

NIACE Research and Development



Key Findings



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The Impact of Local Authority Reorganisation on Family Learning Services

Abstract

This project for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) aimed to discover the views of local authority Family Learning managers and co-ordinators in England in relation to local government reorganisation, as part of moves towards integrated children's services as stipulated in the green paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003) and the *Children Act* (2004).

Research methodology:

- ❖ The views of family learning managers/co-ordinators in England were elicited by means of a short survey sent electronically to all 150 managers/co-ordinators in January 2006. It was intended to serve as a follow up to similar research conducted in 2005 for the Local Government Association, which considered family learning and adult and community learning service locations.
- ❖ Participants were asked to state the name of the department and directorate in which the family learning service sat within their local authority. They were also asked to consider the anticipated impacts this change had had or might have on the development of the service.
- ❖ A total of 65 completed questionnaires were received, representing a response rate of 43.3 per cent.

Key Findings

The main conclusions of the project are:

- ❖ In almost all instances the Family Learning Service was situated within an Adult Education or Community Learning service or department. Twenty-seven family learning services were located within a directorate focussed on children, whilst 36 were located within a directorate focussed on learning and/or culture and/or community and/or regeneration.
- ❖ Directorate location appeared to be the key factor in the opinions of managers in terms of the future development of the service. The comments from those responding to this survey appear to suggest that it was family learning services situated within children's services that had the most to gain in terms of the partnership opportunities presented to them.

Family learning services located outside of children's services were the most concerned about how partnerships and existing relationships might be affected by the reorganisation.

- ❖ Strategic positioning appeared to be the most crucial factor in the successful facilitation of family learning across local authorities. Representation on committees and policy and strategy groups appeared to be one way to counter the location of family learning within services and directorates with an educational or learning focus.
- ❖ NIACE would like to thank all the family learning managers who kindly completed the questionnaire.

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Requests for 'Key Findings' in other formats, such as large print, are welcome. We would be pleased to consider your request.



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