



A quality framework for care homes for children and young people and special residential schools

- Self-evaluation and improvement support.
- Helping keep the promise to children and young people.
- Preparing for inspection.

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1. Introduction

This framework has been developed to help services understand, and improve, the experiences and outcomes of the children and young people they care for. It provides a single point of information to assist staff, managers, external managers and providers with self-evaluation, keeping the promise and inspection preparation.

It is most effective when used as a working tool, to help guide where your strengths as a service lie and where improvement may be needed. The framework covers every aspect of a service's activity but can be used flexibly to examine specific outcomes or particular aspects of care practice.

Your case holding inspector will be happy to offer advice about the framework and its use.

2. The promise and the quality framework

The promise is clear that if children and young people are removed from their families, the focus of their care must be on nurturing childhoods that are underpinned by loving relationships, fun, play and opportunity. It describes the fundamentals of this care as including children and young people's right to:

- be cared for by a workforce which respects, champions and defends their rights
- be supported to continue relationships that are important to them where it is safe to do so
- continuity of care and carers, limiting the number of changes and moves they experience.

The quality framework is based on these fundamentals and mirrors the promise's expectations that what must be prioritised are the quality of relationships that children and young people experience in residential settings. It sets out the elements that help services answer how well they are keeping the promise and ensuring children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected – so that they realise their full potential.

3. Using the framework for self-evaluation, benchmarking against the promise and preparing for inspection

The quality framework reflects the expectations of the promise, the Health and Social Care Standards, Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019 regulations. It is designed to help to develop a shared understanding of what very good outcomes for children and young people look like, what services need to do to achieve these very good outcomes and what inspectors will look for at inspection.

The framework can therefore be used for:

- self-evaluation and improvement
- helping keep the promise to children and young people
- preparing for inspection.

It uses the European Foundation for Quality Management approach, specifically the EFQM Excellence Model, which is a quality tool widely used across sectors and countries. We have adapted the model for use in care settings and have used the promise and the Health and Social Care Standards to illustrate the quality we expect to see.

It is framed around seven key questions (see the table on page 13).

The purpose of key questions 1 to 5 is to support services to understand their own performance against the expectations of the promise and the Health and Social Care Standards. Using key question 6 then enables services to evaluate their performance against both.

Answering key question 6 helps services find out how good the care and support that children and young people are experiencing really is. It also assists in developing ways of improving these experiences and outcomes - with advice, guidance and practical tools for both self-evaluation and producing a development and improvement plan.

Key question 7 then consolidates the outcomes set out in questions 1 to 5 and is used proportionately by inspectors to structure their evidence gathering at inspection. This supports the transparency of evaluations at inspection because services using the framework for self-evaluation know they are benchmarking themselves in a similar way, and to the same standards, as the Care Inspectorate.

4. How is the framework structured?

The first question is:

1. How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?

To try and understand what contributes to wellbeing, there are four further key questions:

2. How good is our leadership?

3. How good is our staff team?

4. How good is our setting?

5. How well is care and support planned?

Under each key question, there are a small number of quality indicators. These have been developed to help services understand how best to answer the key questions. Each quality indicator has a small number of key areas, which are short bullet points which make clear the areas of practice covered.

Under each quality indicator, we have provided quality illustrations at two levels on the six-point scale used in inspections. They describe what children and young people would expect to experience in a care service that is operating at a 'very good' level of quality, and what they might see in a service that is operating at a 'weak' level of quality. These illustrations are not a definitive description of care and support provision but are designed to help services evaluate the quality indicators, using the framework.

In each quality indicator, we have also included a 'Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox'. This includes examples of actions that services might find helpful to undertake when evaluating the experiences and outcomes for children and young people. It also contains links to key practice documents that underpin good care and support, which services should use as part of their own improvement journey.

Key question 6

Key question 6 is 'What is our capacity to keep the promise and ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected – so that they realise their full potential?'

This is the most important key question to answer. The guidance and tools in this section can be matched against the quality illustrations, core assurances and self-evaluation toolboxes in key questions 1 to 5. This will allow services to more confidently evidence the quality of outcomes children and young people are experiencing. Equally important, the process of self-evaluation will also enable any improvements to be identified. A further benefit is a shared understanding of expected outcomes, and the practice that underpins these outcomes, when key question 7 is inspected against.

