounts of the young people in Germany mostly fell between those in the other two countries.

Differences in recruiting and retaining staff

Staff turnover, recruitment and retention, caused greatest concern in England, least concern in Denmark.

Study 3. (for DH/DfES) Does pedagogy have a part to play in foster care, in Europe?

The study reviewed foster care and fostering services in Denmark, France, Germany and Sweden. A national expert provided a written review and the researchers interviewed stakeholders at local, regional and national level.

In general, foster carers were not qualified as pedagogues except for those working in a few agencies in Eastern Germany and Denmark. However, the principles of pedagogy were apparent in the training and support of foster carers which, except for Sweden, were often carried out by people with qualifications in pedagogy. The pedagogues' professional experience and training provided insights into working with 'the head, the hands and the heart', all of which were seen as also necessary for fostering.

Study 4: Evidence relating to introducing pedagogy in England (for Esmée Fairbairn Foundation)

A review of current evidence of pedagogic approaches and activity in England found the following:

- Some existing qualifications are already based on pedagogic principles (e.g., BA Curative Education, University of Aberdeen; BA European Social Work, University of Portsmouth; various degrees in Youth and Community Work.
- Some foundation degrees, in development, build on pedagogic curricula (e.g. at the Institute of Education and at the University of Portsmouth).
- Camphill Schools, Steiner schools and Montessori schools build on a continental European pedagogic tradition.
- Danish pedagogy students on 6 month full-time placement in English children's services were highly praised by supervisors. Reportedly, they developed excellent relationships with children and staff, and were regarded as contributing far beyond the normal remit of placement students.

- A UK agency specialising in recruitment of German pedagogues has placed 200 qualified practitioners in local authorities and other agencies, on permanent contracts.
- Pedagogues from the new member states of the EU are said to be increasingly employed in this country.

English informants reported that there is 'pedagogic' i.e., relational, holistic, creative and group-based practice in children's services in the UK, but that this is frequently hampered by procedural and policy pressures and limited by an underdeveloped workforce.

Section 3: Perspectives of English professionals on developing qualifications for care work

Differences between social pedagogy, social work and social care

The researchers prepared background papers and a slide presentation on the Social Work Degree, and on the relevant practitioner and manager NVQs. These were discussed with two Danish lecturers in pedagogy. Areas of difference and similarity with the pedagogy curriculum were identified.

In terms of the titles presented in the social work curricula and in the NVQ Unit details, there appeared to be some overlap with the Danish curriculum. There were, however differences of focus and differences in learning processes between the Danish and the English qualifications. The social work degrees were seen as of a similar *standard* to those of pedagogy; the main differences were in *approach and content*. The NVQs (levels three and four), were of a different order from the degree qualifications. They had no entry requirement and were not postulated on training. They represented a process of assessment, not of education.

The NVQ system, therefore, is categorically different from that of pedagogy.

Other significant differences between the English qualifications and pedagogy were that:

- For the English qualifications, life in group settings is less to the fore.
- The multiplicity and specificity of items for assessment in the NVQs are difficult to compare with general pedagogic aims such as 'being present for children'.
- There is less on child development theory in the English qualifications
- The Danish qualification emphasised working in and with groups, and group processes, much more than the social work degrees and the NVQs.
- In England there was less focus on learning about – and through – co-operation, collaboration, team work and working together.
- Creative and practical subjects, a substantial component of the pedagogue's training, are not to be found in English social work and have little place in the NVQ. In Denmark, creative activities are often the subject of group projects, which are reflected on in the light of various group theories.

Interviews were undertaken with 14 experts in training (social work educators, NVQ providers and NVQ awarding body personnel) and senior staff from two residential homes.

General responses

The residential home staff, and the three interviewees involved in social work education already had some knowledge of pedagogy. They were generally in favour of adopting a more pedagogic approach to residential care. They were all critical of the NVQ approach but were not convinced that social work provided an appropriate preparation for work in residential care.

In general interviewees were:

- Enthusiastic about the greater emphasis on group processes and living in groups, in the Danish model. They saw this as particularly relevant to residential care. An NVQ advisor believed that there was already scope for requiring work on the importance of the group, drawing on existing optional NVQ units.
- Another thought that group work was emphasised more in the Young Children's Learning and Development NVQs, than in Health and Social Care.
- Arts and creative activities were mostly seen as highly relevant to direct work with children, and especially relevant for group care settings. However, these would be an entirely new area for social work. Staff at an NVQ assessment centre, while recognising the possibilities presented by creative activities, considered they might be less suitable for English children.

Perspectives of English professionals on a tiered and integrated training framework for training and qualification

The professional interviewees were also asked about the broad proposals regarding training and qualification set out in the green paper, Care Matters.

Most of those interviewed were, in general terms, in favour of:

- Improved training for residential and foster care workers and a qualifications framework that placed residential and foster care within the children's sector, and linked to social work.
- There was some support for the tiered system, proposed in the green paper. However, the manager of a residential home expressed concern that a tiered approach was less appropriate for residential care, where needs were often complex. Other reservations were that *all* staff should have a good understanding of their work.
- Issues were raised as to the possibility of progressing staff *within* the care system. Qualifications were said to be often a route out of residential care and into, for example, social work. Such considerations led some interviewees to be guarded in their evaluation of developing qualifications in social care higher than those already existing.
- Most interviewees supported the principle of a level 5 education for residential social care workers, based around the principles of social pedagogy. Some commented that the social work post-qualifying framework offered a good opportunity to develop awards in pedagogy and the management of pedagogic settings.

Section 4: Proposal for a new qualifications framework

Care Matters proposed a new qualifications framework for work in residential and foster care, based on pedagogic approaches. Section 4 describes such a framework, in the light of the following considerations, raised by this study:

- Existing qualifications and awards, such as the NVQ level 3 for residential social care and the social work degree programmes, do not appear to offer sufficient fit with the complex needs of the residential care sector.
- Developing the profession of social pedagogue requires courses catering for both
 - current residential social care workers, whose qualifications range mostly from unqualified to level 3 (the latter for a minority of staff).
 - professionals already qualified in social work, and other relevant occupations, who wish to develop expertise and leadership in social pedagogy.

The proposed framework aims to support the practice expertise and the career development of residential social care workers (Figure 1). The framework encompasses:

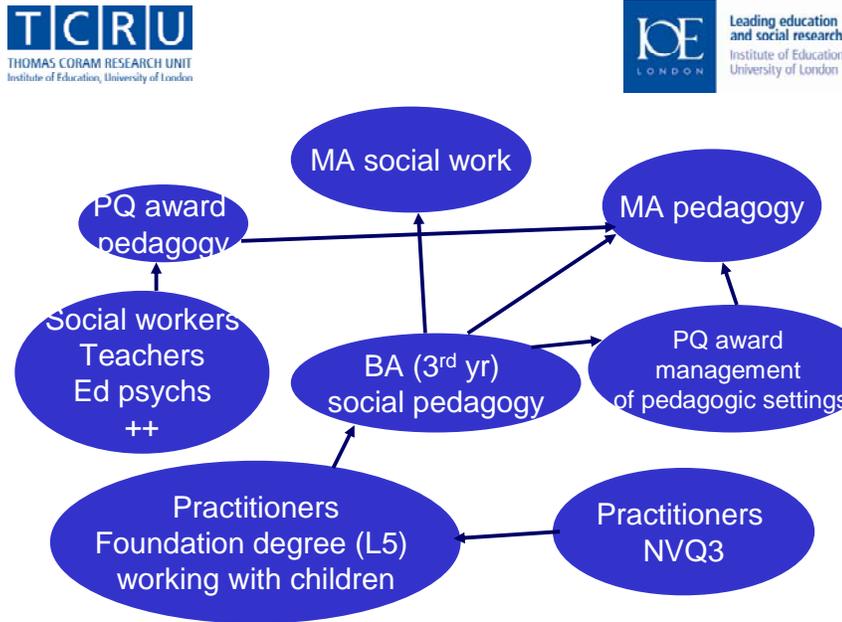
- A foundation degree in *working with children*, offering the opportunity to link the qualifications for those working with looked after children to those
 - in the children's sector more widely,
 - to social work and its framework for continuing professional development,
 - to leadership qualifications for the children's sector, and
- Higher level qualifications for those who have completed foundation degrees and for graduates in other appropriate disciplines. This presents the possibility to develop an academic field of pedagogy, such as exists in continental Europe and is necessary for the renewal of knowledge.

The model proposed brings together vocational occupations and professions, and bridges the gaps between them. It is radical in calling for conceptual unity across children's sector occupations and across education for practice; it is 'tweaking' in that it adapts to existing qualifications. The proposal is to base the foundation degree on working with children more generally, because:

- A more universal understanding of work with children, than one narrowly focused on residential care, is typical of the pedagogic approach;
- There are likely to be more applicants for such a course than one aimed purely at residential care workers.

At the same time, the degree would address the specific characteristics and needs of the individual student's work settings or practice placements.

