



Quality and Performance
Framework for Sure Start
Children's Centres in Hampshire



Hampshire
County Council

SureStart



Introduction

Sure Start Children's Centres are designed to become, over time, universal access points for integrated services for children and their parents/carers at the heart of their local communities. They will give parents/carers and children access to the services they need – either on site, or through referral to more specialised agencies. Hampshire County Council's Quality and Performance Framework has been developed to include monitoring

mechanisms to demonstrate achievements against the national objectives set out in the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. Additional 'local indicator' targets have been devised in order to contribute to Hampshire County Council's statutory duty in reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for all young children.

Quality Improvement Statement

The Quality and Performance Framework of Hampshire County Council's Children's Centre Services (CCS) has been developed to ensure that the service:

- ▶ embeds a culture of continuous quality improvement

- ▶ fulfils the aims of its Mission Statement - 'to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for children'
- ▶ supports its strategic objectives
- ▶ contributes to Hampshire County Council's Corporate Strategy

Quality and Performance Framework

The Framework aims to:

- ▶ clarify and make explicit the expectations of children's centre managers/co-ordinators in delivering quality services
- ▶ take into account children and families' needs, interests and skills development
- ▶ involve all staff at all levels in continuously seeking to improve the provision
- ▶ ensure consistency of quality across the provider network
- ▶ take into account the quality requirements of funding, inspection and awarding bodies

The Framework is informed by:

- ▶ Every Child Matters
- ▶ Sure Start Performance and Planning Guidance
- ▶ Ofsted Standards

and is supported by:

- ▶ Service Agreement (Hampshire County Council managed children's centres) / Service Contract (school and third-party managed children's centres)
- ▶ Sure Start Practice Guidance
- ▶ Self-Evaluation Form and Guidance
- ▶ Quality Improvement Plan (QulP)
- ▶ Management Handbook for Sure Start Children's Centres in Hampshire
- ▶ Investing in Quality Licence (IQ)
- ▶ Staff Development Programme
- ▶ Models of Practice
- ▶ Children's Centre Monitoring and Performance Review Process
- ▶ Support and Guidance
- ▶ Children's Centre Confidence Rating
- ▶ National and Local Indicators

Key Questions for Performance Reviews

This publication outlines the key questions for performance reviews for children's centres. Most of these questions are applicable to all children's centres, although some are tailored towards either full core offer or graduated centres.

Achievement and Standards

Key Question 1

How well are outcomes for children improved?

Evaluation will include the extent to which:

- ▶ the children's centre performs against challenging targets outlined within national and local performance indicators
- ▶ users are satisfied with the services of the children's centre and enjoy their experiences

- ▶ the children's centre supports and encourages parents/carers in their children's learning and development
- ▶ the development of skills contribute to the social and economic well-being of the family
- ▶ the children's centre supports and contributes to the emotional development and behaviour of children
- ▶ children and families utilise the services of the children's centre
- ▶ children and families adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles

The Quality of Provision

Key Question 2

How effective are children's centres at reaching priority and excluded families?

Evaluation will include the extent to which:

- ▶ equality of opportunity is promoted to effectively engage with priority and excluded families
- ▶ priority and excluded groups have accessed services and outcomes have improved
- ▶ the children's centre outreach function has supported an inclusive approach
- ▶ the children's centre has enabled priority and excluded groups to influence the planning and delivery of services

- ▶ the children's centre measures the impact of activities on the most priority and excluded groups
- ▶ the children's centre has changed practice in response to impact data
- ▶ the children's centre's delivery mechanisms (within centre, co-ordinated outreach and home visiting programmes) support inclusive practice
- ▶ the children's centre identifies and ensures provision for families with special needs and/or disabilities

Key Question 3

How well do services and activities meet the needs of children and families?

Evaluation will include the extent to which:

- ▶ the children's centre gathers and evaluates the views of parents/carers and other stakeholders and how it ensures information gathered is broadly representative
- ▶ these views inform the children's centre about the quality of provision

- ▶ these views are taken into account in strategic development
- ▶ the collated views are shared with parents/carers and other stakeholders
- ▶ the children's centre takes into account the views of parents/carers not directly involved
- ▶ children's views have been sought
- ▶ the complaints handling procedures are effective
- ▶ programmes or activities match children's and families' requirements in the local community

Key Question 4

How well are children and families guided and supported?

Evaluation will include the extent to which:

- ▶ the children's centre provides high quality and accessible information, advice and guidance to children and families in relation to services and activities
- ▶ the communication strategy for information and advice to parents/carers is effective
- ▶ the children's centre has links with the Children's Information Service (CIS)
- ▶ the children's centre increases the community's awareness of its services
- ▶ protocols are effective in supporting all interactions with families and children

Leadership and Management

Key Question 5

How effective are leadership and management in the delivery of services to support children and families within the notional catchment area?

