care inspectorate

How well are we improving the lives of children and young people?

A guide to evaluating services using quality indicators

Contents

We inspect jointly with Healthcare
Improvement Scotland, Education
Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate
of Constabulary for Scotland.

1. Introduction

This guide provides a framework of quality indicators to support self-evaluation which leads to improvement across services for children, young people and families. It places the child at the centre and is applicable to the full range of services which contribute to the wellbeing of all children, young people and their families. It aims to support successful implementation of Getting it right for every child[1] and integrated approaches to improving the lives of the most vulnerable children and young people. The quality indicators take account of national policy and drivers aimed at delivering tangible improvements in outcomes and reducing inequalities for Scotland's vulnerable children including the Early Years Collaborative, More Choices, More Chances, These are our Bairns: A guide for community planning partnerships on being a good corporate parent. It also takes account of key messages in the Report on the Future Delivery of Public Services. These quality indicators also take account of the range of provisions set out in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act which puts in place new legislation aimed at providing greater support for children, young people and families. This includes wide-ranging reforms to help Scotland become 'the best place in the world to grow up' such as more flexible early learning and childcare for young children, improved advice and help for all children and young people from birth up to leaving school through access to a single point of contact known as the Named Person, a single planning process for children and young people who need support from a range of services, and continuing care and support for young adults leaving care. It also includes new duties on the public sector to promote children's rights and for local authorities and health boards to collaborate with others on strategic plans for children and young people.

The framework of quality indicators is designed to provide a complementary approach to robust self-evaluation and independent scrutiny. Using the same set of quality indicators reinforces the partnership between internal and external evaluation of services.

This guide is primarily for Community Planning Partnerships and those with strategic responsibility for the planning, delivery and evaluation of services for children, young people and their families. It will assist Community Planning Partnerships to establish a shared understanding of wellbeing and set challenging targets for improving outcomes for children and young people. The content is relevant to a wide range of organisations in the public, independent and third sectors. The framework of quality indicators does not replace existing approaches to self-evaluation and quality improvement which are already embedded, for example, How good is our school?, How well do we protect children and meet their needs?, A guide to supported self-evaluation: building excellent social work services. Rather, it is designed to enable the evaluations and supporting evidence from a range of self-evaluation activities across the full range of services for children, young people and families to be brought together.

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[1] The Scottish Government is committed to giving all children and young people in Scotland the best possible start in life and a national approach to improve outcomes. Getting it right for every child is a way of working to provide co-ordinated, proportionate and timely support. It means working across organisational boundaries and putting children, young people and their families at the heart of decisionmaking.

2. Evaluating services for children and young people using quality indicators

The process of self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is central to continuous improvement. It is not a bureaucratic or mechanistic process. Rather, it is a reflective process through which Community Planning Partnerships and strategic planning groups for services for children and young people get to know how well they are doing and identify the best way to improve their services.

This framework of quality indicators is designed to help this by:
* encouraging us to reflect upon practice and identify strengths and areas for improvement
* recognising the work we are doing which has a positive impact on the lives of children and their families
* identifying where quality needs to be maintained, where improvement is needed and where we should be working towards achieving excellence
* allowing us to inform stakeholders about the quality of services for children, young people and families.

Self-evaluation is forward looking. It is about change and improvement, leading to well considered innovation in service delivery. It is based on our professional reflection, challenge and support and involves us in taking informed decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for children, young people and families. Rather than a one-off activity which is done in preparation for inspection, it is a dynamic process which should go on throughout the year. It establishes a baseline from which to plan to improve outcomes for children and promotes a collective commitment to set priorities for improvement. Used effectively, continuous self- evaluation helps us to monitor progress and impact.

Self-evaluation for improvement broadly focuses on answering three key questions.

* **How good are we now?**

This question should help partners identify strengths within and across service delivery and begin to consider areas for improvement.

* **How do we know?**

In considering this question, services should be gathering evidence and developing auditing processes which illustrate how well the lives of children and young people are improving. There are a number of sources of evidence which can inform partners and services about the quality of their work.

* **How good can we be?**

This question should help to take forward what we have found so far and to develop a set of clear and tangible priorities for improvement.

The quality framework

The framework is consistent and can be used in conjunction with a number of quality models and awards including Customer Service Excellence, Investors in People, the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and aspects of ISO 9000. The approach is also consistent with the principles of Best Value, the statutory framework provided within the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003. It can also be used in conjunction with the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) which provides a useful tool for corporate self-assessment within public service organisations.

The framework is arranged under six high-level questions which the Care Inspectorate and other scrutiny bodies have adopted for evaluative purposes. These questions will be at the core of the joint inspections of services for children and young people introduced at the request by Scottish Ministers from 2012.

For the purposes of self-evaluation, partners are asked, individually and collectively, to answer six simple but powerful questions.

- What key outcomes have we achieved?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- How good is our delivery of services?
- How good is our management?
- How good is our leadership?
- What is our capacity for improvement?

These questions are set out in a framework of 10 key areas with one or more being linked to each question. These key areas are numbered one to 10, then broken down further into 22 quality indicators shown in section 3 and explained in the diagram below.

High level question	What key outcomes have we achieved?
Key area	1. Key performance outcomes
Quality indicator	1.1 Improving the wellbeing of children and young people

The quality indicators provide a toolkit to help with evaluating and improving the quality of services children, young people and families. The 22 quality indicators cover the key aspects of the work of Community Planning Partnerships in the delivery of services for children, young people and families and include a global indicator on the capacity for continued improvement.

3. The quality indicators

The framework of quality indicators for evaluating services for children and young people

What key outcomes have we achieved?	How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?	How good is our delivery of services for children young people, and families?
1. Key performance outcomes	**2. Impact on children, young people and families**	**5. Delivery of key processes**
1.1 Improvements in the wellbeing of children and young people.	2.1 Impact on children and young people 2.2 Impact on families	5.1 Providing help and support at an early stage 5.2 Assessing and responding to risks and needs 5.3 Planning for individual children 5.4 Involving individual children, young people and families
	3. Impact on staff	
	3.1 Impact on staff	
	4. Impact on the community	
	4.1 Impact on communities	
10. What is our capacity for improvement? Global judgement based on an evaluation of the framework of quality indicators		

How good is our operational management?	How good is our leadership?
6. Policy, service and development and planning	**9. Leadership and direction**
6.1 Policies, procedures and legal measures 6.2 Planning and improving services 6.3 Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders. 6.4 Performance management and quality assurance	9.1 Visions, values and aims 9.2 Leadership of strategy and direction 9.3 Leadership of people 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change.
7. Management and support of staff	
7.1 Recruitment, deployment and joint working 7.2 Staff training, development and support	
8. Partnership and resources	
8.1 Management of resources 8.2 Commissioning arrangements 8.3 Securing improvement through self-evaluation	

4. Table of quality indicators and themes

What key outcomes have we achieved?

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
1. Key performance outcomes		
1.1	Improvements in the wellbeing of children and young people	• Improving trends through prevention and early intervention. • Improvements in outcomes for children and young people. • Improvements in the life chances of vulnerable children and young people.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
2. Impact on children, young people and families		
2.1	Impact on children and young people	The extent to which children, young people get the best start in life and are: • safe • healthy • achieving • nurtured • active • respected • responsible • included.
2.2	Impact on families	The extent to which the wellbeing of families is strengthened and they experience: • increased resilience • greater confidence in parenting • earlier help and support.
3. Impact on staff		
3.1	Impact on staff	The extent to which staff are: • motivated • involved • valued.
4. Impact on communities		
4.1	Impact on communities	The extent to which the quality of life in local communities and communities of interest improves and they experience: • participation and empowerment • increased capacity • confidence in services.

How good is our delivery of services for children, young people and families?

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
5. Delivery of key processes		
5.1	Providing help and support at an early stage	• Recognising children, young people and families who need additional support. • Sharing and making use of information. • Timely and effective intervention.
5.2	Assessing and responding to risks and needs	• Initial response. • Chronologies of significant events. • Assessment of risks and needs.
5.3	Planning for individual children and young people	• Quality of plans. • Reviewing progress, joint planning and decision-making. • Securing stable and caring environments.
5.4	Involving individual children, young people and families	• Seeking and recording views. • Participation in key processes. • Addressing dissatisfaction and complaints.