Figure 1: A proposed framework for qualification in social pedagogy



Costs

Foundation degree students currently pay the undergraduate fee of £3k per annum. In addition, the Higher Education Institutions attract a supplementary fee, per student from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Employers need to support the student financially to attend, and to provide cover for their absence, including independent study time.

The position of funding for social care training is anomalous, considering that for some other public sector professions. For example, teaching and social work courses can attract bursaries and the NHS meets the cost of places on certain nursing, midwifery or other health profession degree courses (such as the NHS contracted foundation degree in Health & Social Care, at Manchester Metropolitan University).

The funding strategy for training for residential care settings should be rethought, so as to attract entrants to the profession and to raise the capabilities and status of those already employed.

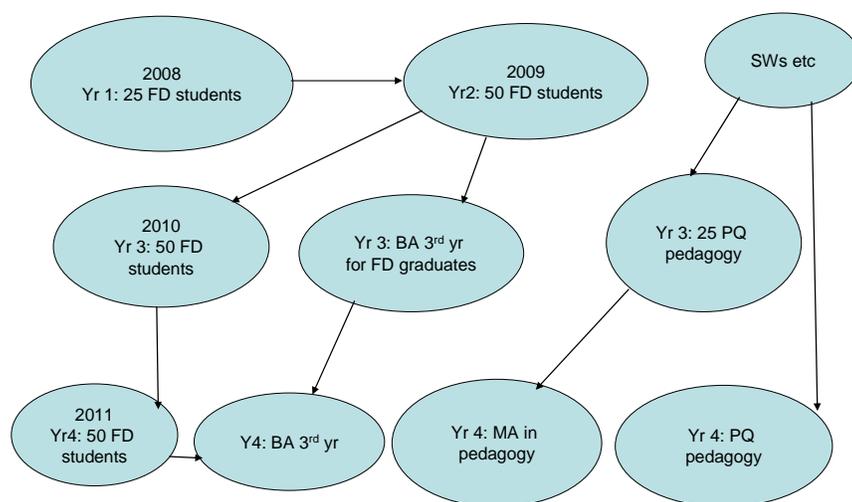
Developing training capacity: a preliminary model

A tentative estimate is that social pedagogy foundation degrees would require, when fully developed, capacity for 3-4,000 workers per annum, in about 140 higher education institutions. This estimate is based on a combination of national sources and information reported in Petrie et al (2006).

In order to develop such capacity, a cascade model is proposed. This would be based initially in existing institutions where the researchers have already identified interest and expertise in social pedagogy. The identification of such institutions is

preliminary, compiled on the basis of professional contacts. No systematic mapping has been undertaken, either on curricula or on the ethos of the courses. Any quantification of the existing foundation for developing sufficient capacity must, therefore, be cautious. Nevertheless, there would seem to be sufficient institutions to initiate a social pedagogy network. It is proposed that this network would support the development of training courses, in conjunction with Danish advisers.

Figure 2: The development of student capacity in pedagogy courses in one institution



FD– foundation degree; SW – qualified social workers; PQ – post qualifying

In Figure 2, the output of graduates per year is necessarily approximate, depending on uptake of courses, teaching group sizes, and availability of teaching staff. Also, the model addresses the employed workforce, not the potential workforce. On the basis of this model, by 2012, a tentative estimate is that 45 institutions could produce 1,125 foundation degree graduates each year, plus graduates with post qualifying awards, and MAs and BAs.

In conclusion

During the time this study has been underway, interest has grown considerably in developing pedagogy in the UK, not least in the support for the pedagogic approach promoted by Care Matters. Evidence that pedagogues are already working in the UK has come to light. There is now momentum on which to build. In order to promote social pedagogy further, we suggest that serious attention should be given to developing and funding the following:

- 1. A qualifications framework based on foundation degrees in *working with children*, (two years) with an optional third year, leading to a bachelor's degree in social pedagogy. Higher level qualifications could then build on this.
- 2. Programmes of training designed to familiarise English staff with the concepts of social pedagogy. These would be for social care staff who work

directly with children and young people, and for others such as educators in further and higher education, and local authority children's service staff.

As we heard from the young people we interviewed, they want what pedagogy can provide and ways must be found to deliver this.

Introduction

Background

Social pedagogy, as the basis for work with children, is familiar in much of continental Europe (Petrie et al. 2006). In 2001 a conference hosted by the Social Education Trust found that the profession of pedagogue was to be found in 11 of the then 15 EU countries. It is also found in countries that joined the EU in 2004. In England, however, interest in this approach has been limited. This situation has changed somewhat over the last few years, with the concept discussed as a potential basis for occupational development in government and other documents.³

This growing interest is evidenced also in the frequency with which staff at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, where a considerable amount of work on the subject has been carried out, have been asked to present papers and/or to discuss social pedagogy by organisations such as the British Association for Fostering and Adoption, Barnardo's, the Training and Development Agency for Schools, the University Council for the Education of Teachers, The Fostering Network, Demos, the Children's Workforce Development Council and various UK government departments.

The understanding of the pedagogic approach presented in this report builds on studies conducted in many European countries, commissioned by the DfES, DH, ESRC, EC and others (a bibliography is appended). Residential care, foster care, early childhood care and education, leisure time services for children and work with adults with disabilities have been addressed, variously, in this body of research.

Aims

Implementing the Social Pedagogic Approach for Workforce Training and Education in England, developed in conjunction with DfES and Social Exclusion Task Force, reports a short preliminary study regarding the implementation of the pedagogic approach in workforce training and education. The focus is on the workforce for looked after children: i.e., residential care workers and foster carers, but it is set within the context of the wider children's services workforce proposed by Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003).

The report contains:

- (i) The views of recent care leavers regarding their carers;
- (ii) A summary of 4 studies of social pedagogy conducted at TCRU;
- (iii) Comparisons between Danish qualifications in social pedagogy and: English NVQs in Children and Young People's Health and Social Care and the degree in social work, *and* the perspectives of some professionals, from children's services and training and education, on some of the proposals set out in Care Matters (DfES, 2006)

³ For example, Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003), The Children's Workforce Strategy (DfES, 2005).

- (iv) Suggestions towards developing a framework for social pedagogy qualifications in England, and a model for developing training capacity.

Ethics and Research Governance

The study was conducted in accordance with the Ethical Code and Procedures of the Thomas Coram Research Unit and the Research Governance and Ethics Committee of the Institute of Education, University of London. Participant employer and local authority research governance procedures were followed. These procedures were consistent with the highest standards of research practice, as well as the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000). All interviews were conducted with the freely given informed consent of participants. Participants were informed of their right to refuse to answer any questions, and to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

It was explained that interviews would be shared among members of the research team, and that agreement to participate meant interviewees were consenting to the data being collected, stored and shared in this way. Any resulting tape recordings have been destroyed and data has been stored anonymously. Quotations used in reports and publications arising from the research have and will be anonymised.

This information was provided verbally, with the opportunity for questions at each stage of explanation. In addition, letters or leaflets were prepared for participants, providing the above information in written form, and giving contact details for the research team. Participation in the research was not expected to cause distress.

Possible disclosure of abuse by young adults, formerly in care

It is the duty of the interviewer to act on any information that leads her to believe that a child's safety (not necessarily the person interviewed) may be currently endangered. The following procedures would have been followed, if necessary (in fact there was no such necessity).

If the interviewer has a *high level of concern*, they should discuss these, and their proposed plan of action with the person who has made the disclosure, and say that they wishes to contact the appropriate helping agency, requesting the interviewee's permission to do so.

For *low levels of concern* or uncertainty the interviewer should discuss concerns with colleagues before taking any action.

Concerns and possible plan of action should be discussed, immediately, with Claire Cameron and/or Pat Petrie. If it is then decided to take any action, the first contact should be the duty officer at the Social Services Department involved.

It is the responsibility of the interviewer to whom the disclosure is originally made to ensure that all stages of the appropriate action are carried out, according to these guidelines, and that a record is made of decisions made and any subsequent action taken.

Section 1. The perspectives of care leavers

'It's two years since I left, I'm mad, I say forget it but it's always there. We can't change anything [for us] but it would be really nice if we could change it for others.'

In this Section we present a brief summary of discussions with groups of young people who have left the care system, with the aim of obtaining their views about the kind of support they would have wanted from their care givers – foster parents or residential workers. The hypothesis was that care leavers would be better able to engage in critical and reflective discussion than those currently in care.

The care leavers

Twenty four young people, seven males and 17 females, attended in five groups. Their ages ranged from 16 to 24 with an average age of 18. They defined their background as White British (7), Black African (5), British Asian (5) Bangladeshi (3), Black Caribbean (1) and mixed race (1). Access to care leavers was obtained through three leaving care teams with whom the researchers had successfully collaborated in the past.

The time participants had spent in care ranged from two to eight years, with an average stay of four and a half years. The number of their placements ranged from more than six (2) to one (7); the average number was two and a half. By far the most common type of placement was fostering, 15 young people had only fostering experience, two only residential experience. These young people may not have been typical of care leavers, as they were all in contact with a leaving care service.