Key question 7

This key question is divided into two quality indicators and is used by inspectors to structure their evaluations at inspection. Quality indicator 7.1 covers the same experiences and outcomes for children and young people as key question 1 and also includes key experiences and outcomes that are matched against key question 4 and key question 5. Quality indicator 7.2 covers the broad outcomes illustrated in key question 2 and key question 3 and is mapped against those key questions.

5. Core assurances: the building blocks of safe care

Experience has taught us that when things go wrong in care services, they often relate to key areas. Theory and inquiries into when care goes wrong have highlighted the areas that are important to monitor because these can be identified as early indicators of concern to people using services (¹Scottish Government 2014, ²Hull University 2012, ³Francis Report 2013, ⁴Wardhaugh and Wilding 1993). These are the key areas considered during the registration process, and policies and procedures relating to them must be in place before a service is registered. Because we know, and research tells us, that these key areas are essential to a service being safe, we have called them ‘core assurances’.

This ‘checklist’ of core assurances guides services on the areas that are important to children and young people’s safety and wellbeing as well as identifying any potential risks. This is because children and young people’s right to be safe and have good outcomes must be consistent, planned and embedded. When a service is self-evaluating experiences and outcomes for children and young people an examination of these core assurances should therefore always be included.

As we know that quality inputs and processes are a key driver for good outcomes and minimising the risks to poor outcomes, we proportionately examine these core assurances at every inspection. Our focus is on the effectiveness of these in delivering good outcomes and minimising the risk of poor outcomes.

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- 1 Scottish Government (2014). Early Indicators of Concern in Care Services
 - 2 University of Hull (2012). Early Indicators of Concern in Residential and Nursing Homes for Older People. Centre for Applied Research and Evaluation.
 - 3 Francis, R. (2013). Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry (Vols. 1–3). The Stationery Office.
 - 4 Wardhaugh, J., & Wilding, P. (1993). Towards an explanation of the corruption of care. *Critical Social Policy*, 13(37), 4–31.

General

- ☐ A registration certificate is on display and contains accurate information that reflects the service currently being delivered.
- ☐ A valid insurance certificate is either displayed or readily available (except local authority services).

Protection

- ☐ There is a child and/or adult protection policy and procedure that evidences how people are kept safe.
- ☐ Staff are trained in child and/or adult protection and are confident in knowing when and how to make referrals, including notifying the Care Inspectorate.
- ☐ Where required, there is evidence that appropriate child and/or adult protection referrals have been made and followed up.

Infection prevention and control

- ☐ All staff have an understanding of infection prevention and control, including the importance of regular handwashing, which contributes to a safe and hygienic environment for children and young people.
- ☐ The service has governance and quality assurance processes in place for infection prevention and control. This includes regular training in key areas such as infection prevention and control and food hygiene where appropriate.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to suitable equipment and appropriate cleaning products where needed.

Medication system and records

- ☐ Children and young people are protected by safe medication management policies and practices. This includes regular audits and accurate tracking of children and young people's medication.
- ☐ Legislation and good practice guidance are followed when supporting children and young people who do not have capacity to take medication, where medication is given covertly and when 'as required' medication is prescribed.
- ☐ Where there are medication errors, services make appropriate notifications and learn from these to improve medication practice. This is supported by regular training and development opportunities for staff.

Management of people's finances

- ☐ Children and young people's personal property and finances are managed and protected in line with legislation. This includes children and young people in continuing care still receiving pocket money or an allowance.
- ☐ Clear financial policies and procedures for the management of children and young people's money and possessions are documented and evidenced in practice.
- ☐ Where decisions are being made on behalf of an individual who lacks capacity, legislation principles and good practice guidance are followed. For some services working with young adults, this includes proper financial accounting and audit measures being in place in accordance with Part 4 of the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, and the Act's guidance for managers – code of practice.

Accident/incident/restraint records

- ☐ A record of all accidents and incidents involving children and young people occurring in the service is maintained and, where required, notified to the Care Inspectorate and/or the appropriate agency or authority. There are quality assurance processes around accident and incidents and evidence of learning from these.
- ☐ Clear records of any instances where restrictive practices are used must be kept in line with national guidance. This should include details of any debrief or learning and development arising from the incident.

Development/improvement plan

- ☐ There is an up-to-date development/improvement plan in place that is informed by feedback from staff and children and young people who use the service and their relatives or people who are important to them. This plan reflects the principles of the promise and is actively used to drive improvement in the service.