How good is our operational management?

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
6. Policy, service development and planning		
6.1	Policies, procedures and legal measures	• Range and coherence. • Reviewing and updating. • Fulfilment of statutory duties.
6.2	Planning and improving services	• Integrated children's services planning. • Child protection committee business planning. • Managing and mitigating risks.
6.3	Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders	• Involvement in policy, planning and service development. • Communication and consultation. • Promoting the rights of children and young people.
6.4	Performance management and quality assurance	• Setting and reviewing performance measures and standards. • Systems, processes and reporting arrangements. • Reaching targets, achieving consistency.

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
7. Management and support of staff		
7.1	Recruitment, deployment and joint working	• Meeting human resource needs. • Deployment to achieve planned results. • Multi-disciplinary working and team work.
7.2	Staff training, development and support	• Competence and confidence. • Training and development. • Advice, guidance and supervision.
8. Partnership and resources		
8.1	Management of resources	• Transparency of financial planning and spend. • Joint deployment and expenditure. • Achieving best value.
8.2	Commissioning arrangements	• Balancing direct provision and purchased services. • Joint funding and commissioning. • Monitoring and reviewing quality.
8.3	Securing improvement through self-evaluation	• Prioritising, planning and co-ordinating self-evaluation. • Involving stakeholders. • Securing continuous improvement.

How good is our leadership?

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
9. Leadership and direction		
9.1	Vision, values and aims	• Coherence of vision, values and aims. • Sharing and sustaining the vision. • Equality and inclusion.
9.2	Leadership of strategy and direction	• Collaborative leadership. • Prioritising prevention and early intervention. • Balancing stability and the need for change.
9.3	Leadership of people	• Developing leadership capacity. • Building and sustaining relationships. • Promoting teamwork.
9.4	Leadership of improvement and change	• Continuous improvement. • Learning for change. • Transformational change.

10. What is our capacity for improvement?
A global judgement based on an evaluation of the framework of quality indicators.

What key outcomes have we achieved?

4. The quality indicators with key features and illustrations

1. Key performance outcomes

QI 1.1 Improvements in the wellbeing of children and young people

Themes
- Improving trends through prevention and early intervention.
- Improvements in outcomes for children and young people.
- Improvements in the life chances of vulnerable children and young people.

Key features

This quality indicator relates to demonstrable improvements partners make in the wellbeing of children and young people. It considers the extent to which partners are successfully tackling inequalities and closing outcome gaps through effective prevention and early intervention. It is about the performance of community planning partners in improving children and young people's wellbeing over time against an agreed set of outcome indicators. It focuses on tangible results in improving the life chances of vulnerable children and young people.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We can demonstrate a wide range of improving trends as a result of our very effective approaches to prevention and early intervention. We are successfully tackling the consequences of child poverty and closing outcome gaps in our different communities.	We have limited measures of improving trends as a result of our approaches to prevention and early intervention. Our progress in tackling the consequences of child poverty and inequality in the longer term is unclear. Outcome gaps between our different communities are, for the most part, unchanged. Our early years collaborative demonstrates limited effectiveness in improving trends.
We are improving trends in our outcome indicators year on year. Our results compare increasingly well when benchmarked against our comparators and national performance information. We are on course with the ambitious targets we have set ourselves to break the cycle of inter-generational child poverty and inequality. We can demonstrate sustained improvements in the extent to which our children and young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.	We can demonstrate improved performance in key processes. We do not have a sufficient focus on measuring improvements in the wellbeing of children and young people. We have not established baseline measures from which to demonstrate year-on-year improvements in our performance. We do not take sufficient remedial action to ensure the targets we set ourselves are met. We mostly report on outputs rather than outcome indicators. We do not challenge ourselves sufficiently through benchmarking our performance against our comparators and national performance information.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Our results show improving trends in the wellbeing of a wide range of vulnerable children and young people. The child protection committee can demonstrate that our children and young people are better protected. As corporate parents, we are making notable progress over time in improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.	We have limited information on improving trends in the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people. We have made progress in improving our services for children and young people in need of protection and looked after away from home. However, we do not measure what difference this makes to the wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

2. Impact on children, young people and families

2.1 Impact on children and young people

Themes
The extent to which children and young people get the best start in life and are:
- **S**afe
- **H**ealthy
- **A**chieving
- **N**urtured
- **A**ctive
- **R**espected
- **R**esponsible
- **I**ncluded

Key features
This indicator relates to the impact of services on optimising the wellbeing of children and young people using the SHANARRI indicators. It focuses on the difference services are making to their lives and life opportunities.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Safe Children and young people are very well protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community. They are assisted to be free from all forms of exploitation and are well-equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves safe.	Children and young people are not always fully protected from abuse, neglect or harm. They may be exposed to unsuitable situations at home, in school or in the community. Some children and young people are vulnerable to exploitation and do not have sufficient awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Healthy Children and young people enjoy high standards of physical and mental health. They make well-informed choices and lead healthy lifestyles.	Children and young people's access to the healthcare they need is restricted. They do not always make sufficient progress towards optimum physical and mental wellbeing. Children and young people get limited help to adopt healthy lifestyle choices.
Achieving Children and young people are equipped with the skills, confidence and self-esteem to progress successfully in their learning and development and achieve their full potential.	Children and young people do not always have the skills, confidence and self-esteem to make sufficient and sustained progress in their learning and development.
Nurtured Children and young people thrive as a result of secure attachments, trusting relationships and caring experiences. Children and young people who are not able to live at home benefit from consistent and trusting relationships with carers and staff who know them well and provide continuity in their lives.	The wellbeing of children and young people is diminished substantially as a result of inconsistency or insecurity in care givers or living arrangements.
Active Children and young people are physically active and benefit from opportunities to explore the world around them. They experience healthy growth and development	Children and young people are not always achieving healthy growth and development. Opportunities to benefit from play, recreation and sport are limited.
Respected Children and young people know their rights and are confident in exercising these. They are able to express their views and be involved meaningfully in decisions which affect them.	Children and young people have a limited understanding of their rights and do not know how to exercise them. They do not have sufficient opportunities to express their views or to become involved in decisions which affect them.
Responsible Children and young people take on appropriate levels of responsibility and become responsible citizens. They benefit from consistent boundaries, guidance and supervision.	Children and young people experience too much or too little responsibility. They do not always get the guidance and supervision they need to act as responsible citizens.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Included Children and young people are valued contributors to the communities in which they live and learn. They have a strong sense of identity and feel they belong. Children and young people acquire the strengths and resilience they need to overcome any inequalities they experience.	Children and young people do not always receive the encouragement they need to contribute to the communities in which they live and learn. They feel excluded and are not supported well enough to overcome the inequalities they experience.

2.2 Impact on families

Themes
The extent to which family wellbeing is strengthened and they experience:
- increased resilience
- greater confidence in parenting
- earlier help and support.

Key features
This quality indicator relates to the impact of services on family wellbeing. It considers the extent to which families are helped to be resilient and can meet their own needs. It focuses on the level of confidence parents and carers have in their parenting. It is concerned with the impact of early and effective intervention in strengthening families.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Families experience helpful and reliable support from an extensive range of accessible, high quality services which are universally available. They are valued as important contributors to ensuring positive outcomes for their children and young people. They work as equal partners alongside services to secure flexible help and support to prevent their difficulties getting worse. As a result, their resilience is increasing and their reliance on specialist support is diminishing.	Families are sometimes isolated, and do not always find it easy to connect with appropriate support networks. Families have access to a limited range of support services. These are not always flexible enough to meet their needs and are of variable quality. Families experience gaps in support services and their need for more specialist support is increased when they do not get the help they need early enough.
Families benefit from very effective support which helps them to promote the wellbeing of very young children from pre-birth. Support for parenting is readily available in different ways to suit different lifestyles and needs. Advice and guidance is well-matched to the needs of parents and carers and available at every age and stage. Parental confidence and parenting skills are increasing.	The support provided during pregnancy is not sufficient in helping families prepare for parenthood. Families do not have enough opportunities to increase their knowledge of child development and confidence in bringing up children and young people. Those who most need help to develop their parenting skills do not always get appropriate support. Advice and guidance for parents during their child's teenage years is too limited.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Families are very well supported as soon as any difficulties arise. They get help early and frequently enough at times, in places and in ways to meet their needs. Vulnerable families benefit from personalised support aimed at helping them to bring up their children successfully. Those parents and carers who are reluctant, for whatever reason, to seek help benefit from staff reaching out to them. Families get the help they need for as long as it is needed.	Families too often reach a crisis point before getting help. The needs of some vulnerable families are not met well as appropriate help is not always available when it is needed. Support services are not sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of some families, particularly when additional help is needed in the evenings and at weekends.