It was not feasible to consult about pedagogy directly, because it was unlikely that the young people had knowledge of the concept. Less direct methods were devised, which examined how the young people appraised their own care. The discussions were based on responses to two vignettes. These had been used in interviewing pedagogues working in residential care in continental Europe and residential care workers in England (studies 1 and 2, described in Section 2, below).

The care leavers responses were analysed in terms of their correspondence with the pedagogic approach identified in TCRU's earlier studies. The ways in which workers had reported helping young people with their problems differed significantly between countries (Petrie et al, 2006: 78). For example, for staff in Denmark, listening to the young person was an almost universal response (97 per cent compared to 56 per cent of German and 39 per cent of English staff); this was closely followed by 'putting words to their feelings' (89 per cent compared to 18 per cent of German staff and 2 per cent of English). Few staff in England said that they had provided physical comfort through cuddling the young person (8 per cent, compared to 20 per cent in Germany and 32 per cent in Denmark). More staff in Denmark (60 per cent) said they had spent time with the young person, as a means of offering support, than was reported in England (24 per cent) or Germany (22 per cent).

The care leavers' responses to the vignettes were individual and heartfelt and, not surprisingly, the participants drew on their own history. Their feelings were in many cases still raw and in a few cases evoked angry resentment. All the responses show the importance of the carer really coming to know the child or young person:

'The foster carer has to earn the trust of the young person, so that they will open up to them. If you don't know them, the first days you feel sad and don't talk; it will depend on how they treat you.'

And of the carers receiving appropriate information from the authorities:

'knowing the child matters – social services needs to tell them everything about that child'.

First Vignette

A young person is crying at night.

What do you think, on reflection, is the most helpful thing that another person could do in those circumstances?

Is there anything that would be less helpful?

Reassurance, comfort and support were key themes. In order of frequency mentioned:

The most important types of responses are listed below.

Companionship It was important for the carer to be there either physically or emotionally:

'Be there for you.'

'My first foster carer was working, and never there for me, knowing someone is there is really important. The second foster carer had her own family and was at home, she gave me warmth when I came into her house.'

'Put the light on, leave the door open, stay with them until they fall asleep.'

There was however a strong feeling on the part of some participants that what they would want in that situation was *space*. This was the case especially in residential care where other people might be around, but they still wanted carers to check that they were OK.

'I don't like being overcrowded when what you want is space.'

'Tap on the door and see if I'm alright.'

Listening was implied in references to the carer 'being there'. A typical response:

'Someone to talk to, no point if no one is listening to you.'

Comfort appeared to be mentioned mainly by participants who had had positive experiences in care.

'I would want her to comfort me like my mum... and my foster mum did do that.'

For some, comfort included physical hugging. However there were many provisos.

'Wouldn't mind a hug, but not overstep the boundaries, that would depend on the relationship.'

'Hugging – some children don't like hugging they may feel intimidated; may not be appropriate.'

'It would depend on child's history if there was abuse [hugging] may not be right.'

For others the implication was that if the foster parent knew the young person well enough to offer some comfort, that in itself was helpful.

'My foster parent asking me if I wanted to go outside and have a fag, it might make me feel better.'

In speaking about the carer finding out what was wrong, some stressed the need to take time.

'You need frequent comforting but not really pushing to tell them; gradually the child will get to a point where they will start opening up.'

Others were used to the principles of counselling:

'Counsel you, sympathise, empathise.'

'Be non-judgmental.'

Still others were cautious:

'[If they say they understand] it makes me want to say 'No you don't understand'; you're not in my shoes, you don't know what experience I've had.'

The nature of the problem. A number of participants hinted at the difficulty of talking about problems that arise within the foster home.

'It depends whether she is crying for something that happened in the foster home or outside. If it is outside, the foster parent can deal with it. If it is inside, she won't be able to tell her. She would have to go to the social worker.'

Need for further help. The young people had different ideas on what worked and how it should be done again depending on their experience.

[In my situation] 'giving me a choice of people within the family, there was my foster father, foster mother and brother. I could talk to all of them.'

'It wasn't until I got here [leaving care service] that I got numbers [for the different sources of help] that I needed.'

The need for *confidentiality* emerged strongly. In the case of disclosure of abuse or involvement in what might be criminal activity, the young person wanted to be *consulted*:

'I trusted them, they don't have to rush and do something, they can explain the consequences, slowly, slowly break it down.'

It is clear that what the young people wanted most from carers were empathetic responses in a distressing situation and the ability to point them towards helpful information.

Second Vignette

A child does not want to go to school.

What do you think, on reflection, is the most helpful thing that the carer could do in those circumstances?

Is there anything that would be less helpful?

For many of the young people the scenario did not relate to their reality, because they had liked school. For a few others it did not ring true because they 'bunked off' and 'never told anyone', For yet others, school provided some relief from other troubles, and a way of getting away from foster parents. It was, therefore, hard to restrict the discussion to the role of the carer. School reaction, the behaviour of individual teachers and the nature of any social services' response is seen as at least as important.

'I got moved four times in two months before my GCSEs. My mock grades were As and Bs. My actual results were all below D. I've always resented Social Services for it. I never had an explanation.'

Several resented what they saw as lost educational opportunities and the majority were valiantly trying to make up for lost time by attending college. One boy spoke for many:

'People in foster care don't want to miss out on life, they want to go further, get 'A' levels and go higher.'

Most participants thought it was important for the carer to *find out what the problem was*.

'Listening, finding out what is useful.'

'Foster parents need to get to know child's friends because, if it is bullying, the child themselves might not say.'

Giving rewards, incentives and using sanctions Sometimes these had been tailor-made for individual children by their carers and in some cases by the school.

'If I didn't want to go my foster mother said she'd phone my mum. And she'd say you better go otherwise you won't be able to come home at the weekend. Well that was it. I used to love going home to my mum.'

'My foster carer always checked up with the school [if I said I didn't want to go], even if I was ill she needed to tell the school about it.'

For some participants, carers *talking about the importance of education*, and the long term *consequences of missing education* was helpful, if it was in the context of a positive relationship:

'She [foster mother] was a careers adviser and she said 'Are you just going to be like all the other children on the street with no job and not getting anywhere.' Or she took the door key off me and said 'you won't be able to get in [during the day], so what are you going to do?'

'Not give them too much freedom; tell them about life in a hard [realistic] way and the importance of education.'

Some care leavers spoke of the carer's *contact with the school*, remarking that carers should:

'show concern for your schooling; how your education is going on; see that you are looked after well.'

The participants spoke of *tailoring solutions to individual children*. They described how these could be devised, despite initial difficulties, through collaboration between all concerned with the young person. One young person told how after missing a year of school and then having foster parents in four different boroughs and four different schools, she was placed in a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

'PRU: cab there and back; fag break, homemade lunch, no uniform; that made me realise how important education is.'

Another young person after creating a lot of trouble, by his own admission, was permitted to go to school part-time.

'Only went to school four days; foster brother took time off on last day of the week and took me out, while my foster mother went to meetings, then I went to school the rest of the time.'

Another young person appreciated his foster mother 'going the extra mile':

'There are certain times, when people start fighting or bullying and I don't want to go to school; then I need foster care support and for them to come to school and talk to the teacher to sort it out; maybe take me to school for a bit ...'

Less helpful responses

At least four participants had had very negative experiences of foster care, although two of them, (one after running away) had subsequently had good experiences with a different carer.

'When I moved in, this woman took me in this room, shut the door and left me. Obviously she knew it was my first time. She could have asked me if I was OK, if there was anything I needed.'

Some of the less helpful responses described arose from professional shortcomings of the foster parent or residential care worker, such as not ensuring confidentiality:

'Tell them [carers] something in confidence and the next minute it's all over the house.'

'Don't want people running to someone else. Shows lack of trust. You feel you gave your trust and they haven't appreciated it.'

'Be there one to one, not get their family involved and tell them everything, respect your privacy.'

Perhaps a *Cinderella syndrome* describes the experience of some who were expected to skivvy and were treated worse than the rest of the family.

'Treat you like house slaves.'

'My foster parents used to hide food in their bedroom to make sure I couldn't get it.'

'They opened my letters. I wasn't allowed to answer the phone.'

In one case the foster parents seemed afraid to ask for help with a medical problem.

'I had ringworm. I showed it to my foster parents as I was distressed. They told me first to put deodorant on it and then when it didn't get better to wait for two weeks until it went away. I didn't wait. I got my social worker to move me.'

The role of Social Services

Social Services have a part to play in ensuring fair treatment of children in care. Participants' general view of social services was not positive. Most admitted that there were some good social workers, although those 'didn't seem to stay long'.

Several young people appeared to have had no satisfactory independent access to a social worker, or anyone else in whom to confide, without fear of their difficulties going further. Where things were not going well, the young person felt that the social worker tended to believe the foster parent.

‘Foster parents can be nice if the social worker comes but quite different when they are not there.’

I only found out about the Children’s Rights Service a few months ago. I did have the number but I thought it was children’s services. All children should be told about it – who they are, what they are there for and how to contact them – when they come into care.’