Complaints

- ☐ The complaints and concerns of each child or young person, their family, advocate or representative and visitors are listened to and acted upon and there is an effective appeals procedure.
- ☐ People are made aware promptly of the outcome of any complaints and there are processes in place to implement learning from complaints. A record is made of all complaints, responses and outcomes and details of any formal investigations undertaken.
- ☐ The complaints process is accessible and easy for people to use. It can easily be understood by children and young people using the service.

Staff recruitment procedures

- ☐ Safe and effective recruitment practices are in place to recruit staff in accordance with good practice and national safer recruitment guidance.

The physical environment

- ☐ The service is clean, tidy, welcoming and free from avoidable and intrusive noise and smells. The layout of the setting and quality of the furnishings and fixtures provides a nurturing environment that meets children and young people's needs and outcomes.

Maintenance records for safety equipment

- ☐ Equipment necessary to the safe operation of the service is well-maintained in line with manufacturer's instructions and any other relevant legislation.
- ☐ Staff and children and young people are aware of emergency procedures, including where evacuation is required.
- ☐ Where specialist equipment is needed, there is a process for ensuring this is properly installed and remains safe through appropriate testing and servicing.

Planned care and support

- ☐ The child or young person's personal plan is outcome-focused and based on an ongoing comprehensive assessment of individual's needs and strengths. It is implemented, evaluated and reviewed, reflects the child or young person's changing needs and outlines the support required to maximise their quality of life in accordance with their wishes.
- ☐ Children and young people are actively involved in their personal planning process and care is person-centred and delivered in accordance with each child or young person's individual plan.
- ☐ Personal plans are accessible to children and young people and the staff providing their care and support, ensuring their needs and wishes are met.

Management oversight and governance

- ☐ There are governance and oversight systems in place to identify risks and ensure appropriate action is taken to improve outcomes for children and young people. These include leaders' behaviours which create the right environment for safe quality care.
- ☐ There are internal and external quality assurance systems in place to promote high-quality care and support.

Meaningful connections

- ☐ Children and young people are actively supported with physical meetings, visits and digital and/or traditional forms of communication to maintain social and community connections. This includes staying connected with siblings and other people important to children and young people.
- ☐ Staff demonstrate they understand and apply the principles of sustaining meaningful relationships in children and young people's lives and how to support them with this.
- ☐ Practice is strengthened by a policy which outlines how children and young people will be supported to keep in touch with people who are important to them.

Safe staffing

- ☐ The numbers, skill mix and deployment of staff are determined by an effective process of continuous assessment featuring a range of measures and is linked to quality assurance.

6. How will this quality framework be used on inspections?

We use key question 7 to structure our activity at inspections where an evaluation on our grading scale is to be given.

The question is comprised of a single key question with two quality indicators.

The key question is 'How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?' and the quality indicators are:

7.1 Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life.

7.2 Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights.

Inspectors will always look at 7.1 and will also look at 7.2 in some services depending on the current evaluations (grades) for the service, the intelligence we hold about the service and risk factors that we may identify. In some circumstances we may also look at specific quality indicators from key questions 1 to 5, should this be needed to offer further assurance on outcomes for children and young people.

The core assurances span the entire framework, covering elements of several different quality indicators, so will always be proportionately examined.

We will use the quality illustrations in our professional evaluations of the care and support we see. We will provide an overall evaluation (grade) for each of the quality indicators we inspect, using the six-point scale, from 'unsatisfactory' (1) to 'excellent' (6).

Where we inspect one quality indicator, the evaluation for that quality indicator will be the evaluation (grade) for the key question overall. Where we inspect more than one quality indicator per key question, the overall evaluation (grade) for the key question will be the lowest evaluation (grade) of the quality indicators for that specific key question. This recognises that there is a key element of practice that makes the overall key question no better than this evaluation.

7. The six-point grading scale

The six-point scale is used when evaluating the quality of performance across quality indicators.

6	Excellent	Outstanding or sector leading
5	Very Good	Major strengths
4	Good	Important strengths, with some areas for improvement
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – priority action required
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses – urgent remedial action required

An evaluation of **excellent** describes performance which is sector leading and supports experiences and outcomes for people which are of outstandingly high-quality. There is a demonstrable track record of innovative, effective practice and/or very high-quality performance across a wide range of its activities and from which others could learn. We can be confident that excellent performance is sustainable and that it will be maintained.