3. Impact on staff

3.1 Impact on staff

Themes
The extent to which staff are:
- motivated
- involved
- valued.

Key features
This indicator considers the extent to which staff are committed and motivated to achieving the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. It relates to how well they are involved in the ongoing development of services. It considers how well their contribution to improving the lives of children, young people and families is recognised and valued.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Staff are energised by the vision and visible leadership of services for children. They have a strong and shared commitment to improving the wellbeing of children, young people and families and to tackling inequalities. They have a shared understanding of children's wellbeing and apply this to their work confidently. Staff have a clear understanding about their roles and responsibilities as well as those of their colleagues. They are highly motivated to work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people.	Staff motivation is more connected to team working and peer support than to achieving the vision for children, young people and families. Staff are not confident about joint working with colleagues in other services. The effectiveness of integrated working is diminished by unresolved tensions in relationships across services. Staff feel unsupported in their efforts to close outcome gaps and they are unclear about what is expected from them. As a consequence there is an adverse impact on morale.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Staff are involved meaningfully in the ongoing development of services for children, young people and families. They are engaged purposefully in promoting good practice and identifying areas for improvement. Staff test out new and improved ways of working and take pride in the contribution they make. They understand fully what they need to do within their own service and with colleagues across services to further improve the quality and effectiveness of their work.	Staff have insufficient opportunity to contribute meaningfully to service development. They do not feel their views are taken into account. They are not engaged in promoting good practice or identifying areas for improvement. They do not understand the rationale for proposed changes to their way of working and are sometimes reluctant to implement these.
Staff experience a high level of satisfaction in working together to deliver services for children and young people. They feel valued and their contribution recognised. They are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills which has a significant positive impact on the quality of their work. They are confident in identifying the difference their work is making to the wellbeing of children, young people and families.	Staff experience varying levels of satisfaction in the quality of service they are delivering. While they work conscientiously on their own and with their immediate colleagues, they experience barriers to joint working with colleagues across services. Opportunities to improve practice are limited. Staff feel that they are not deployed effectively and under-valued.

4. Impact on the community

QI 4.1 Impact on the community

Themes
The extent to which the quality of life in local communities and communities of interest improves and they experience:
- participation and empowerment
- increased capacity
- confidence in services.

Key features
This indicator considers the extent to which communities participate in planning and are co-producers of local services for children, young people and families. It relates to how well resources are put to best use to build community capacity. It has a focus on the extent to which there is public confidence in services for children, young people and families.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
There are high levels of participation in the design and delivery of local services for children, young people and families. Communities of interest and minority groups are empowered to be involved fully in co-producing services to meet their particular needs. Positive attitudes and behaviour towards socially and culturally excluded families are encouraged.	Local communities are not engaged sufficiently in the design and delivery of services. Communities of interest and minority groups are not always identified or involved meaningfully in the planning services to meet their needs. Limited knowledge or involvement of local communities is restricting opportunities to tackle inequalities and social exclusion.
A range of community groups is building capacity by strengthening the skills, competencies and abilities of children, young people and families. Children, young people and families live in increasingly safer communities. Anti-social and harmful behaviour is reducing. There is a high degree of success in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people within their local schools and communities.	Community groups and local voluntary organisations do not always get the encouragement or support they need to play a key role in building community capacity. Youth crime and anti-social behaviour has a detrimental impact on local communities. Support for vulnerable children, young people and families has not been sustained or has not been successful in enhancing their skills, competencies and abilities.
The public has a high degree of confidence in the effectiveness of services to meet the needs of children, young people and families. Members of the public are alert to concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. They have a high degree of awareness about how to report concerns and are confident that children and young people will get the help they need as a result. Children, young people and families live in increasingly safer communities and young people are viewed positively. Parents and carers have very positive experiences of bringing up children and young people in their local area.	There is a lack of public confidence in services for children, young people and families. They are not viewed as matching the needs of communities. Members of the public are unclear about when and how to report their comments and concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. They lack confidence that these will be taken seriously. Many families do not rate their local area as a good place to bring up children and help young people flourish.

How good is our delivery of services for children and young people and families?

5. Delivery of key processes

QI 5.1 Providing help and support at an early stage

Themes
- Recognising children, young people and families who need additional help and support.
- Sharing and making use of information.
- Timely and effective intervention.

Key features
This indicator focuses on the extent to which staff recognise that something may be getting in the way of a child or young person's wellbeing. It considers how well information is shared and used to make decisions. It looks at the timeliness and effectiveness of the help and support provided in preventing difficulties arising or increasing.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We carefully identify children, young people and families who need advice and guidance at an early stage to help them build on their own strengths and resilience. We are skilful in recognising the warning signs that something may be getting in the way of an individual child or young person's wellbeing. Staff who work primarily with adults are attentive to the needs of children and young people and are very alert to circumstances which may have an adverse impact on them.	We do not always identify children, young people and families who may benefit from early advice and support. We miss opportunities to help them build on their own strengths. We sometimes overlook the warning signs that something may be getting in the way of a child or young person's wellbeing. Staff who work primarily with adults are not sufficiently attentive to the needs of children and young people. They do not always recognise circumstances which may have an adverse impact on a child or young person's wellbeing.
We are guided by clear protocols and procedures which take account of best practice in information-sharing within and across services. We have very effective systems for recording our observations and concerns about children and young people. We are confident in identifying those circumstances in which we may share information about children, young people and families with and without prior consent. We understand fully the significance of the information we share and the actions that flow from this.	The quality of recording of observations and concerns about children and young people is variable. We are not always sure what information we can share with protocols for sharing and managing information are not comprehensive or clearly understood. Sometimes we overlook the best interests of the child or young person and share confidential information without ensuring it is used responsibly, or, do not pass on information to ensure the safety or wellbeing of a child or young person.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We promptly arrange helpful advice and support for all children, young people and families when they need it. We promote wellbeing very effectively in our day-to-day work and have a strong focus on preventing difficulties arising or increasing. Vulnerable families benefit from flexible support which is tailored to meet their individual needs. We build trusting relationships with parents who find it difficult, for whatever reason, to accept help. We provide very effective and flexible interventions which are designed to respond quickly and meet the individual requirements of children, young people and families. We successfully seek out and draw upon other relevant sources of help when appropriate.	Our capacity to provide prompt advice and support is restricted. We do not give enough emphasis to preventative approaches or to providing help and support at an early stage which is tailored to meet the individual needs of children, young people and families. There are gaps and shortfalls in our support for families. We provide effective support within our own service and in our day-to-day work but are not always effective in seeking out and drawing upon other sources of help. Help and support is more readily available and accessible to some children, young people and families than others. Some wait too long or their circumstances deteriorate before they get the help and support they need.

QI 5.2 Assessing and responding to risks and needs

Themes
- Initial response.
- Chronologies of significant events.
- Assessments risks and needs.