Most participants felt that another big disadvantage of being in care was the *labelling* it attracted, not so much from carers as from social workers, schools and society at large.

‘Just because we are in care, social workers feel we have got issues, some of us have got no issues.’

‘[They assume that] troubled kids are troublesome.’

In schools this stereotyping led to *lower expectations* of the young people.

[School says] ‘Low marks OK, you’ve had a hard time.’

‘Expectations should be the same [as for everyone else], you may need a bit more support.’

Another girl felt she was placed in a PRU just because she had come into care.

‘They associate you with where you are [PRU]. You get penalized. They label you. You can’t get what you want. They only put you in for a few GCSEs and you can’t get more than a C because they aren’t qualified to teach any higher.’

Characteristics of the carer

The care leavers’ discussions showed that they thought that the *general disposition* of carers mattered:

‘Body language, the way they look at the child, a smiling friendly face.’

‘The relationship is one where they joke about with you and can have a laugh.’

They spoke of the importance of carers being able to *communicate*, show that they *care about you*, be *able to set limits*, and give *advice and support*. Two most important *attributes* were:

- that they were *not just doing it for the money*. Those who had had a bad time felt particularly strongly about this.

'They really do [should] care about you and not about getting money in their pockets.'

'Children from 14 should be told that the foster parent is getting paid. I've seen adverts to say foster and you'll get £30,000. It's not right.'

- and that carers *treated the child in care like their own child*.

'Somebody who can take to you like their own child. They should introduce foster child to their own children so when there's parties you get to go too.'

'My foster parent, she calls me when she is going away and asks me to water the plants and look out to see her car's OK'. I feel like I have a mum and when something happens, I just dash there.'

The young people thought it helped that foster parents had *children of their own*:

'Important for them to have children of their own, no point if they don't have children.'

'Important to be a couple and for them to have kids of their own – a family environment gives more understanding and then you have two guiders – a mother figure and a father figure.'

They also need to have had some *experience in life*. In one group there was serious discussion of how far care leavers were suitable for care work.

'They need to have gone through certain things in life.'

'It [experience] doesn't have to be care, it can be drugs or alcohol.'

The following quotes sum up how the young people want their carers to be.

'My second foster parent was really nice. I can see the difference. In her house I don't feel like a stranger. I can talk to her like my mother. She's not fake. The first one was the type of person to respect rules which is good, but she did not make us feel at home, part of the family.'

'My carers let me be the person I wanted to be and respecting who I wanted to be. I always had that.'

'My foster carer was my best mate.'

Training for carers

Most participants thought that foster parents needed training and that having their own children or some experience of children, though necessary, was not enough. Foster carers needed to make sense of that experience or get help to do so. But one young person said: 'You can't train some people for caring and loving' and was sceptical about the possibility that initial selection would ensure suitable foster parents: 'They can pretend'.

But what emerged as the main ingredient of training was *helping foster parents or residential workers to understand what it is like to be a child in care* including the trauma they may have gone through and the effects of separation and numerous placements.

‘Children come into foster care, because something is not quite right; they [Foster parents] need to know what kind of situations can happen in life – drinks, drugs.’

‘They need to learn about distance. That distance comes because the young person is scared because they have been in too many placements, so they can’t speak to anyone. The trust has gone and the young person is saying “Why am I having to build the trust?”’

The young people felt they should be *more involved in training* so as to tell carers what being in care is like.

‘Not just the token two hours – properly so the foster parents really understand what they are getting into.’

Conclusion

The young people consulted wanted carers who were able to make contextualised judgements about individual circumstances, who gave priority to ‘being there’ for young people, both in terms of physical presence, providing welcome and warmth, and being available for physical comfort such as a hug, if they felt the young person could accept it. They thought that carers should know the young person as an individual, on the basis of listening carefully to what they had to say. Carers should also be scrupulously fair and ethical in their use of information about young people and in their treatment of the young person, whether in foster care or residential care. Expectations of young people should be high, especially in education, but also as individuals with talents, not just problems. Professional carers should not collude with the societal stigma attached to young people who are looked after away from birth families. These findings are common to other studies of the views of care leavers⁴. They suggest that young people in care would appreciate the characteristics of the pedagogic approach identified across the earlier TCRU studies, which we detail in our next section.

⁴ See for example, *Young People’s Views on Leaving Care*, R. Morgan and M. Lindsay (2006).

Section 2. A summary of four studies of social pedagogy conducted at Thomas Coram Research Unit

This Section summarises, findings from four studies conducted at TCRU since 2000.

Study 1: (for DH).What is pedagogy?

In much of continental Europe the term pedagogy has a wider application than is usual in English. It is a system of theory, practice and training that supports the overall development of the whole child. It can be defined as 'education in the broadest sense of the word'. Pedagogues work with all age groups and in a range of settings, including residential care for young people, and in adult services. In many countries, they are the main practitioners employed in early childhood education.

What are the common characteristics of pedagogic work?

Pedagogues usually work with and in groups of service users. They are trained to be conscious of the dynamics and conditions of group life. They value associative life, sharing the 'lifespace' of children and other service users. 'Everyday' activities – play, eating together, homework, creative activities and holidays are seen as meaningful, not routine. Pedagogues also value the individual, their unique identity and their contribution to the group. Developing relationships is centred around listening to children, respecting their views and identifying and working with individual talents as well as problems.

Pedagogues make opportunities to foster practical and creative skills in young people. An essential feature of the training concerns developing skills and confidence in using a range of arts, crafts and environmental skills with children, for enjoyment and therapeutic benefit.

What is the training for pedagogues?

Qualification as a pedagogue is usually associated with three years training, at BA degree level. There are also examples of lower level courses as well as Masters and PhDs in Pedagogy.

What is the difference between pedagogy and social work?

The biggest difference between the two professions lies in the extent to which pedagogues are trained for work in group settings, sharing the daily lives and activities of children and young people. This type of work setting is less normative for people trained as social workers. Social work and social pedagogy do not appear to be in competition, they have different spheres of work.

Study 2. (for DH/DfES) How does residential care in England compare to that found in Denmark and Germany?

The study was based on 49 residential children's homes in England, Denmark and Germany, with interviews with 56 heads of establishment, 144 staff and 302 young people.

The study found that, overall, pedagogic education and training (i) makes a difference to practice and to staff's understanding of practice options in residential care and (ii) outcomes for children are linked to staff characteristics, in terms of practice and approaches.

How were staff qualified in the three countries?⁵

In Denmark, all the pedagogues held a high level relevant qualification (predominantly in pedagogy), compared with one fifth of those in England.

In England: around one third of workers held a medium level qualification, including the NVQ Level 3, and a further third held either no qualification or none that was relevant to their post.

In Germany: staff were almost equally divided between medium and high-level qualifications, in pedagogy and related fields.

How does pedagogy inform staff practice?

Workers in Denmark most frequently reported that they responded to young peoples' difficulties by listening to them. In England, staff reported listening least frequently. Staff in Danish children's homes most frequently suggested alternative strategies for dealing with a difficult situation (staff in German homes did so least frequently).

Compared to staff in Denmark and Germany, English workers relied more heavily on talking and discussing, rather than listening and empathising. They also referred more frequently to procedural or organisational matters and to short term behaviour management, indicating a less personal professional role than that adopted by pedagogues.

In response to vignettes, workers in Denmark reported more and more varied responses than other workers, and indicated a more reflective approach.

Are staff characteristics related to outcomes for young people?

According to the reports of managers and young people themselves, those in residential care in England were, when compared to their Danish and German counterparts, more likely to be out of education and/or employment, and at greater risk of teenage pregnancy and/or engagement in criminal activity.

We conducted statistical analyses to see whether these differences could be explained by characteristics of staff that reflected a 'pedagogic approach' – for example, in their levels of training, or the way staff worked with young people.

The populations of young people in care in each country are different, and so statistical analyses first considered whether care entry characteristics (such as the

⁵ Using SEDOC, the common frame of reference for training, adopted by the European Community (Van Ewijk et al.,2001)

proportion of young people in voluntary placements, or whether crime was a contributing factor to the placement being made) explained differences in outcome indicators. These care entry characteristics differed across countries, but did *not* account for significant variation in outcome indicators, in the different homes, once staff characteristics were taken into account. Rather, variance in outcome indicators was associated with a range of workforce characteristics⁶, which, considered as a whole, were reflective of a pedagogic approach to public care. The findings do not show cause and effect, but they do suggest that better life chances were associated with a smaller, more stable and professionalised workforce, and a reflexive, child-centred approach to work with children.

What were the main differences in young people's reports?

The English young people, whose placements were of shorter duration than those in Germany and Denmark, were rather less inclined than young people in the other countries to advise a new resident to approach staff for advice. They reported less involvement and less satisfaction regarding the ways in which decisions were made about day-to-day activities. They went on holiday less frequently, and were more likely to report that they had not been on holiday at all during the last year, compared to the children in the other countries. They said that they enjoyed group activities, and other activities with members of staff, slightly more frequently than the children interviewed in Germany, but less than those interviewed in Denmark. Fewer of them spoke of enjoying skills or creative activities with staff. In England, outside friends visited young people less often and having a friend to stay overnight was very rare.