An evaluation of **very good** will apply to performance that demonstrates major strengths in supporting positive outcomes for people. There are very few areas for improvement. Those that do exist will have minimal adverse impact on people's experiences and outcomes. While opportunities are taken to strive for excellence within a culture of continuous improvement, performance evaluated as very good does not require significant adjustment.

An evaluation of **good** applies to performance where there is a number of important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh areas for improvement. The strengths will have a significant positive impact on people's experiences and outcomes. However, improvements are required to maximise wellbeing and ensure that people consistently have experiences and outcomes which are as positive as possible.

An evaluation of **adequate** applies where there are some strengths, but these just outweigh weaknesses. Strengths may still have a positive impact but the likelihood of achieving positive experiences and outcomes for people is reduced significantly because key areas of performance need to improve. Performance which is evaluated as adequate may be tolerable in particular circumstances, such as where a service or partnership is not yet fully established, or in the midst of major transition. However,

continued performance at adequate level is not acceptable. Improvements must be made by building on strengths while addressing those elements that are not contributing to positive experiences and outcomes for people.

An evaluation of **weak** will apply to performance in which strengths can be identified but these are outweighed or compromised by significant weaknesses. The weaknesses, either individually or when added together, substantially affect people's experiences or outcomes. Without improvement as a matter of priority, the welfare or safety of people may be compromised, or their critical needs not met. Weak performance requires action in the form of structured and planned improvement by the provider or partnership with a mechanism to demonstrate clearly that sustainable improvements have been made.

An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** will apply when there are major weaknesses in critical aspects of performance which require immediate remedial action to improve experiences and outcomes for people. It is likely that people's welfare or safety will be compromised by risks which cannot be tolerated. Those accountable for carrying out the necessary actions for improvement must do so as a matter of urgency, to ensure that people are protected, and their wellbeing improves without delay.

8.The quality indicator framework

Key question 1: How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?	Key question 2: How good is our leadership?	Key question 3: How good is our staff team?	Key question 4: How good is our setting?	Key question 5: How well is our care and support planned?
1.1. Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect	2.1. Vision and values positively inform practice	3.1. Staff are recruited well	4.1. Children and young people experience high-quality facilities	5.1. Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs, outcomes and wishes
1.2. Children and young people get the most out of life	2.2. Quality assurance and improvement are led well	3.2. Staff have the right values, skills and knowledge to care for children and young people	4.2. The setting enables children and young people to thrive and develop their independence	5.2. Parents, carers and family members are involved
1.3. Children and young people's health and development benefit from the care and support they experience	2.3. Leaders collaborate to support children and young people	3.3. Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people's needs, with staff working well together	4.3. Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community	
1.4. Children and young people get the service that is right for them	2.4. Staff are led well			
Key question 6: What is our capacity to keep the promise and ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected – so that they realise their full potential?				
Key question 7: How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?				
7.1. Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life		7.2. Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights		

Key question 1: How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing?

This key question has four quality indicators associated with it.

They are:

- 1.1. Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect
- 1.2. Children and young people get the most out of life
- 1.3. Children and young people's health and development benefit from the care and support they experience
- 1.4. Children and young people get the service that is right for them

Quality indicator 1.1: Children and young people experience compassion, dignity and respect

Key areas include the extent to which children and young people:

- feel safe and are protected from harm
- feel loved, valued and secure and have positive relationships
- have their rights respected and experience dignity and a life free from discrimination
- have their views and wishes taken into account.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Children and young people feel and are kept safe – both emotionally and physically. The service works authoritatively with other agencies and effectively uses preventative, risk-assessed practice with early identification of indicators of concern. The service fully implements national guidance and best practice in child protection, including child sexual abuse and criminal exploitation. Staff are alert to and understand the potential online risks to children and young people. Staff have a comprehensive knowledge of children and young people's personal plans to make early and effective use of strategies for preventing escalation of distressed behaviour. The service has a culture that aims to reduce the use of restrictive practices. If children and young people do experience restraint or other restrictive practices to reduce risk, this is always carried out in accordance with best practice.	The extent to which children and young people are protected from harm is compromised. Staff do not consistently identify indicators of concern and strategies to manage risk are ineffective. There is insufficient collaboration with relevant external partners and minimal networks of support outside the home. Children and young people may not feel involved in or well-informed about decisions that are made about their protection. The needs of those with disabilities or who are less able to communicate their experiences verbally do not receive enough attention. Children and young people may not feel safe, and some experience being intimidated, feeling afraid or excluded. Their concerns are responded to inappropriately and do not reflect the seriousness of the concerns.