Key features
This indicator considers the effectiveness of the initial response to children and young people when there are concerns about their safety or wellbeing. It considers the effectiveness of chronologies to identify patterns of significant events or experiences. It focuses on the quality of assessments and how well these inform decision making.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have very effective measures for considering the circumstances of a child or young person when there are concerns about their safety or wellbeing. We promptly share and jointly review all relevant information. We quickly identify risks and carefully consider what action we need to take in the best interests of the child or young person. When appropriate, we take immediate action to ensure the safety of children and young people when they are in need of protection, at risk of significant harm or when they pose a risk to others.	Our arrangements for considering the concerns about the safety or wellbeing of children and young people are not consistent, or do not involve all relevant services. Decisions about how best to respond are not made with reference to all of the relevant information or with a full appreciation of the risks. We delay taking action unnecessarily to help a child or young person while we are carrying out assessments.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Our chronologies of significant events in a child or young person's life start at birth and are maintained throughout their childhood. We compile carefully significant events or factors which impact on wellbeing. We use chronologies very effectively to identify concerns or an accumulation of experiences which may adversely affect the child or young person's wellbeing. We integrate our chronologies when we identify a child or young person who needs help from more than one agency.	We compile chronologies for individual children and young people but these are not helpful enough in identifying events or an accumulation of experiences which may adversely affect the child or young person's wellbeing. They do not always start at birth or chart significant events throughout the child or young person's life. Too often they contain details of meetings and contacts and lose focus on factors which have an adverse impact on a child or young person's wellbeing.
Our systems and processes help us to gather information across all relevant services when we assess risks and needs. All relevant staff, including those who work primarily with adults, contribute ably to assessments. Our assessments are of a consistently high quality. We take a holistic approach to assessing risks and needs addressing all aspects of wellbeing. We base our assessments on recognised frameworks such as the National Practice Model and review and update them regularly. We make very effective use of these to reach informed judgements about the risks to and needs of each child or young person. Our assessments are comprehensive and we use these very well to develop plans which reduce risks and meet needs. They help us make sound and timely decisions about children's and young people's lives. We arrange for more comprehensive or specialist assessments when these are required and complete these without delay.	We do not consistently gather relevant information from all appropriate sources. Different services carry out separate assessments so that a child, young person or family may have to tell their story several times. Staff who work primarily with adults do not always contribute consistently or effectively to assessments of children and young people. The quality of our assessments of risks and needs is variable and we do not routinely consider all aspects of a child or young person's wellbeing. The tools we use to support us in our assessments do not help us to come to informed judgements about the risks and needs of each child or young person. They do not give us enough evidence to underpin well-informed decision-making. We may recognise that more comprehensive or specialist assessments are needed, but do not have the skills to carry these out, or we delay making the necessary arrangements for these to be completed.

QI 5.3 Planning for individual children and young people

Themes
- Quality of plans.
- Reviewing progress, joint planning and decision-making.
- Securing stable and caring environments.

Key features
This quality indicator considers the quality of plans to reduce risks, meet needs and improve wellbeing. It takes account of the effectiveness of arrangements for reviewing progress, joint planning and decision-making. This indicator has a particular focus on securing nurturing and stable environments for children and young people who are looked after.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Our plans for individual children and young people are very effective in addressing all aspects of their wellbeing. Our plans are of a consistently high quality and link carefully to our assessments of risks and needs. We ensure that all the relevant people, including children, young people, parents and carers contribute to the development of the plan and diligently identify who will do what and by when. We clearly set out what difference our actions are expected to make to the child or young person's circumstances in both the short and longer term. We are creative in our approaches to make sure that children and young people get the help they need even when resources are scarce or unavailable. We set out a clear contingency plan to meet the needs of children and young people when sufficient progress is not made or sustained.	We prepare plans for individual children and young people but the quality is variable. We develop a number of different and unconnected plans for the same child or young person. Some of our plans do not link well to assessments of risks and needs. Our actions are often too vague and we leave timescales open ended. We are not always explicit about what needs to change to improve the child or young person's circumstances and wellbeing. We do not always ensure that each child within a family unit has their own individualised plan. We are not always clear about what we will do next when the circumstances of children and young people do not improve quickly enough.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Our planning is very effective in improving the wellbeing of children and young people. Review and decision making meetings are streamlined. They take place regularly and at required intervals. We ensure that there is sufficient independent challenge to drive progress forwards within timescales appropriate to the individual child or young person. We quickly take account of changes in circumstances and follow-through on aspects of the plan where progress is slow. We record our meetings and decisions appropriately. We promptly make the record available to all relevant staff and ensure that they are well-informed about progress and any significant changes.	Overall, the effectiveness of our planning is limited in improving the wellbeing of children and young people. We hold different meetings about the same child or young person causing unnecessary duplication. Meetings do not always take place at specified intervals or involve all relevant staff. They are frequently cancelled or rearranged at short notice. Staff are not held to account when actions have not been carried out as agreed. We do not follow through effectively when agreed timescales are not met or there has been insufficient progress. Meetings and decisions are not always recorded well or communicated promptly to all relevant staff.
Our plans for children and young people who are looked after have a strong focus on securing nurturing and stable environments. Our plans clearly set out what we need to do within the home, school or community to compensate for adverse experiences. We take timely and effective action when a child or young person's wellbeing is at risk because their needs are no longer being met within a family or care placement. Our plans are effective in minimising periods of uncertainty for children and young people placed in temporary care situations. Our young people are provided with a range of suitable accommodation options and support when leaving care or when they become homeless. We provide appropriate and timely support to reduce the risk of placement break down including post adoption support services.	Our plans do not focus enough on securing nurturing and stable environments for individual children and young people. On occasion, we continue to manage a child or young person's plan in environments which are no longer conducive to their safety and wellbeing. Some children and young people experience poorer outcomes because they are accommodated too far away from their families, schools and communities. Our plans are not always effective in minimising periods of uncertainty or in reducing the length of time children and young people live in temporary care arrangements. Our young people are provided with limited accommodation and support when leaving care or when they become homeless. We do not always respond quickly or appropriately to prevent placement breakdown.

QI 5.4 Involving individual children, young people and families

Themes
- Seeking and recording views.
- Participation in key processes.
- Addressing dissatisfaction and complaints.

Key features
This indicator is concerned with how well we elicit and represent the views and wishes of children, young people and families. It considers the extent to which children, young people and families are informed, included and enabled to participate meaningfully. It looks at how well we address dissatisfaction and complaints.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We listen carefully to children, young people and families and have a thorough understanding of their views, wishes, and expectations. We ensure that those with learning or communication difficulties or for whom English is not their first language, are able to express their views fully. We accurately record what they say and take this into account in our assessments, plans and decision-making. We regularly revise and update our understanding of the views, wishes, and expectations of children, young people and families.	We listen to children, young people and families but our understanding of the views, wishes and expectations is limited. We do not always give enough support to those with communication difficulties or those for whom English is not their first language. We do not always record what children, young people and families say accurately or take their views into account fully when decisions are made. We do not revisit our understanding of their views, wishes and expectations regularly.
We acknowledge and respect diversity and difference. We treat children, young people and families in a fair and inclusive manner. We provide helpful information about our services and describe our processes in ways which are transparent and easy to understand. We tell children, young people and families about the information we hold. We have a shared approach to managing and recording their consent to share information. We make sure that our communications, records of meetings and reports are provided in a way which is relevant and easily understood. We ensure that children, young people and families are included meaningfully in our processes and in decisions about their lives and the help they need, unless this compromises their own safety or that of others. We provide all the necessary support, including independent advocacy, to enable children, young people and families to participate fully.	Our approaches to providing services to children, young people and families do not fully acknowledge diversity and difference. Information about our services is not easily understood and does not assist children, young people and families to exercise their rights and responsibilities. We are not consistent in our approaches to obtaining consent to share information from children, young people and families. We do not always arrange our meetings at times, in places or ways which take into account the needs and wishes of individual children, young people and families. We are not consistent in our approaches to helping children, young people and families participate in important processes of assessment and decision-making. Independent support and advocacy for children, young people and families is not available routinely.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We encourage children, young people and families to tell us what they think about our services. We use this information well to act upon matters we can address quickly to improve their individual experiences. We provide helpful information about how they can express their dissatisfaction and challenge decisions. We respond quickly and effectively when children, young people and families complain or seek a review of a decision. We investigate complaints thoroughly and objectively within agreed timescales and provide feedback on the outcome of the investigation and any action taken as a result.	We do not routinely check out what children, young people and families think about our services. We provide limited information about how to express dissatisfaction, make a complaint or challenge a decision. When children, young people and families complain or ask for a decision to be reviewed, our responses are not thorough enough or timely.

How good is our operational management?

6. Policy, service development and planning

QI 6.1 Policies, procedures and legal measures

Themes
- Range and coherence.
- Reviewing and updating.
- Fulfilment of statutory duties.