Young people in Denmark consistently offered more positive replies about their experience in care than those in Germany and England. The accounts of the young people in Germany mostly fell between the other two countries.

What were the differences in recruiting and retaining staff in the three countries?

Staff turnover, recruitment and retention, caused greater concern in England, with higher turnover, more difficulties reported in recruiting and retaining staff, and disquiet about poor working conditions and the low status of residential care work. Danish establishments reported fewest problems with the recruitment and retention of staff. This is especially interesting given that, in Denmark, employment for qualified pedagogues is available in widespread universal services, such as nurseries and out of school services.

⁶ Factors associated with better outcomes included lower staff turnover, higher rates of in-service training, lower numbers of staff per young person in the home, and more flexible, information-seeking approaches to work with children.

Study 3. Does pedagogy have a part to play in foster care, in Europe?

Four case studies were developed for Denmark, France, Germany and Sweden, based on a (i) review of foster care and fostering services, provided by a national expert, and (ii) interviews with key stakeholders at local, regional and national level. The study covered a range of issues, including the role of social pedagogy in fostering services.

In general, foster carers were not qualified as pedagogues in any of the countries visited. Exceptions were found in the professional foster care provided by a few agencies in Eastern Germany and in the Danish *Opholdssteder*. However, the principles of pedagogy were apparent in the training and support of foster carers which, with the exception of Sweden, were often carried out by people who held qualifications in pedagogy. In France, for example, with the requirement for foster carers to complete 240 hours of training, this was often delivered in schools of social work, which trained social pedagogues among other types of social workers.

The perceived strengths of the pedagogic approach for foster care included that it was action oriented, that it provided a 'normal' way of thinking about children and their upbringing, and that it focused on children's strengths and their everyday activities.

The trainers and other staff involved in supporting and training foster carers were able to draw on their own pedagogic theory and knowledge of child development. Importantly, pedagogues' own professional experience and training was seen as providing insights into working with 'the head, the hands and the heart', all of which were required in fostering.

Study 4. (Esmée Fairbairn Foundation) Is there any evidence indicating the likely success of introducing pedagogy in England?

In 2006, an exploratory study, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, identified some possibilities for consideration. These were:

- Some existing English qualifications are based on pedagogic principles: for example the BA in Curative Education at the University of Aberdeen; the BA in European Social Work at the University of Portsmouth; degrees in Youth and Community Work such as those to be found at the University of Durham and the YMCA George Williams College in Canning Town (Canterbury Christchurch University)
- Some foundation degrees in development are building on pedagogic curricula and organisational methods (*Working with Children* at the Institute of Education and the University of Portsmouth).
- Camphill Schools, Steiner schools and Montessori schools build on a continental European pedagogic tradition.
- Danish pedagogy students on 6 month full-time placement in English children's services were highly praised by their English supervisors. Reportedly, they accommodated well to existing modes of practice, they developed excellent relationships with children and staff, and they were

creative. They were frequently allowed to undertake responsibilities beyond the normal remit of placement students. Some students were said to promote a questioning culture about practice and procedures, which was seen by staff as beneficial to institutional practice, overall.

- A UK agency, specialising in recruitment of German pedagogues, has placed 100 qualified practitioners in local authorities and other agencies, on permanent contracts.
- In England, pedagogues from the new member states of the EU are said to be increasingly employed.

At the project's final conference, both study participants and other conference members were enthusiastic about introducing pedagogy to England – but they were also aware of clear cultural and policy differences between for example, Danish and German society on the one hand and UK society on the other⁷. English participants reported that there is already some 'pedagogic' (i.e., relational, holistic, creative and group-based) practice in children's services in the UK. But this is frequently hampered by procedural and policy pressures and limited by an underdeveloped workforce.

⁷ For example, there are different approaches to parenting, as well as a much greater use of residential care in those countries.

Section 3. The perspectives of professional stakeholders

We return now to another component of the study which is the main subject of this report, the pedagogic approach and English qualifications. Before considering the views of professional stakeholders regarding the introduction of a more pedagogic approach into children's care, it is first necessary to outline the major differences between Danish pedagogy and the English qualifications. How are these similar to, or different from, Danish courses, in respect of entry requirements, curricula content and modes of teaching and assessment?

Differences between social pedagogy, social work and social care

The researchers prepared background papers and a slide presentation on the Social Work Degree (based on courses in two different Universities) and on the relevant practitioner and manager NVQs. They then held a two day meeting with two Danish lecturers at one of the Copenhagen colleges educating pedagogues, to consider the social work curricula and the NVQ units. The aim was to identify areas of difference and similarity with the pedagogy curriculum.

Generally, in terms of the titles presented in the social work curricula and in the NVQ Unit details, there was some overlap with the Danish curriculum. There were, however differences of focus, differences in learning processes, and differences in the importance given to theory.

On the basis of their entry requirements and curricula, the social work degrees were seen as being of a rather similar standard to those of the qualification in pedagogy; the main differences were of approach and content (see below). However, the NVQs, both at level three and level four, were of a different order from the degree qualifications. The NVQ system has no requirement for occupational training or education. Neither does it have any entry requirement. To obtain the NVQ, candidates must provide evidence that they fulfil the role for which they are already employed, in the light of national occupational standards.

From their perspective as educators, the Danish colleagues had difficulty with the NVQ process, which is based on the candidates' providing evidence that they *successfully* met National Occupational Standards, at a required level. The Danish educators would expect their own students to present accounts of work where they were less 'successful', seeing such accounts as an important area for reflection and development. However, candidates for an NVQ are undertaking a process of assessment, not of education, and this is a major difference: the assessor's role is not primarily educational. Nevertheless, there are courses available to guide candidates through the NVQ process and to provide some of the knowledge base which the job requires. However, courses are of short duration, they are not obligatory and depend to some extent on employers financing them. Also, we found some evidence that standards vary between assessment Centres. An external verifier reported that out of some 20 Centres for which he was responsible, only two were of a satisfactory standard.

It is not altogether fair to the NVQ system, therefore, to compare it with the education and training represented by the pedagogue's qualification: they are categorically different.

The Danish lecturers concluded that the content of the NVQs could be included in a pedagogy degree, but the methods and organisation of learning and assessment was 'not pedagogic'. They also believed that the performance indicators and knowledge specification were too rigid and too vast to be addressed and documented in a meaningful way.

In the following, which summarises the main differences between the English qualifications and the pedagogy qualification, reference to NVQs applies, to some extent to both the NVQ 3 in Children and Young People's Health and Social Care and to the NVQ 4 for Managers of Children's Residential Homes. Because the status of registered manager will depend on both management qualification *and* a more specialist qualification, such as the NVQ 4, in Children's Care or the Diploma in Social Work, it is not possible to be more specific about how the content and processes involved in obtaining this status compares to those of pedagogy.

Other significant differences between the English qualifications and pedagogy include:

- Care staff and foster carers share, to greater and lesser extents, young people's life space. The Danish pedagogue educators believed that children, in different settings, need 'involvement in their lives', they 'ask for presence'. Providing students with this understanding, to be judiciously exercised in practice, was an important general aim of the course.

This approach is not to be found in social work training, where focus on group life is less to the fore. With the NVQ units, the multiplicity and specificity of items for assessment, makes for difficulty in identifying general aims such as 'being present for children'.

- In the pedagogue course, child development theories are addressed within the first semester, framed as 'different views on the child and childhood', and are referred to throughout the three years' training and education.

In the social work degree, the focus is on 'human growth, development, mental health and disability'⁸ rather than child development theory specifically; and while child development theory has some place in the NVQ in children's health and social care it is at a low level, and is not represented in the manager's qualification.

- The Danish qualification emphasised working in and with groups, and group processes, more than the social work degrees and the NVQs. The Danish educators planned for students to engage in group projects, during much of their course. This provided experience of working in groups, material for reflection and a basis for the more theoretical understanding of groups that the course required.

⁸ Requirements for Social Work Training, Department of Health (2002).

One of the pedagogy courses, for experienced staff already working in group settings, was based on an initial year in college. Thereafter they continued their education by distance learning. Yet coming together regularly for group projects and reflection remained a requirement.

In England there was less focus on learning about and through co-operation, collaboration, team work and working together. Nevertheless, there *were* NVQ units and social work modules that were based on group processes. But, while the English social work educators and NVQ trainers said that they, too, used group work, this appeared to be a much less prominent feature of their approach. For English social workers, whose work is more frequently at an individual case level, rather than in settings such as residential care, the strong Danish emphasis on groups may seem less appropriate. In the case of the NVQ, the approach itself focuses on the individual. For NVQ candidates, there maybe some opportunities to undertake training as part of a group, but this is not a requirement.

- The creative and practical subjects, which form a substantial part of the pedagogue's training are not to be found in English social work. In Denmark, they are often the subject of group projects, and the basis for learning about groups. With the NVQ, there is an optional unit on activities with children, which relates to this area. Within the NVQ assessment system, this unit requires candidates to produce evidence that they provide activities for children. It does not provide education in creative and practical subjects.

