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Men in childcare: how to fulfil the Coalition Government pledge to improve gender Balance in the workplace

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The Coalition: our programme for government:

"We support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children, and we want that support to be provided by a diverse range of providers, with a greater gender balance in the early years workforce."

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The extent of the challenge

- 2003 – 1% workforce male
- 2005 – 2-3% workforce male
- 2010 – 2% in full daycare and childminders, 1% in sessional care

Source: Childcare and Early Years Survey of Providers

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Previous initiatives

- 1998: Government green paper ‘Meeting the Childcare Challenge’ led to target set for Early Years Development and Childcare partnerships to increase the percentage of male childcare workers to 6% by 2004 – but not achieved.

- 2003: Daycare Trust published ‘Men’s work?: Changing the gender mix of the childcare and early years workforce’.

- 2009: CWDC communications campaign

- 2009: The Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) and Daycare Trust examined changes in the intervening period and held roundtable event.

- Local initiatives eg Milton Keynes and Surrey

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The benefits of men in early years

- Role models for children
  - boys & girls
  - representing men & challenging role
- Helpful for fathers' engagement
- Eradication of gender stereotypes
- Enhance pay & status

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Barriers

- Image – women's work
- Disapproval from society & own circle
- Information not given as part of careers advice in school or by Jobcentre Plus
- Low pay & low status
- Child protection & paedophilia
- Is part-time hours still an issue?
- Are job titles a barrier?

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What do parents think?

- CWDC survey in 2009 – 55% of parents in favour of male practitioners in early years settings
- MORI poll in 2003 - 77% of the public were in favour of men working in the profession.
- Most parents (84%) said that they were willing to place their children in a childcare setting where a male childcare worker is employed — though a third (34%) said other parents may be more suspicious.

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International comparison

- Scandinavia:

  Norway – target of 20% for 2010

  Denmark - 8% male
- Scotland
- European Men in Childcare network
- European Commission recommendation is to achieve 20 per cent male workers

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Recommendations

- Strategic approach needed
- Images of men with children – change culture
- Marketing of training to men
- Training for JC+, careers, recruitment
- Action plan at national & local levels – both colleges & providers
- More support to retain – need critical mass of 20%. Network of men in childcare and examples of good practice.

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What else?

- Will the recession have an impact?
- How can literature and communication best engage men?
- How can media be used e.g. to counter the fears of paedophilia?
- How can FE and HE be encouraged to engage and develop training?
- How can settings be more attractive to men? And support men better?

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Who should be doing what?

- Providers
- FE/HE
- Local authorities
- Jobcentre Plus
- Provider bodies
- Central government

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Your views...

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