Key features
This indicator considers the extent to which policies, procedures and the use of legal measures link to the vision, values and aims and support joint working. It considers the effectiveness of arrangements to systematically review and update multi-agency policies and procedures. It focuses on the extent to which services adhere to legal principles and use legal measures effectively.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have shared policies which strongly reflect our vision, values and aims and set expectations and standards for effective service delivery and implementation of Getting it right for every child. A readily accessible suite of multi-agency procedures guide staff in working together and ensure high levels of consistency in practice. These procedures, including multi-agency guidance for child protection, specify respective roles and responsibilities and clearly outline the processes to follow.	We share the policies relating to our individual services but do not work together to develop these jointly. Policies do not always link well to the vision, values and aims of our services for children and young people or support staff to implement the principles of Getting it right for every child and measures to protect children. Our procedures lack coherence resulting in duplication of effort, contradictory guidelines and gaps. Staff are confused about what they are expected to do.
We update our multi-agency policies and procedures routinely. Staff understand clearly the reasons for the changes we make. They are supported well to adopt new ways of working within appropriate timescales. We achieve high levels of compliance with implementing new procedures.	Staff have difficulty finding the latest version of our multi-agency policies and procedures. We do not have a systematic approach to reviewing and updating our procedures and communicating changes effectively to staff. As a result implementation is inconsistent.
Our value base is underpinned by a very sound knowledge of and commitment to fulfilling statutory obligations, regulations, guidance and codes of practice. We ensure that staff at all levels use these fully to inform their practice. Our monitoring of the timely and effective use of legal measures ensures that we keep children and young people safe and promote their wellbeing very effectively.	We meet out statutory duties to a minimum standard. There are weaknesses and inconsistencies in the ways in which we implement legislation and guidance. Staff are inconsistent in using legal measures to protect children and young or to achieve secure and permanent placements for those who need them.

QI 6.2 Planning and improving services

Themes
- Integrated children's services planning.
- Child Protection Committee business planning.
- Managing and mitigating risks.

Key features
This indicator considers the effectiveness of integrated children's services planning and the work of the child protection committee to improve outcomes for children and young people. It considers how well risks are mitigated and managed jointly to keep children and young people safe and inform actions to minimise harms.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Partners from all relevant services are involved meaningfully in the co-ordination, development and implementation of our integrated children's services plan. Our plan is based on a thorough, dynamic assessment of need and demonstrates a sound relationship between universal, targeted and specialist services. It takes account of Getting it right for every child principles and recognises fully the specific steps we need to take to put these into practice. We have SMART objectives, measurable success criteria and clear lines of accountability to ensure actions are achieved and progress reported publicly. Staff have a strong ownership of our plan and contribute ably to its realisation.	Commitment among partners to integrated children's services planning is uneven. Our plan is not well-matched to changing needs and does not focus sufficiently on prevention and early intervention. It consists of a number of single service initiatives rather than an overall approach to shared priority objectives. We are unsure about our progress in implementing key actions making it difficult to report publicly on our achievements. We are unsure what measurable difference integrated children's services planning is making to the wellbeing of children and young people.
The Child Protection Committee demonstrates very effective joint working to improve services to protect children and young people. We have robust systems for monitoring performance and measuring improvement. We report regularly on measurable improvements in the quality and effectiveness of services to protect children.	Our Child Protection Committee meets regularly and has a busy agenda. Our annual report describes our involvement in a wide range of activities. However, we are unable to demonstrate the impact and outcomes of improvements in performance for children and young people in need of protection.
Our approach to managing risk to keep children and young people safe is comprehensive. We are proactive in jointly identifying emerging and potential risks to the safety or wellbeing of children and young people and take very effective action to minimise harm.	We do not have a systematic approach to jointly identifying and managing risk. We are not sufficiently well-informed about potential or emerging risks to vulnerable children and young people. As a result we are unable to assure ourselves that we are taking the necessary actions to minimise harm.

QI 6.3 Participation of children, young people, families and other stakeholders

Themes
- Involvement in policy, planning and service development.
- Communication and consultation.
- Promoting the rights of children and young people.

Key features
This indicator considers the extent to which children, young people, families and other stakeholders are involved in and their views influence policy, planning and service development. It relates to the effectiveness of integrated approaches to communication and consultation. It focuses on the approaches taken to raising awareness and upholding the rights of children and young people.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We are strongly committed to ensuring that our policies, planning arrangements and service developments fully reflect the views of children, young people, families and other stakeholders. The voice of children, young people and families comes across strongly within our integrated children's services plan, corporate parenting strategy and all our policy making and planning processes. Children, young people and families have meaningful opportunities for direct access to elected members, community planning partners and senior officers. Our engagement with children, young people, families and other stakeholders is used positively to shape our policies and inform our plans.	We are committed to involving children, young people, families and other stakeholders in our policies, planning and service developments. However, we do not have an agreed strategy or clear framework for consultation and involvement. We do not routinely seek the views of all our stakeholders on the full range of services. The integrated children's services plan and our corporate parenting strategy do not include the views of children, young people and families. Children, young people and families have few opportunities to discuss plans, policies and services directly with elected members, community planning partners and senior officers.
We have very effective consultation and feedback methods in place which minimise duplication for our stakeholders. Our user-friendly communication helps to ensure meaningful engagement. We recognise and compensate for power imbalances between different stakeholders and engage harder to reach groups successfully. We facilitate the very effective participation of children, young people and families with a learning disability and communication needs. We recognise the importance of involving children, young people and families at risk and deploy a range of methods to achieve this. We can demonstrate how the views of children and young people have influenced policies and service developments.	We are at an early stage in developing joint policies and strategies to communicate and consult with children, young people and other stakeholders. We make varied and inconsistent attempts to reduce barriers to communication and involvement. Some stakeholders are consulted too often while others are not included. We do not provide feedback routinely to those with whom we consult leaving them unsure about how seriously we take their views or the difference these have made.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Children's rights guide and underpin our policies, planning and service development. We have successful strategies for furthering understanding of children's rights among children and young people, staff and communities. We ensure children, young people and families know their rights and explain how we will help them to exercise these. We report annually on our progress in promoting children's rights and the resulting benefits.	We raise awareness of children's rights through a range of activities but we lack a coherent strategy to underpin this. We are unclear about what we are trying to achieve through the promotion of children's rights and do not have mechanisms in place to review or report on the effectiveness of our approaches to embed them within our work.

QI 6.4 Quality assurance

Themes
- Setting and reviewing performance measures and standards.
- Systems, processes and reporting arrangements.
- Reaching targets and achieving consistency.

Key features
This indicator relates to the effectiveness of performance management and quality assurance to ensure high standards of service delivery and in improving outcomes for children and young people. It considers the extent to which systems, processes and reporting arrangements enable staff at every level to take responsibility for the quality of services. It looks at how well services are improving by addressing poor or inconsistent performance.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have established baseline information and set improvement targets which have a clear rationale. We review our targets regularly and monitor trends over time closely. We have agreed standards across all relevant areas which reflect our aspirations to deliver services of the highest quality. Staff are clear about what is expected of them.	We have limited baseline information from which to set improvement targets. We monitor some key processes but the measures we use are not collated systematically. We are unsure how much our performance has improved over time. Our standards do not cover the full range of services and focus more on quantitative measures than the quality of our work. We do not challenge staff sufficiently or involve them in revising and raising standards.
We have well established systems and processes to gather performance management information. Reporting arrangements provide us with timely and reliable information. Performance which falls below our expectations is quickly identified and action taken to correct this. We routinely quality assure our key processes. When we identify variability in the quality of our work, effective solutions are put in place to remedy this.	Our systems and processes for gathering performance management information are inefficient and not always reliable. Performance reporting is limited and does not provide the level of detail needed to identify inconsistencies in practice. Staff are unable to use performance data on a day to day basis to reliably identify where improvement is needed. We do not have enough information about the quality of service we are delivering in some key areas in order to take remedial action when standards are not maintained.
We monitor our performance against stretching targets taking corrective action when necessary to achieve our goals. Our quality assurance systems and processes ensure that we maintain high standards and consistency in the quality of our work. We use them successfully to drive up standards. We are not content with meeting minimum standards and continually strive to improve the quality of our work.	We do not ensure that we always meet out performance management targets. We do not challenge ourselves enough to perform better by making our targets more demanding. We have delivered improvements in some areas of work but key processes remain inconsistent. There are significant gaps in the work covered by our quality assurance processes.