(Further information on curricula from 3 different Danish colleges may be found at: <http://www.socialeducator.dk/page.php?menu=seminar&ID=2>; <http://www.socialeducator.dk/page.php?menu=seminar&ID=6> <http://www.socialeducator.dk/page.php?menu=seminar&ID=3>)

Perspectives of English professionals on introducing and other Care Matter proposals

Professionals engaged in residential care, and in the training and education of care workers and of social workers, were consulted on the proposals for the child care workforce contained in Care Matters (DfES, 2006).

Interviews were undertaken with 14 professionals:

- Six senior staff in two residential children's homes (one public sector and one voluntary sector) in London;
- Two heads of department in Social Work and one recently retired Professor of Social Work;
- A private NVQ Centre proprietor, who was also an experienced NVQ assessor, verifier and trainer for social care and work in the children's sector;
- The manager of the same Centre, who was rather similarly experienced;
- An external verifier with responsibility for achieving consistency between NVQ Centres in one region of England;
- Two awarding body regional advisers, responsible for supporting and advising NVQ Centres, in two different regions of southern England.

The professional interviewees were asked about the broad proposals regarding training and qualification set out in *Care Matters*. In brief, these are for, first, a national qualifications framework for foster and residential carers, related to a tiered model of children's needs: (i) fewer additional needs, (ii) some additional needs and (iii) severe or complex needs, with training differentiated according to tier. A competency-based approach is proposed, relating to new national minimum standards for each tier. Training would be differentiated according to tier, presenting a ladder for career progression. *Care Matters* also proposes that the principles of social pedagogy should be incorporated within training and qualification. The intention is that professionals should develop a common language and approach based on children's development, and on understandings of diversity. There should be a foundation degree for working with children in care, leading to the status of 'expert practitioner'. An additional year would result in a BA qualification.

Semi structured interviews covered the merits of social work and NVQs for residential care workers; the *Care Matters* proposals, and the feasibility of introducing pedagogic principles into training and education for social care in England. As appropriate, questions of teaching capacity and costs were also raised.

General responses

The managers and senior staff in the residential homes, and the three interviewees involved in social work education were generally in favour of adopting a more pedagogic approach to education of people working in residential care. They had already some knowledge about pedagogy; some had supervised pedagogy students.

Those residential home managers who had provided practice placements for Danish pedagogy students were very impressed by what the students had brought to the work: their desire to learn, their involvement with the young people, their contribution to staff meetings and their creativity. Asked to compare the pedagogy student with a recently recruited member of staff of about the same age, managers referred to the more highly developed knowledge and skills of the students, despite their student status and lack of experience in English residential care. The students reportedly had a better understanding of theory and knowledge of systems than the new staff members, who tended to be more uneven in their skills and knowledge.

One manager saw the current requirement for the NVQ 3 as a starting point, but thought that it was inadequate when viewed as a learning process. Most commented that it was not sufficiently progressive in terms of acquiring new knowledge and skills; it did not sufficiently 'embed' reflective practice, or teach child development in a holistic context. Others commented in a similar way but noted that obtaining an NVQ could be rewarding for candidates who had little history of success. A manager doing an NVQ 4 in management complained that the process was stultifying, and that she was learning very little.

The three social work educators interviewed (one of whom had direct experience of working with pedagogy students, and another who had worked with pedagogic colleagues on a cross-national study) also favoured the pedagogic approach. One said that for residential care and staff working with 'very damaged children' the current training was not robust enough and that they were not convinced that studying social work was the right answer – in any case practitioners were not

expected to qualify in social work, and those that did so frequently left the residential sector for field social work or other areas of employment.

We now turn to reactions to the more specific differences, identified above, between the English and Danish qualifications.

Group Processes

Those interviewed were, mostly, enthusiastic about the greater emphasis on group processes and living in groups in the Danish model, and saw this as particularly relevant to residential care. An NVQ advisor believed that there was already scope for requiring work on the importance of the group in existing units, which could be made part of the core requirement. Another thought that group work was emphasised more in the Young Children's Learning and Development NVQs, than for Health and Social Care.

Creative activities

Arts and creative activities were, mostly, seen as highly relevant to direct work with children, and especially relevant for group care settings. However, a social work educator asked whether and how it would be possible to integrate them into a degree programme; this would require some thinking through. Students undertook these subjects in the education studies programme in the university where she worked. However, it would be an entirely new area for social work given the practice focus on statutory social work teams, where students rarely work face-to-face with children: 'There would have to be some rethinking'. Another said that they 'would love to have it within programme' but 'we have very centralised requirements that dictate what is taught and I would have to consider what would be left out if I was to put in arts and crafts'.

Staff at the NVQ assessment centre saw some potential for a greater emphasis on arts and crafts in work with children in care. At the same time, they wondered how feasible it would be to introduce creative activities into residential and foster care, because they thought that young people in this country were more challenging than those in the rest of Europe. They implied that young people here would not accept such activities. 'We are about 10 years ahead of Europe, just behind the USA [with regard to the challenging behaviour of young people]'. One of them said, at this point, that as NVQ assessors and trainers, they were working with adults (residential care staff) who were themselves exhibiting childlike behaviour and implied that they were very self-centred 'me,me,me,me'. The interviewees believed that this in itself affected the behaviour of the children with whom the staff worked.

An NVQ advisor, however, saw that there was scope for more creative work. She said that an existing unit on leisure activities could be further developed and required as a core unit. There were also possibilities for looking at some of the units in the playwork NVQs, and the possibility of a transitional award, as there can be from early years to play work.

Perspectives of English professionals on Care Matters proposals for a tiered and integrated training framework for training and qualification

Most of those interviewed were, in general terms, in favour of improved training for residential and foster care workers, and a qualifications framework that sets residential care and foster care within a children's sector and linked to social work. Interviewees drew attention to the Children's Workforce Development Council's integrated framework of qualification for children's work, which is in development. They thought this should encompass fostering and residential care. Children in both settings have the same needs and transitions. Foster care should share, to some extent, the knowledge and theory base for residential care and, some interviewees said, for the other children's occupations. An integrated framework should permit staff to crossover between different settings.

Staff in the NVQ centre said that residential staff and foster carers benefit from each other in training groups and that 75% of their training could be done together. The basis for the work is the same but the different settings have to be addressed. The main difference identified was that foster carers work alone. For example working with challenging behaviour can be very different in a domestic, compared to an institutional, setting.

There was some support for the tiered system, proposed in the green paper, described by one interviewee as providing 'building blocks' for training and qualification, with tiered training seen as specific to different care roles. However, differences emerged about whether it was equally appropriate for both residential and foster care. One interviewee commented that a tiered model could be of some benefit to foster carers whose motivation for choosing care work probably differed from that of staff in residential care. For foster carers, their choice of occupation may result from a perception that there are few other employment opportunities. A tiered model and a common framework offered flexibility and a means of progression.

Attention was drawn to the varying levels of qualification and education that could exist among foster carers. Some foster carers have no training (and do not volunteer for training) and have low levels of general education. However, other foster carers are already graduates and training opportunities should be at an appropriate level for them. Staff at an NVQ centre were appreciative of foster carers' approach to training and assessment. They compared them favourably to residential workers whom, they said, were less punctilious in completing tasks.

A manager of a residential home expressed concern that a tiered approach was less appropriate for residential care, where there could be a quick turnover of residents with a great range of needs, mostly towards the more complex end of the spectrum.

Staff in the NVQ assessment and training centre expressed other reservations. They said that, while staff needed to know their own limitations and when to refer to someone else or to an outside agency, *all* staff should have a good understanding of their work. Similarly, an interviewee engaged in educating social workers observed that she '...hated the term minimum standards. Practice with these kids should not be minimum anything'. Another interviewee replied in a similar vein, regarding

residential care. 'Here, staff work with young people with very complex needs, on an everyday basis. All staff should, therefore, be trained to the highest complexity level'.

Career paths

Interviewees raised issues as to the possibility of career progression for staff within the care system. There was a lack of career opportunities for residential workers, with the only option being to obtain a post in management. Several interviewees commented that obtaining higher qualification was seen as a springboard into other types of work, such as generic social work, which enjoyed a higher status than social care. Qualifications did not, therefore, help with staff recruitment and retention problems. Such considerations led some interviewees to be guarded in their evaluation of qualifications higher than those already existing.

One respondent expressed strong views about the term 'expert practitioner', as proposed in the green paper for those completing a foundation degree for work with children in care. This person said that in other fields 'you do not become an 'expert' for many years, with many qualifications. It is a disservice to the children to call workers 'expert' with a qualification pitched at sub-degree level. It is not a way to upgrade the status of the job. It is setting up health and social care to be second cousins, not as good as health and social work. It will not be taken seriously'.