All restraints and any use of seclusion are recorded, reported and analysed to uphold rights and legal compliance, and ensure best practice. If restrictive practices are used, these are individualised approaches and are consistently reviewed on a multi-agency basis. Children and young people develop the skills and knowledge they need to understand risk, make informed decisions and make their lives as safe as possible.	Children and young people feel restraint is not always undertaken in a caring and safe manner. Children and young people may be restrained, subject to restrictive practices, or have their liberty restricted unnecessarily or without authority. A culture of reflection and learning following the use of restraint or seclusion is not embedded. Blanket restrictions limit children and young people's choices and independence, and are not child-focused or based on risk. Children and young people may feel humiliated. The service has a risk-averse or inflexible approach. Children and young people suffer trauma or unnecessary criminalisation because the service has a culture of over-reliance on the police to help resolve conflict and challenges.
Children and young people develop nurturing, trusting and secure relationships with those caring for them. These are based on empathy, compassion, love, affection and fun. Positive relationships are based on a full understanding of the impact of trauma on behaviour and development. This includes a trauma-informed service culture and approach to all aspects of care and support. Children and young people know they always have someone they trust to turn to when troubled, or to celebrate with, and always know who will be caring for them.	Children and young people do not feel that the people looking after them like, know or value them as individuals. Their relationships with staff do not provide continuity, perhaps as a result of changes or shortages, and may be superficial or mistrustful. They may feel alone and unsupported. Children and young people's experiences of trauma are poorly understood, impacting their ability to develop trusting and secure relationships.

All children and young people experience a high level of respect from everyone involved in looking after them. This principle is at the heart of the service's culture and frameworks of practice. Children and young people's privacy and confidentiality is proactively safeguarded and demonstrates genuine regard for their dignity. Children and young people benefit from effective and passionate support to understand and fully exercise their legal and human rights. This includes readily available independent advocacy. Children and young people's sense of wellbeing, worth and identity is protected and nurtured with staff recognising and effectively addressing and challenging any form of discrimination and bullying.	Children and young people experience unnecessary or insensitive intrusions on their privacy. Their personal records may contain inaccurate information or be shared inappropriately with others. Children and young people's rights are compromised, and they receive limited support or information to understand their rights, including from independent advocacy. Care and support does not take enough account of children and young people's diversity, recognising, appreciating and understanding their culture, language, religion or spirituality, sexuality or gender identity. Staff fail to recognise or effectively address inequality, discrimination or intolerance. The service does not have a preventative approach to bullying.
Children and young people are fully engaged in their care and support. Their voices are heard, they participate meaningfully in decisions affecting them, feeling empowered to strongly influence the way they are cared for. Children and young people with additional support needs, whose first language is not English, including asylum seeking children and young people, have full access to services and communication tools. Children and young people are wholly included in all aspects of decision-making, exercising choice to the fullest extent.	Children and young people's views do not consistently make a difference. There are limited opportunities for children and young people to express themselves or have their voices heard. Where children and young people's views are provided, they are not listened to or used to support the development of the service. Involvement in decision-making of those with additional support needs or those who have experienced trauma is limited because their needs are not understood and there may be a lack of resources to respond appropriately.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice
- interactions with children and young people.

Review:

- incident, protection and restrictive practices records, mapped against any daily recordings
- children and young people's personal plans and records for evidence of how their rights are respected and their views obtained and acted on. Consider complaint and duty of candour records for the service's response to issues and concerns
- any restrictions to children and young people's liberty and freedom of choice, whether these are justified, and how they have been explained.

Consider:

- the extent to which relevant policies and procedures, for example confidentiality, equality and diversity, are implemented and influence care and support
- how children and young people are informed about their rights, for example in admission information and use of advocacy
- relevant policies and procedures, child protection records, incident records, staff training and their understanding of their responsibilities
- children and young people's access to advocacy and the use of communication support tools in obtaining their views.