7. Management and support of staff

QI 7.1 Recruitment, deployment and joint working

Themes
- Meeting human resource needs.
- Deployment to achieve planned results.
- Multi-disciplinary working and team work.

Key features
This indicator is concerned with how well human resource needs are met. It relates to the effective management of staff recruitment and retention. It focuses on the extent to which staff across services are deployed effectively to deliver the GIRFEC approach. This indicator focuses on the extent to which teamwork and multi-disciplinary working are promoted within and across services.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have established a joint workforce strategy and a common approach to recruitment across services for children, young people and families. We strongly promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We align skills, aptitudes and experience of applicants to clearly defined selection criteria. Staff have clear job descriptions and remits which support multi-disciplinary and joint working. We are effective in retaining staff through career development and succession planning. We proactively involve staff in developing and reviewing our workforce strategy.	Recruitment policies and procedures across our services are largely individual and do not always ensure safe recruitment. We have written policies on equality and fairness but these are not comprehensive and are implemented inconsistently. Recruitment practice is variable and does not always recognise or align the skills, aptitudes and experience of applicants to clearly defined selection criteria. Our policies and practices are ineffective in recruiting and retaining staff leading to unfilled vacancies. The involvement of staff in developing and reviewing our workforce strategy, policies and plans is largely underdeveloped.
We actively promote a culture in which staff recognise and value each other's contribution. Clear lines of communication and accountability are established. Our strategy for integrating and improving services for children and young people and their families is well understood and accepted by staff. They are clear about their roles and responsibilitiesin working with others across professional disciplines and organisational boundaries for the benefit of children, young people and families.	We have yet to develop a culture of mutual support and recognition of the contribution staff make across services and in multi-disciplinary teams. Staff are unclear about their roles and responsibilities and of colleagues. They have limited knowledge of our strategy for delivering integrated services for children, young people and their families. Many staff feel disconnected from the planning process and make limited contributions to achieving priorities, targets and outcomes.
Multi-disciplinary teams have the necessary range of skills and professional expertise. Staff are effectively deployed and work very well together in achieving our priorities, targets and outcomes towards the Getting it right for every child approach.	We have not given enough attention to ensuring multi-disciplinary teams have the necessary skills and professional expertise. Staff lack confidence in team working and working closely with partners. Staff are unclear about how their work relates to the wider context of Getting it right for every child.

QI 7.2 Staff training, development and support

Themes
- Competence and confidence.
- Training and development.
- Advice, guidance and supervision.

Key features
This indicator relates to how well staff are supported to be competent and confident in their work. It is concerned with the effectiveness of training and development to ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and qualifications to perform their work well. It considers the effectiveness of the advice, guidance and supervision staff receive to reflect upon and improve their practice.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have established a positive culture and supportive working environment. We ensure that staff are supported, supervised and accountable in their work with children, young people and families. We give staff help and advice when they need it and encourage them to exercise initiative and professional judgement. We regularly appraise staff performance and use this very effectively to develop the skills and competence of our workforce.	We have created a culture in which staff are not held accountable in their work or equipped to fulfil their responsibilities. Staff lack confidence and are reluctant to take initiative or appropriate decisions. They do not have access to regular and effective support, challenge and appraisal.
We demonstrate a clear strategy and commitment to developing staff. Training and development programmes are comprehensive. New staff benefit from highly effective induction. Staff demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the values and principles of the Getting it right for every child approach. Joint training is provided on a regular and planned basis. Evaluations show very positive impact and added value of training and development. Improvements in skills and working practices enhance the experiences of children, young people and their families.	We have yet to develop a strategic approach to joint training and development. We do not have robust systems to identify training needs. The confidence and competence of our workforce is variable and their understanding of the values and principles of the Getting it right for every child approach is not well developed. We are unclear about the impact of training and development on staff skills and working practices or on the experiences of children, young people and families.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have established a strong learning ethos in which reflection and learning are valued. We learn from research findings, guidance and examples of good practice. We appraise staff performance regularly and use this very effectively to develop the skills and competence of our workforce. We encourage staff to show initiative and to exercise professional judgement. We make them aware of the standards we expect them to maintain and hold them accountable for their work.	Staff are not equipped to fulfil their responsibilities and we have not been clear about the standards we expect. Practice is highly variable and dependent on the competence and confidence of individuals. Poorer performance often goes without challenge. We do not operate an effective staff appraisal system and feedback to staff on their performance is limited. We have difficulty retaining our best staff and working environments do not promote professional autonomy and accountability.

8. Partnership and resources

Q1 8.1 Management of resources

Themes
- Transparency of financial planning and spend.
- Joint deployment and expenditure.
- Achieving best value.

Key features
This indicator considers the effectiveness of the joint management of resources to deliver better outcomes for children and young people.   It focuses on how effectively partners are working together to make joint decisions about the deployment of finance and resources in order to meet agreed priorities. It considers the extent to which partners maximise opportunities for best value through sharing resources and integrating service delivery.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have identified the totality of our spend on services for children and young people. This includes capital and revenue budgets, asset management, human and other resources. We target current and projected spend very effectively to meet agreed priorities. We report fully on resource management in our integrated children's services plan and annual progress reports. We explain clearly how we have balanced short and longer term goals including directing resources increasingly year on year towards prevention and early intervention. We can demonstrate how this has supported service improvements and transformational change.	We manage the majority of our financial planning and spend on services for children and young people separately. We do not have an overview of total spend as a starting point for jointly planning services for children. Our strategic planning and allocation of resources is not systematic or sufficiently linked to our integrated children's services planning. We publish limited information about financial planning and spend as part of our integrated children's services plan.
We take a joint approach to the deployment of resources. Many of our budgets are aligned and there is a drive towards pooled budget arrangements. We are kept well-informed about collective financial resources. We are proactive in reshaping our services by identifying opportunities to "spend to save". We can demonstrate how our collective management and deployment of resources is tackling inequalities and reducing demand for specialist services.	Our budgets are complementary rather than aligned. Those responsible for managing our budgets are not always well enough briefed to participate in informed, collective decision-making. Opportunities to make best use of resources through sharing resources and developing an overview of children's services are overlooked. We have made little discernible improvement through joint deployment and expenditure of resources in the quality and effectiveness of our services for children and young people.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We understand and accommodate financial constraints. We demonstrate a rigorous and collaborative approach to implementing best value. Our streamlined governance and accountability arrangements help us to jointly review, appraise options, maximise opportunities to reduce costs and avoid duplication.	We are inconsistent in jointly reviewing services to achieve best value. Costs and financial constraints are not managed effectively. We are becoming more forward looking in seeking to improve our efficiency but our financial planning focuses too much on the bottom line without paying sufficient attention to service quality and the impact on service users.

Q1 8.2 Commissioning arrangements

Themes
- Balancing direct provision and purchased services.
- Joint funding and commissioning.
- Monitoring and reviewing quality.

Key features

This indicator relates to how well partners work together to commission services to improve outcomes for children and young people. It considers the extent to which the planning of integrated children's services achieves an optimum balance between directly provided and purchased services. It looks at how well partners monitor and review the quality of commissioned services in partnership with providers and service users.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Our commissioning strategies are coherent with our vision for children, young people and families and the priorities set out in our integrated children's services plan. We analyse current and future needs comprehensively and routinely. We use an evidence-based approach to meeting needs through the delivery of a wide and flexible range of service provision. We can demonstrate our rationale for achieving an appropriate balance between direct provision and purchased services, universal, targeted and specialist services and shifting our focus towards prevention and early intervention.	We are at an early stage in developing a shared, strategic approach to commissioning services for children, young people and families. We are not well informed enough about our resources and capacity. We have yet to jointly assess current and future needs.
We publish a shared set of commissioning standards and guidelines. As our partnership working matures, we are increasingly funding and commissioning services jointly. We ensure that all commissioned services are able to demonstrate their effectiveness against relevant priorities within our integrated children's services plan.	Our approaches to commissioning are inconsistent and provide limited assurance of competitive neutrality amongst providers in the public, voluntary and independent sectors. We commission to meet gaps in services or renew contracts without a thorough review of overall needs. We are unable to show how the services we commission align with the priorities set out in our integrated children's services planning.
We work closely with providers and service users. We ensure that the services we commission are delivered efficiently and effectively. We have high expectations about the quality of services we commission and maintain a strong focus on achieving the standards necessary to meet the needs of children, young people and families. We monitor and evaluate how well the services we commission are improving the wellbeing of children, young people and families.	The relationships we have with providers and users of the services we commission are not well-developed. We tend to become involved only when difficulties are brought to our attention through complaints or concerns identified through inspection activity. We focus too heavily on the cost of commissioning services without due consideration to the quality and experiences of service users. We are slow to take appropriate action when services we commission fail to perform well.