Section 4. A qualifications framework that includes pedagogy

Care Matters proposed a new qualifications framework for those working in residential and foster care. In this Section we extend this proposal by providing options for introducing pedagogy into English training and qualification systems, looking across social work, social care, and the children's sector in general. This proposal includes those workers considered under the auspices of Care Matters. The proposed framework does not adapt existing qualifications. Instead it draws together elements of existing frameworks with new pedagogic courses.

The reasons for proposing new qualifications lie in the major changes, which would be required for existing NVQ and social work qualifications to become more 'pedagogic'.

The study findings suggest that making the NVQs for young people's health and social care comparable to qualifications in pedagogy would require an overhaul of all aspects of the NVQ system, including its methods of assessment, organization and curricular content. For example, training in group work would have to become more central, through group based learning. Training in the arts and crafts would have to be developed. The competencies would need to change to become more reflective, to ensure that students considered why an action went well or not (BUPL 2006). The role of assessors would also need to change or develop, with an emphasis on promoting the development of students' capacities through education and advice.

The BA and MA in Social Work, as indicated earlier, have curricular content that overlaps with pedagogy. However, there is variation between different courses in the emphasis which they placed on, for example, group work. There are also differences in teaching methods.

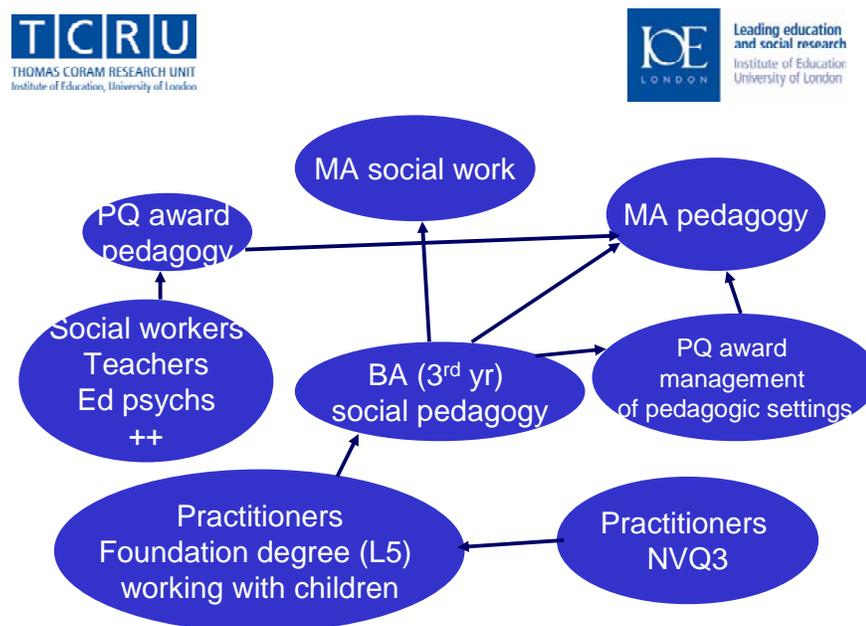
Overall, adapting social work degree programmes to encompass social pedagogy would require additional subject areas, such as arts and crafts and a greater emphasis on group processes and on collaboration. It would also require the integration of learning across different areas of knowledge.. Given that social work is primarily aimed at generic field social workers with a largely case management workload, not people specializing in group living and direct work with children and young people, it may be impossible to change the degree programme sufficiently to meet the demands of working in both residential care and in field social work. As elaborated below, it may be better to focus efforts on developing a post-qualifying award in pedagogy for residential specialists and for foster care support workers.

There are various ways to develop pedagogy through the English qualifications structures. Options include: joint social work/pedagogy degrees; optional pathways through the BA in social work; post-qualifying awards in social pedagogy; and transitional routes from early years and playwork NVQs (with their already strong emphasis on creative activities and the group) to social pedagogy. In discussing possible qualifications with interviewees, we asked about costs of running courses. In all cases, this turned out to be a difficult question to answer at interview, requiring a more detailed investigation of financial sources. For example, charges to students in

terms of fees do not necessarily include total institutional costs for running courses. Few of the proposals made below suggest new courses; most suggest reframing what is already in place, in which case, extra costs to candidates and employers would be minimal. We return to questions of costs and who pays, below.

We conclude, then, with a proposal, for discussion, for a qualifications framework that includes pedagogy. It retains an entry level that is 'accessible' to relatively unqualified candidates, but at the same time provides a clear career structure within children's work. This was put to the various professionals whom we interviewed. For the most part it was seen as a constructive proposal. A less positive response was given by some of the professionals connected to the NVQ system. As we reported earlier, they believed that higher qualifications took people out of direct work with children, and one interviewee thought that a more theoretical approach was less appropriate or 'less hands-on' for this work.

Figure 1: A proposed framework for qualification in social pedagogy



In this framework, the entry point for practitioners such as foster carers and residential care workers would be the NVQ3 or equivalent. They could then progress to a foundation degree in working with children (a general pedagogy course), and either return to practice or move onto a third year, which would give them a BA in social pedagogy. The BA would be particularly suitable for people working with children in residential or foster care, or in family support services such as children's centres.

From the BA, practitioners could develop academic studies through an MA in Pedagogy, or an MA in Social Work. Management and leadership could be developed through a post-qualifying award in the management of pedagogic settings,

building on the post-qualifying framework in Social Work. Qualified professionals in a relevant area such as social work, teaching or educational psychology could also access post-qualifying awards, including MAs, in pedagogy.

This framework offers the opportunity to link the qualifications for those working with looked after children to those in the children's sector more widely, to social work and its framework for continuing professional development, to leadership qualifications for the children's sector, and to the development of the academic field of pedagogy, such as exists in other European countries and is necessary for the renewal of knowledge.

The framework would also address the need, recognised in Every Child Matters, to support the flexibility of workers, who move between different types of children's sector work. It would provide a common core of knowledge and skills, and would facilitate inter-professional work in integrated services. The framework proposes keeping NVQs as an entry-level qualification, and extending practitioners beyond NVQ Level 3, through professional education rather than vocational awards.

Potentially, support for foster carers could be developed through this framework, with fostering support social workers undertaking post-qualifying training in pedagogy. In addition, it might be possible to broaden sources of support for foster carers, still within a pedagogic framework, by giving foster carers and their children access to children's centres, whose staff could also undertake pedagogy based foundation degrees in working with children.

Alongside this framework, further educational options might be to introduce summer schools, one-day introductory courses and outreach courses to make pedagogy familiar to practitioners nationwide.

Some estimates of costs and capacity for developing the framework

Here we address the question of developing capacity in the residential care workforce, in line with the proposals made above. This material has been prepared in response to comments from the commissioning departments, and follows headings given in these comments.

An overview of factors relevant to costs

Foundation degree students currently pay the undergraduate fee of £3k. In addition, the providing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) currently attract a supplementary fee, per student, from the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Employers need to support the student financially to attend, and to provide cover for their absence, including independent study time.

The position of funding for social care training is anomalous, compared to that for some other public sector professions. For example, the NHS meets the cost of places on certain nursing, midwifery or other health related degree courses, such as the NHS contracted foundation degree in Health & Social Care, at Manchester Metropolitan University. Teachers in training may be eligible for training bursaries for post qualifying courses and maintenance grants at undergraduate level; social work students on approved degree or diploma course may be entitled to non-repayable bursaries paid by the General Social Care Council.

With these examples in mind it is proposed that the funding strategy for training for work in residential care settings should be rethought, so as to attract entrants to the profession and to raise the capabilities and status of those already employed. Arguably, residential care, and other children's sector workers, are in professions parallel to nursing, teaching and social work. The question of who pays fees paid, and whether bursaries are available, needs consideration by the General Social Care Council.

An estimate of the number of residential care staff eligible to enter the foundation degree

Using a combination of national sources and information reported in *Working with Children in Care: European perspectives*⁹, we estimate there may be 20 – 24,000 practitioners in residential care for children and young people, including children's homes and secure accommodation in all employer sectors. To undertake the foundation degree, staff should be qualified to Level 3 (those with NVQ level 3 or A Levels). Evidence from the 2003 Social Care Workforce Survey suggests that approximately 50% of workers are so qualified. However, managers in residential homes can only release two to three staff per home at any one time. Taking into account both eligibility and availability would suggest that around 4,000 staff might be available to undertake a foundation degree each year.

These are tentative figures and need further investigation. They are provided to give some idea of scale.

Numbers of courses necessary

The foundation degree has class groups with a maximum of 25 students. This number is seen as optimum to ensure the efficiency of learning and the organisation of teaching. Assuming one group per institution, would require 160 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) running foundation degree programmes to meet the needs of around 4,000 residential care workers. A wide geographic distribution of courses is probably necessary to ensure accessibility to workers, who remain in post while studying. (It should also be borne in mind that not all those eligible would wish to take the degree, unless this were made a requirement.)

Existing interest in developing capacity

Introducing a new field requires time sufficient to develop both the necessary teaching expertise and new courses. Importantly, there is also a need to develop an understanding of a core social pedagogy curriculum that is of relevance to residential care practitioners, focusing on: direct practice with children, group work, child development, upbringing, arts and crafts, integrated children's services, law and policy, and children's rights.