Quality indicator 1.2: Children and young people get the most out of life

Key areas include the extent to which children and young people:

- make decisions and choices about their lives and how they spend their time
- lead active and fulfilling lives
- have positive learning experiences, achieve their goals and aspirations and reach their potential.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
All children and young people routinely exercise a high degree of choice in all aspects of their day-to-day lives. They experience highly personalised care and support that is enhanced by an understanding of their individual strengths and preferences and experiences of trauma. Daily transitions are proactively managed, with children and young people sensitively supported to navigate these. Meaningful connections and the importance of secure, therapeutic, loving and consistent relationships that matter to children and young people, are championed, fostered and sustained. This includes living alongside siblings where possible. Children and young people regularly have fun along with opportunities to experience and enjoy their cultural community. Their individual ambitions, interests and life skills are consistently encouraged, supported and developed. These include physical activities, being outside and the creative arts. They plan and enjoy holidays which broaden their horizons and support the creation of happy memories.	Children and young people have little autonomy or experience institutionalised practices. The quality of their experiences is lessened by assumptions about what is safe or possible. Transitions in daily life are poorly planned and children and young people are unnecessarily traumatised by them. Children and young people's sense of belonging and identity are compromised because they are isolated from their families and community. They are not supported to sustain relationships and connections. Support for them to maintain, re-establish or repair family and other significant relationships is given low priority. There is a lack of consideration regarding them having the opportunity to live alongside their brothers and sisters. Children and young people do not experience secure, therapeutic, loving and consistent relationships. Their trauma is exacerbated. Opportunities for making positive memories during childhood are sparse.

	Children and young people's day-to-day lives lack stimulation and fun. The possibilities of taking part in individualised meaningful activities are limited. New experiences are rare with minimal encouragement to be active and involved.
Children and young people receive individually tailored support to engage fully in learning, maximising attainment and attendance. Where challenges or barriers exist, staff successfully champion the right to a high-quality, inclusive education. Going to, or taking part in preparation for, school, college, higher education, or work is the norm for all children and young people. Children and young people making a transition from one education setting to another receive high-quality, planned, trauma-informed support to do so successfully. When they leave school, they receive support to move to positive and sustained destinations. There is a culture of ambition and celebration when children and young people strive for and achieve success, these are used to build optimism and foster further progress. With staff support, at the right time and pace, children and young people develop a wide range of life skills. These promote confidence and help them to flourish.	Children and young people are disadvantaged because there is no learning culture or the support they receive is limited or takes little account of individual needs or strengths. School attendance is low or children and young people receive limited targeted support for successful learning. They are not enabled to play a full part in school life. There is limited collaboration with schools and other learning providers to help reduce the impact of adverse experiences, trauma or overcome stigma. Children and young people have low expectations about what they should aspire to and can achieve. They feel they do not receive enough encouragement to reach their potential. Children and young people have limited opportunities and individualised support to develop the skills they will need in adulthood. Support for children and young people to develop at the right pace for them is compromised by a lack of understanding of trauma and child development. Approaches are task focused and rigid.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice
- interactions with children and young people.

Review:

- children and young people's records, including assessments, plans and reviews, and the extent to which they demonstrate they are safe, active, achieving, respected and responsible
- the effectiveness of support for children and young people to attend school, college or work.

Consider:

- children and young people's suggestions, comments and requests and how the service responds
- children and young people's access to protective adults and supports outside the home
- how the service supports wider learning and achievement outside the formal school setting.

Quality indicator 1.3: Children and young people's health and development benefit from the care and support they experience

Key areas include the extent to which children and young people:

- have the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health
- have positive food experiences, good nutrition and learn about healthy eating.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Children and young people's health needs are proactively met. They benefit from comprehensive, holistic health assessment and primary and specialist healthcare. Where necessary they are enabled to make best use of the right technology and specialist equipment. Children and young people with a disability or a long-term illness or condition can fully maximise all opportunities. There is continuous review of their needs. Children and young people are enabled and encouraged to make informed health and lifestyle choices by adults who are positive role models. Flexible daily rhythms, routines and structures, including good sleep patterns, provide security and reassurance and support health and wellbeing. Positive mental health is a high priority for all children and young people. Those with additional mental health needs benefit from the support of skilled, informed and confident staff.	The service is not proactive when there are unmet needs or delays, or when healthcare is disjointed. Information about children and young people's health needs is not up to date and made available when they move on. There is a lack of attention to healthy routines including good sleep patterns and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Children and young people have limited opportunities to benefit from support to improve health. Their right to have their views considered and make informed decisions about their healthcare is not respected. The service does not have a robust, preventive approach to children and young people's mental health. There is a lack of understanding of the impact of trauma with minimal focus given to supporting recovery from traumatic experiences. Lack of access or delays to specialist intervention or effective advocacy may compromise their health, wellbeing or recovery.