Q1 8.3 Securing improvement through self-evaluation

Themes
- Prioritising, planning and co-ordinating self-evaluation.
- Involving children, young people and families.
- Securing continuous improvement.

Key features
This indicator relates to how well self-evaluation is prioritised, planned and coordinated. It considers the extent to which self-evaluation involves and takes account of the experiences of children, young people and families. It looks at the effectiveness of self-evaluation in leading to improvements.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We are strongly committed to delivering excellence in children's services. We have a shared approach to self-evaluation and improvement guided by relevant and accredited frameworks. We review the quality of our services together and challenge each other to aim for better results. We use accurate performance management information to identify and agree key priority areas for self-evaluation. We carefully plan and co-ordinate a cycle of single agency and joint self-evaluation based on a manageable number of priorities. We gather robust evidence by comparing our findings from a number of different activities. Staff are encouraged to carry out self-evaluation as an integral part of their work and are supported well to be reflective practitioners. They are equipped with the knowledge and skills to do this well.	We are content for our services to meet minimum standards. We do not plan and coordinate self-evaluation together. We have not developed a level of maturity in our partnership working which enables us to motivate and challenge each other to become more successful. We do not understand enough about what we do well and what we need to improve. We tend to rely on external scrutiny to identify priorities for improvement. We have an unmanageable number of actions in our development and improvement plans and frequently changing priorities. Our management information is of limited value in identifying areas where we are not performing well. Staff have a limited appreciation of the value of self-evaluation and are not involved in reviewing their work systematically.
We gather the views and information about the experiences of service users routinely to inform our self-evaluation. We have well-established and innovative approaches which promote their involvement in self-evaluation. We regularly provide feedback to children, young people and families and can demonstrate how their views are influencing the improvements we make.	We seek the views of individual children, young people and families about their experiences of using services. However, we do not do this systematically enough or collate their views as part of our self-evaluation. We are unable to demonstrate a clear link between the views of service users and the improvements we make.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
Our self-evaluation focuses strongly on outcomes. We are successfully achieving notable and tangible improvements in our performance and in the wellbeing of children, young people and families. We communicate clearly our improvement priorities. Staff understand fully what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. We are successfully building the capacity of staff to secure change and improvement through self-evaluation.	Staff remain unconvinced about the benefits of self-evaluation in securing improvement. Our self-evaluation continually identifies the same areas for improvement. We make plans to take things forward but these are largely ineffective. We can demonstrate a few improvements in the quality and consistency of our systems and processes. However, we have limited evidence of improvements in the wellbeing of children, young people and families.

How good is our leadership?

9. Leadership and direction

Q1 9.1 Vision, values, and aims

Themes
- Coherence of vision, values and aims.
- Sharing and sustaining the vision.
- Equality and inclusion.

Key features

This indicator relates to how well leaders work together to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people through a shared vision and unity of purpose. It considers the extent to which the vision is owned by staff and drives the planning and delivery of services. It focuses on how effective the vision is in promoting equality and inclusion.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We share an ambitious vision to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Our vision, values and aims take account of national priorities and aspirations. We are highly committed to adopting the Getting it right for every child approach and to fulfilling our corporate parenting responsibilities. We have achieved strong and clear links to connect our vision, values and aims with our single outcome agreement, integrated children's services plan, joint operational plans, policies and procedures.	Our vision for children and young people lacks collective ownership and does not focus sufficiently on improving outcomes. Our vision, values and aims are influenced by national policy drivers but we are slow to respond to new priorities. We are at an early stage in implementing the Getting it right for every child approach and determining how best to meet our responsibilities as corporate parents. The separate aims of partners are reflected in our single outcome agreement and integrated children's services plans but we have yet to reach agreement about our shared aims. This is impeding the development of joint operational plans, policies and procedures.
We involve a wide range of stakeholders and children, young people and families fully in developing our vision, values and aims. We have achieved strong collective ownership of our ambitions and aspirations. We continually revisit and take action to reinforce our vision, values and aims. Our work is underpinned by a common purpose, shared values and high expectations.	Our vision, values and aims have limited relevance to our work. Staff, children, young people and families have too few opportunities to become involved in developing our vision. Our vision, values and aims do not help staff and other stakeholders to work towards achieving our goals. We seldom refer to our vision, values and aims or refresh these to ensure that they remain central to our overall purpose. These are used infrequently to unite us in driving forward planning and improvement.
Our vision, values and aims set out clear expectations for promoting equality and inclusion. This is reflected in all relevant plans, policies and procedures. We ensure that staff are embedding our values and aims for equality and inclusion in their work.	We recognise the importance of our role in leading on equality and inclusion. However, we do not reflect this clearly enough in an appropriate range of plans, policies and procedures. While staff are committed to promoting equality and inclusion this is not always evident in their practice.

Q1 9.2 Leadership of strategy and direction

Themes
- Collaborative leadership.
- Prioritising prevention and early intervention.
- Balancing stability and the need for change.

Key features

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership to plan and direct the delivery of integrated services for children and young people. It considers how well leaders are prioritising prevention and early intervention. It looks at how well leaders are sustaining services which deliver positive outcomes and at the same time secure ongoing improvement through integrated working.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We have established a coherent strategy and clear direction for integrating services for children and young people. This involves all relevant partners and ensures that we share accountability and responsibility for leading the future direction our services. We monitor the effectiveness of our approach together and prioritise activities which are successful in delivering and sustaining measurable outcomes.	Our strategy lacks clarity and focus and is not fully representative of all relevant interests. Accountability for leading and directing our work does not represent the full range of relevant partners. Collective accountability and responsibility for leading integrated services for children and young people is not well developed. We have not achieved levels of trust that allow for quick and binding decision making. This undermines our shared determination and approach to drive improvement.
We are successfully leading and directing our resources towards integrated and effective approaches which promote prevention and early intervention. Our leadership of collaborative working in the early years is building resilience and reducing demand for targeted and specialist services. We provide the leadership and direction needed to firmly embed the implementation of the Getting it right for every child approach. We are challenging our services to intervene at an earlier stage to prevent difficulties arising or getting worse.	We do not have a coherent strategy in place for focusing our resources on prevention and early intervention We are not placing sufficient emphasis on the gains to be made through collaborative approaches in the early years. Our leadership of the implementation of the Getting it right for every child approach is not sufficient to ensure the benefits to children and young people are experienced consistently. Our leadership and interventions are often reactive and driven by crises.
We demonstrate sound cost benefit analysis alongside a clear rationale for what needs to change and what should remain the same. We steer our services successfully through the challenges associated with achieving the right balance between stability and change. We sustain what is working well for children, young people and families while leading change for improvement.	Our analysis of the risks and benefits of change is limited. We lose focus on improving outcomes when faced with difficult decisions about reducing costs. Our leadership is focused more on making changes within our individual services than on delivering change through integrated working.

Q1 9.3 Leadership of people

Themes
- Developing leadership capacity.
- Building and sustaining relationships.
- Promoting teamwork.