There would need to be substantial investment of time and university personnel to achieve the distribution of courses necessary to address the education needs of all Level 3 residential social care workers.

⁹ In 2005, CSCI supplied information on the number of children's homes of different categories run by private, local authority, voluntary and NHS employers: there were 1,983. Petrie et al. (2006) found on average 11 residential social workers per home, based on 25 homes.

Some institutions are ahead in their knowledge of social pedagogy and course planning:

- University of Portsmouth – Working with Children foundation degree- social work and education departments – starting October 2007
- Institute of Education – Working with Children Foundation Degree –TCRU and others, starting January 2008
- University of Plymouth – a new degree in Early Childhood and Social Work, planned for 2007/8. The university is already running foundation degrees in partnership with local colleges. These courses feed graduates into the third year of degree courses at the University of Plymouth. Existing foundation degrees would need ‘minimal tweaking’ to be appropriate for residential social care workers
- University of Northampton – Children and Youth foundation degree. This has a strong European strand and a focus on working with families, to begin 2008/9, with 25 students. The department of education is also running an Early Years foundation degree, and a BA Early Childhood Studies, both of which attract students who will work in residential care. Both courses are currently expanding their capacity, in the light of requirements for Early Years Professional Status.
- London South Bank University, in conjunction with the London Borough of Redbridge, is planning for 2007 a foundation degree: Children and Young People’s Workforce Assistant Practitioner. Much of this will be delivered within the local authority, with input from the university Faculty of Health and Social Care.
- Childhood First runs five residential therapeutic facilities for traumatised children, together with a Placement and Family Support programme. There is an embedded training programme run jointly with Middlesex University at Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Post-Graduate Certificate and Diploma as well as MA levels.

Most of the courses listed above are not only targeting residential practitioners but are also aimed at children’s centre workers, childminders, youth workers, integrated community support team workers and so on. They are characterised by cross-departmental initiatives, responding to employer demand. Some institutions have indicated that they would be willing to consider developing a third BA year for foundation degree graduates in social pedagogy but a clear steer from government that this would be supported in policy would be desirable, if not necessary, for HEIs to develop and approve BA courses.

How long would it take to develop the qualifications envisaged?

The development, validation and marketing stages of foundation degree, BA, MA and post-qualifying courses within HEIs, takes at least one academic year, preferably four terms.

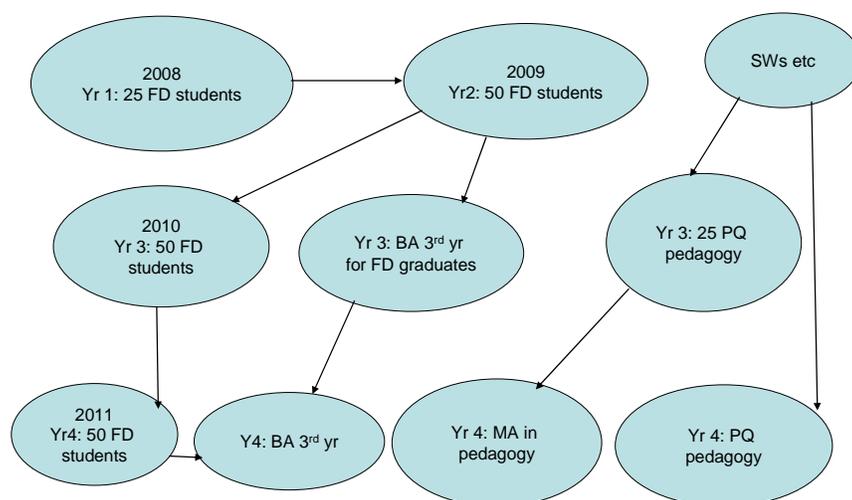
A possible model for growing the capacity to deliver the courses

To take one example, at the Institute of Education we expect to start the Foundation Degree in January 2008, with a third year in Social Pedagogy, for those who wish to continue to the BA, which will be available in 2010. A taught, plus dissertation, MA could be available for 2009. We could also develop a partnership with another

university (Middlesex University's Social Work department has expressed interest) to develop a post qualifying pedagogy course, in line with other such courses in social work, open to people from other professions for October 2008. To do this we would seek to develop a partnership with local employers, such as the London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, and Hammersmith and Fulham, who have expressed interest in pedagogy.

Additional resources would be needed, particularly expertise from other countries, such as Denmark and Germany, to supply teaching about pedagogy and external supervision of the courses. There would be some requirement, also, for Institute of Education staff development time.

Figure 2: The development of student capacity in pedagogy courses in one institution



FD– Foundation Degree; SW – qualified social workers; PQ – post qualifying

Figure 2 shows the estimated output of graduates from one institution, over four years:

- year 1 (2008): no graduates
- year 2: 25 Foundation Degree graduates
- year 3: 25 Foundation Degree graduates, 25 BA graduates; 25 post qualifying graduates
- year 4 and each year thereafter: 25 Foundation Degree graduates, 25 BA graduates; 25 post qualifying graduates; 20 MA graduates

These numbers are necessarily approximate, depending on uptake of courses, teaching group sizes, and the availability of teaching staff. It also addresses the employed workforce, not the potential workforce, for whom new full degree programmes would in time need to be developed.

Suggestions for developing capacity: a cascading model

To replicate the above structure across other institutions, a network of interested educationalists should be formed as a first step. A general principle would be that each of the first round of institutions develop contacts with two other institutions, to help develop their expertise in social pedagogy and shadow their route to validated courses:

Phase one: Five HEIs provide a foundation degree, with graduates emerging from 2009 – 2010. The same five institutions develop a) staff expertise in pedagogy (including overseas partnerships); b) third year BA and MA in pedagogy; c) post-qualifying courses in pedagogy/pedagogic leadership (for managers), with graduates emerging from 2010.

Phase two: Staff from the first five HEIs develop partnerships with ten others, who would repeat the process, so as to set up pedagogic qualifications, with courses starting in 2009, producing graduates from 2011.

Phase three: Similarly, staff from the now 15 HEIs, would develop partnerships with a further 30 institutions, with courses starting in 2010, producing graduates from 2012.

This model would provide 45 Higher Education Institutions with, assuming one group of 25 students each year, 1,125 foundation degree students graduating each year from 2012. There would also be post qualifying and MA students.

The differential between pedagogues and care workers in terms of salary costs

The study *Working with children in residential care: European perspectives* (Petrie et al, 2006) found little significant difference in salary between residential staff in England and pedagogues in Denmark and Germany once purchasing power parity was taken into account. There is at present no mechanism for supporting higher salaries for qualified staff in English residential care. Higher salaries may be desirable to retain staff with the qualifications detailed above. The position is comparable to policy efforts to improve the level of qualification among early childhood care and education staff, without any sustainable increase in pay as reward for obtaining higher level qualifications. The impact of this situation on staff retention is yet to be assessed.

The existing foundation for developing social pedagogy qualifications

The identification of institutions where there are developments sympathetic to social pedagogy, shown below, is preliminary, and is compiled on the basis of professional contacts. No systematic mapping has been undertaken, either on curricula or on the ethos of the courses. Any quantification of the existing foundation for developing social pedagogy qualifications must be cautious. However, there is some foundation for pedagogy in England. This is apparent in various educational strands, but they are nowhere brought together. There are currently no courses that focus on practitioner occupations across the children's sector. For example, Early Childhood degrees, Youth and Community Work degrees, some Social Work traditions, and some teacher education, especially Steiner teacher education, are all sympathetic to continental pedagogy in terms of curricula content and organisation of learning. But none encompasses the breadth and depth of pedagogy courses at degree level, and

none qualifies the graduate to work across the children's sector. There is deeply compartmentalised thinking about children's sector occupations. Moreover, none of the courses addresses residential care in particular.

The model proposed brings into the same framework vocational occupations and professions, bridging the gap between them. It is radical in calling for conceptual unity across children's sector occupations and across education for practice in children's settings. It is 'tweaking' in that it adapts to existing qualifications frameworks. The proposal to base the foundation degree on working with children more generally, is because:

- A more universal understanding of work with children, than one narrowly focused on residential care, is typical of the pedagogic approach. At the same time, the degree would address the specific characteristics and needs of individual student's work settings or practice placements;
- There are likely to be more applicants for such a course, than one aimed purely at residential care workers.

In Conclusion

We heard from the young people we interviewed that they want what pedagogy can provide.

During the time this study has been underway, interest has grown considerably in developing pedagogy in the UK, not least in the support for the pedagogic approach promoted in Care Matters. Evidence that pedagogues are already working in the UK has come to light. There is momentum on which to build, but in order to promote social pedagogy further, we suggest that serious attention should be given to developing and funding the following:

- 1. A qualifications framework based on Foundation Degrees in *working with children*, with a top-up third year, leading to a bachelor's degree in social pedagogy. Higher level qualifications can then build on this.
- 2. Programmes of training designed to familiarise participants with the concepts of social pedagogy. These would be for social care staff who work directly with children and young people, and for others such as educators in further and higher education, and local authority children's service staff.

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