Evaluation on leadership and management will include the extent to which:

- ▶ leaders and managers at all levels clearly direct improvement and promote the well-being of children and families through high quality services and activities
- ▶ the decision-making procedures are transparent and efficient
- ▶ performance is monitored and quality improvement processes are implemented
- ▶ the adequacy and suitability of staff, including the effectiveness of processes for recruitment and selection of staff, ensure that children and families are well supported and safeguarded
- ▶ the equipment, resources and accommodation are adequate and suitable for all staff and services

Evaluation on equality of opportunity will include the extent to which:

- ▶ equality of opportunity is promoted and embedded in all aspects of service delivery to ensure that all children and families achieve their potential

Evaluation on finance will include the extent to which:

- ▶ the children's centre has demonstrated good value for money in providing services to improve outcomes
- ▶ the children's centre has carried out its agreed financial responsibilities

Evaluation on partnership working will include the extent to which:

- ▶ links are effective with statutory and Private, Voluntary and Independent partners to support service delivery in the improvement of outcomes
- ▶ integrated approaches, through partnership working, have improved the quality of service and experience for families, e.g. transition to school
- ▶ statutory partners are involved in the planning and decision making process
- ▶ the partnership board and forums contribute to the effectiveness of the children's centre

Judgement on overall effectiveness

Overall Effectiveness

How effective and efficient is the children's centre and its related services in meeting local needs, reducing inequalities and improving outcomes?

What steps need to be taken to improve the children's centre further?

Evaluation will include:

▶ the overall effectiveness of the children's centre including main strengths and weaknesses

- ▶ the effectiveness of the children's centre's strategic and operational planning, including the capacity for improvement
- ▶ the impact of actions taken to improve quality since the last performance review
- ▶ the effectiveness of equalities practice in reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for children and families
- ▶ the role of the children's centre in contributing to delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Centre Monitoring and Performance Review Process

The Quality and Performance Framework applies to all children's centres regardless of whether they are:

- ▶ directly managed by Hampshire County Council through a Service Agreement;
- ▶ managed by a school governing body through a Service Contract; or
- ▶ managed by a third-party provider through a Service Contract.

An annual performance review will be carried out with children's centres on an annual basis between January and March, to monitor adherence to Children's Centre Services' quality processes and progress against delivery and quality improvement plans. The performance review visits are designed to:

- ▶ provide feedback against performance
- ▶ identify areas for development and/or improvement
- ▶ inform staff development needs

- ▶ identify good practice
- ▶ encourage partnership working across all sectors
- ▶ provide support and guidance as necessary

Judgements will be made on the overall effectiveness of the children's centre. Furthermore, all outcomes will contribute to Hampshire County Council's Annual Performance Assessment.

Additional monitoring and/or support visits will be undertaken according to need.

The following elements have been developed to support the monitoring and review of children's centres:

- ▶ key questions for performance reviews
- ▶ judgement on overall effectiveness
- ▶ grading scale
- ▶ children's centre confidence rating process
- ▶ procedures in the event of underperformance

Support and Guidance

Support and guidance forms a key element of the contractual relationship between Hampshire County Council and children's centres. It is recognised as

an essential component of the continuous quality improvement cycle and is fully integrated into the formal performance review process.

Children's Centre Confidence Rating

Children's centres' performance will be monitored against the following aspects of the provision:

- ▶ delivery of planned services
- ▶ reach data
- ▶ parental satisfaction
- ▶ national performance indicators
- ▶ data submissions
- ▶ continuous quality improvement
- ▶ self-evaluation form

Each of the areas above will be monitored and the outcomes will be shared with children's centre managers /co-ordinators on an individual basis. At the end of the financial year, an overall confidence rating will be determined for each children's centre which will inform the level of support provided for the children's centre for the following year.

Procedures in the event of underperformance

In cases where a children's centre is graded as 'inadequate' in one or more areas, additional support and/or monitoring will be put in place.

If, after 12 months, a school-managed or third-party managed children's centre has failed to demonstrate capacity to improve, the Service Contract may be terminated.

Grading Scale

The common grading scale for all performance review judgements

Grade 1

OUTSTANDING –

for children's centres that have excellent outcomes for children

Grade 2

GOOD –

for children's centres that are effective in delivering outcomes for children

Grade 3

SATISFACTORY –

for children's centres that have acceptable outcomes for children but which have scope for improvement

Grade 4

INADEQUATE –

for children's centres that have unacceptable outcomes for children

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