Key features
This indicator relates to the effectiveness of leaders in building capacity for leadership at all levels. It includes the development of a supportive working environment and positive working relationships within and across services. It focuses on how well team working is promoted to achieve high levels of performance.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We demonstrate very effective leadership skills in motivating others. We foster a culture of collaborative working and our management teams work closely and effectively with each other. There is a shared understanding that staff at all levels have an important role to play in delivering high quality services for children and young people. Staff are confident in exercising their initiative, taking responsibility and adopting lead roles.	We emphasise the importance of effective working relationships, however we are not successful in gaining sufficient commitment to collaborative working. There are important gaps in our leadership to motivate others and there is a culture of dependency which inhibits staff at all levels from exercising initiative. There is confusion about who is leading what and a lack of ownership of important initiatives.
We are very visible leaders and have a high personal profile with our staff. We employ a range of very effective methods to communicate directly with them. We are accessible, responsive when challenged and held in high regard by all our stakeholders. We promote positive working relationships and a supportive working environment in which people share a collective responsibility for improving the quality of their work.	We are reluctant to be open about the challenges we face and to problem solve together. We have limited direct contact with staff. Our methods for communicating fail to engage with staff or energise them to take on new ways of working together. We are seen as being distant and resistant to challenge. We have not done enough to emphasise the importance of effective working relationships or to promote collective responsibility for our work with children and young people.
We exemplify the high performance we expect from staff in delivering high quality services through strong and effective team work. We promote an ethos of teamwork and have established a climate of professional collaboration at all levels. We ensure that staff understand the positive benefits of multi-agency team working and demonstrate this in their practice. We recognise achievements and celebrate success.	We emphasise the importance of team working but have not done enough to ensure consistency in the quality of collaborative working. The effectiveness of working relationships at all levels is variable. Team working often lacks focus and has limited impact on improving outcomes for children and young people.

Q1 9.4 Leadership of improvement and change

Themes
- Continuous improvement.
- Learning for change.
- Transformational change.

Key features
This indicator relates to the commitment and effectiveness of leaders in striving for excellence in the quality of services for children, young people and families. It considers the extent to which learning opportunities are explored and used as a catalyst to effect change. It focuses on the ability and success of leaders in taking a whole systems approach to redesigning services and achieving significant improvements in outcomes for children and young people through step change.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We demonstrate a very strong commitment and focus on improving the quality of services. We constantly explore ways of driving up the capacity for improvement through self-evaluation. We have a high level of awareness about how well services are performing. We conscientiously evaluate whether changes to systems and practices are delivering the required results. Our successes act as a catalyst to implement further improvements in the quality of our services and outcomes for children and young people.	We do not have a sufficiently strong focus on improving the quality of services. Self-evaluation is of limited value in helping us to know how well our services are performing. Our approach to improvement is not sufficiently detailed or systematic to demonstrate whether planned improvements are achieved. We do not readily understand when systems and practices need to be adjusted or changed. We are slow to take corrective action.
We routinely identify good practice in joint planning, joint commissioning and joint working and ensure these become embedded across our services. We empower staff to work creatively together. We are highly motivated to learn from others. We explore new ways of working through applying findings from research, service redesign, scrutiny reports, recommendations from significant case reviews and deaths of looked after children. We are confident in adapting and embedding good practice from elsewhere to meet our needs. Our early years collaborative is achieving marked improvements in outcomes for very young children and their families.	We are aware of good practice within individual services but are not fully sighted on good practice through integrated working. We rarely look outside our own services to learn from elsewhere. We are poor at identifying and communicating our successes or asking ourselves how we might be better. We often continue to do what we have always done, even when these continue to result in poor outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families. We have had a number of successful but time limited initiatives. The learning from these is not embedded in practice change more widely. Our Early Years Collaborative is struggling to have well tested improvements in one service adopted more widely.

Very good illustration	Weak illustration
We use proven models and promote evidence-based approaches to change management. We empower staff to be creative and innovative in their work. Our holistic view of children's needs is breaking down silo working. We continually challenge ourselves about traditionally ways of delivering services and are using our collective resources more effectively. We have applied recognised outcome-focused models of service redesign with success. We have made notable leaps forward. We are escalating the pace of change as our success in improving the lives of children and young people becomes more evident.	Changes we make through joint working absorb a great deal of time and effort and result in limited progress. We have not agreed a joint approach to successfully delivering change. Our primary focus is onthe need to make financial savings rather than improving outcomes for children and young people. We do not always communicate clearly the rationale for change and ensure we take staff with us. We focus on incremental improvements in our individual services and wait for additional funding to make more major changes through integrated service delivery. The pace of change is slow and progress is not always sustained.

What is our capacity for improvement?

10. Capacity for improvement

Our judgement about the capacity for improvement hinges on the confidence we have in relation to important levers for improvement. It is based firmly on the extent to which we can reliably demonstrate the following.

- Improvements to outcomes and the positive impact services have on the lives of children, young people and families.
- Effective leadership and management.
- Effective approaches to quality improvement and our track record in bringing about improvement.

This high-level question requires partners to come to a global judgement and overall statement about the capacity for continued improvement which is based on evidence and evaluations across this framework of quality indicators.

Partners need to take account of important changes and contextual issues which might influence this judgment. These might include significant structural change such as a reorganisation of service boundaries, or changes in funding. Partners also need to take account of their individual and collective ability to respond to change and to be creative and innovative in the pursuit of excellence.

The level of confidence partners reach may be different for each of the above and may include some qualification or reservations. For example, we may evaluate leadership and management as very effective but we know that some pivotal posts will become vacant in the near future, or, there may be gaps in the evidence we have to support firm conclusions.

Appendix 1

The six point scale

Level 6	Excellent	outstanding or sector leading
Level 5	Very good	major strengths
Level 4	Good	important strengths with areas for improvement
Level 3	Adequate	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2	Weak	important weaknesses
level 1	Unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

The illustrations provided in the indicators describe two of these levels, namely, very good (level 5) and weak (level 2). We can identify whether our practice fits best with one of these levels or use the illustrations at these two levels to judge whether our practice is better than very good (level 6) or is somewhere in between very good and weak (levels 3 or 4), or is worse then weak (level 6).

An evaluation of excellent applies to provision which is a model of its type. The experiences and outcomes achieved by children, young people and families are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of performance which will exemplify the very best practice and will be worth disseminating beyond the area. It implies that these very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

An evaluation of very good will apply to provision characterised by major strengths. There will be very few areas for improvement and any that do exist will not significantly diminish the experiences of children, young people and families. While an evaluation of very good represents a high standard of performance, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It will imply that it is fully appropriate to continue the delivery of service without significant adjustment. However, there will bean expectation that professionals will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.

An evaluation of good will apply to performance characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. An evaluation of good will represent a standard of performance in which the strengths have a significant positive impact on children, young people and families. However, the quality of experiences of children, young people and families will be diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that services should seek to improve further the areas of important strength, but take action to address the areas for improvement.

An evaluation of adequate will apply to performance characterised by strengths, which just outweigh weaknesses. It implies that children, young people and families have access to basic levels of provision. It represents a standard where strengths have a positive impact. However, while these weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they will constrain the overall quality of outcomes and experiences of children, young people and families. It will imply that services should take action to address areas of weakness while building on strengths.

An evaluation of weak will apply to performance which has some strengths but where there are important weaknesses. In general an evaluation of weak may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses, either individually, or collectively, are sufficient to diminish the experiences of children, young people and their families in substantial ways. It may imply that

some children and young people may be left at risk or their needs and wellbeing are not met. It will imply the need for structured and planned action on the part of services involved.

An evaluation of unsatisfactory will apply when there are major weaknesses in performance in critical aspects which require immediate remedial action. The outcomes and experiences of children, young people and their families will be at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. Urgent action will be required, across services, to ensure that children and young people are protected and/or to ensure their needs are met and their wellbeing improves.

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Headquarters
Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY
Tel: 01382 207100
Fax: 01382 207289

Website: www.careinspectorate.com
Email: enquiries@careinspectorate.com
Care Inspectorate Enquiries: 0845 600 9527

Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Edinburgh Office	Glasgow Office
Delta House	Gyle Square
1 South Gyle Crescent	50 West Nile Street
Edinburgh	Glasgow
EH12 9EB	G1 2NP
Tel: 0131 623 4300	Tel: 0141 225 6999

General Enquiries: comments.his@nhs.net
Tel: 0131 623 4300
Website Enquiries: online.his@nhs.net
Tel: 0141 225 6999