EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1.0 Introduction

This is the first comprehensive national training strategy to analyse the skill needs of people working in the social care sector in England and to propose an action plan to improve both the qualification base and the quality of training over the coming five years. It is a response both to the *Modernising Social Services* White Paper (DH, 1998) and to the restructuring of further education (DfEE, 1999) and higher education (Dearing Report) arrangements.

ES.1.1 The strategy is placed within a vision of:

- a fully skilled and qualified workforce to meet:
  - the performance culture
  - National Service Standards
  - individual registration with the General Social Care Council
- a national qualifications framework matched to competences and job roles and underpinned by a comprehensive map of National Occupational Standards
- career pathways promoting lifelong learning through flexible training opportunities and Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning
- modern partnerships between service users, carers, employers and training providers to ensure all training and assessment meets the skill requirements of responsive and high quality services
- a tripartite approach between employers, employees and government to fund the necessary training to fill the knowledge, skills and qualifications gap outlined in the strategy
- a workforce which reflects the ethnic communities and diversity of background and perspectives in society as a whole.

ES. 2.0 The key themes of the strategy are:

- *improving workforce planning*
  - at local, regional and national levels
  - mapping existing skills and knowledge
  - predicting skill and knowledge shortages, gaps and skill mix issues
  - recruitment and retention strategies
  - collecting data to meet national criteria, including equal opportunities
  - by promoting best practice through inspection and review activities.
- *modernising quality assurance of training outcomes*
  - mapping training against National Occupational and Service Standards
  - benchmarking activity, e.g. via the National Training and Development Outcomes Index and the Quality Assurance Agency
  - working closely with awarding bodies including higher education institutions.

- *roles and responsibilities*
  - to achieve adequate resourcing of training and development by setting national levels of employer and employee contributions; seeking to influence government investment in the education and training of social care workers, greater influence over Training Support Programme (TSP) planning and Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) funding streams.
- *partnership*
  - to achieve joint and joined-up services
  - with carers and users to improve training outcomes
  - to ensure employees have the knowledge and skills to work collaboratively
  - to establish funding frameworks to achieve shared goals
  - to evaluate and monitor all training.

ES.3.0 The strategy emerges from a series of processes:

ES.3.1 A **skills analysis** which attempts to look forward as well as at current needs and which describes the skill shortages, gaps and mixes. This reveals a serious shortage of data on skills of the people who work in social care as well as a need for TOPSS to develop an appropriate Key Skills framework and a strategy to support and train new entrants to the workforce.

ES.3.2 The **skill shortages** include:
- occupational therapists
- part-time frontline staff in several areas
- DipSW holders to fill key posts created by new policies, e.g. *Quality Protects*
- Approved Social Workers
- managers at all levels
- people to work with drug and other substance misusers
- foster carers to work with older and more vulnerable children and young people.

ES.3.3 The **skill gaps** include:
- management at all levels
- leadership
- information management
- IT
- managing violent and challenging behaviours
- partnership working to underpin joint or joined-up services
- handling increasing dependency levels within a 'promoting independence' culture.

ES.3.4 The **skill mix issues** include:
- domiciliary care staff
- residential and nursing home staff
- heads of homes, now known as Registered Managers of residential care
- community care managers
- day centre staff.

ES.4.0 Identification of good practice—examples are introduced throughout the text in highlighted boxes and include:

- best practice in workforce planning
- excellence in achieving qualifications
- creative partnerships
- models of flexible training delivery.

ES.5.0 The qualifications/training supply side analysis highlights:

- the urgency of the TOPSS project to provide a framework to support and train new entrants to the workforce
- an immediate shortage of front line social workers and care staff, particularly in child care and domiciliary care
- a need for TOPSS to develop sector ownership of the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQ), National Traineeship (NT) and Modern Apprenticeship (MApp) schemes for the sector
- new initiatives to tackle perceived complexities in Post Qualifying (PQ) and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) assessment and progression
- the continuing need to promote flexible training provision and a national credit framework to facilitate career pathways
- an initiative to end uncertainty about the matching of qualifications to current service delivery standards and competences.

ES.6.0 A strategic plan to bridge the gap between skill demand and supply

TOPSS England is committed to twelve Strategic Objectives for 2000–2005:

ES.6.1 National Occupational Standards adopted as the foundation for social care work planning, job definition, skills assessment and audit, development of training provision and performance appraisal.

ES.6.2 A comprehensive framework of 'fit for purpose' National Occupational Standards in place to cover all job roles in the social care workforce.

ES.6.3 Local, regional and national workforce and training strategies based on regular skills audits against national criteria and skills targets

ES.6.4 Improved equal opportunities workforce data on age, gender, ethnicity, race, and disability to be collected, analysed and acted upon.

ES.6.5 The proportion of people from minority ethnic communities in the general population to be reflected at all levels of the social care workforce.

ES.6.6 All new entrants to the workforce to receive a structured induction which meets national foundation standards and progression requirements.

ES.6.7 25% of social care organisations to be recognised as Investors in People by 2005 and all employees subject to an individual training and development assessment and expected to share with employers personal responsibility for their own continuing development.

ES.6.8 All social care training provided and commissioned by social care employers to meet agreed quality standards and linked to national occupational standards and the national qualifications framework.

ES.6.9 All employers to allocate an increased proportion of their staffing budget to meet direct training costs—3% of staffing budget on training linked to qualifications by 2005. (See appendix 7 for clarification.)

ES.6.10 All employees to contribute personal study time and/or bursary or loan resources to achieve 15% of the total cost of their own qualifications by 2005. (See appendix 7 for clarification.)

ES.6.11 National annual targets and action plans to be in place for achieving agreed levels of qualified staff in all sectors of the workforce.

ES.6.12 Training strategies for all sectors of the workforce to take into account the requirements for joint service outcomes.

ES.7.0 A prioritised workplan for 2000 to 2005

The workplan addresses the immediate and medium term outcomes of the training strategy. It identifies the qualifications, skills development and training strategies for key groups of staff, including:

- registration and inspection staff
- heads of homes – now registered managers – adult services and children
- day centre managers
- unqualified front line staff in all settings
- domiciliary care managers and staff
- NVQ level 3 for mental health and child care staff.

It outlines a management development and leadership programme for the sector, and considers how TOPSS England needs to develop partnership work in all aspects of its strategy.

ES.8.0 Estimated costings

These are presented as a guide to the overall costs to the sector of contributing to the national learning targets programme (Department for Education and Employment) and for supplying priority groups with training and development linked to National Occupational Standards in preparation for registration with the new General Social Care Council.

ES.9.0 Key tasks 2000–2005:

- complete the National Occupational Standards framework linked to national service standards as they emerge
- complete the qualifications framework mapped to job roles
- agree a position statement on joint working
- map joint structures and links with all contributors to the *Health of the Nation* plan
- collection of improved skills-related and equal opportunities workforce data
- assist employers to recruit and retain staff
- create a regional commissioning structure for social work and social care education and training.

It is also necessary to develop a TOPSS England income generation strategy to support the implementation of this training strategy, including:

- agreeing levels of employer and employee contributions
- supporting bids to:
  - government departments
  - Europe at regional and national levels
  - charitable funds at regional and national levels.

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