Children and young people have timely access to appropriate specialist services for assessment and support in recovering from trauma, abuse and neglect. Where challenges exist, staff advocate persistently on their behalf. Children and young people benefit from safe and robust management of medication in line with legislation and good practice. When they are ready, they are supported to safely manage aspects of their own medication. Children and young people's mental and physical wellbeing is enhanced by creative use of activities and interests, for example the care of pets.	Children and young people's health and wellbeing is compromised by unsafe management of medication. Children and young people are not supported to safely manage aspects of their medication when they are ready to do so. There is a lack of understanding of the therapeutic benefits of activities and interests. Research and best practice are not understood or promoted.
Children and young people benefit from a tasty, varied and well-balanced diet that promotes health and wellbeing. Food practices in the home contribute to them feeling included, nurtured and promote a sense of belonging. They benefit from the important social aspects of sharing food and eating together, but at a pace that is sensitive and responsive to individual choice. Children and young people are actively involved in menu planning, budgeting, shopping for food and preparing meals for themselves and others. They may have opportunities for growing their own food.	Children and young people's diet lacks variety and balance. They may have limited choice or do not enjoy the food available. Food practices may be insensitive or controlling, and do not consider the cultural, social, sensory and symbolic significance of food.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice
- interactions with children and young people.

Review:

- children and young people's records including assessments, daily logs, personal plans, reviews and evaluation. Consider the extent to which they are enabled to be healthy, nurtured, achieving, respected and responsible
- methods used to capture and respond to children and young people views
- medication records, administration practices and storage
- records of complaints and incident.

Consider:

- menus and share mealtimes with children and young people
- effectiveness and frequency of multi-agency working and communication.

Quality indicator 1.4: Children and young people get the service that is right for them

Key areas include the extent to which children and young people:

- are involved in a comprehensive assessment of their holistic needs
- exercise choice in the care and support they experience
- always experience high-quality care and support, and as a result of planning, commissioning and contracting arrangements that work well
- experience transitions which are well planned and led by them, with the emphasis on continuity and the stability of enduring relationships.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Children and young people's views and choices are central to a comprehensive assessment of their needs. They have the support they need to be fully involved, including opportunities to take an active role in directing aspects of the assessment and any reviews. The assessment involves all key partners, including family members, carers, representatives and professionals with decision making carefully documented.	The assessment and review process provides limited opportunities for children and young people's views and preferences to be heard, and this compromises its quality and integrity. Decision making is poorly documented and lacks detail.
Children and young people receive meaningful support and advocacy to enable them to be full and active partners in how their choices and needs are met. They are well-informed and understand the reasons for any decisions affecting their lives.	Decisions about children and young people's care and support may be service-led or based on what is already available rather than providing suitable, individualised responses. Their changing needs and preferences are not considered.

Children and young people benefit from strong links between the service provider, commissioners and planning partnerships to ensure that their care and support needs are fully planned for and met. Admission decisions are strongly informed by a comprehensive assessment of children and young people's needs, wishes and desired outcomes. These are accurately matched to what the service can offer and to dynamics within the home. The needs of children and young people already living in the service are fully considered, and they experience minimal disruption as a result of new admissions. There is sufficient time and support for visiting new settings. Children and young people are full partners in regular reviews of their progress. If their needs are no longer being met by the service, when the time is right, and with their active involvement, there is a coordinated and planned approach to looking at suitable alternatives to their care and support.	Children and young people experience avoidable crisis or short-notice moves, with decisions not based on their needs, rights or best interests. As a result, children and young people may experience upset and trauma which impacts on their wellbeing and their right to enduring relationships.
Children and young people consistently experience nurturing therapeutic care and support that reflects their experiences, developmental stage and needs. Staff skilfully adapt their approach to take account of the impact of trauma; supporting emotional regulation, recovery and resilience. Planning, policies and relationships demonstrate an enduring commitment to children and young people staying in the service as they become an adult, advocating for their right to continuing care.	There is insufficient understanding of trauma responses with children and young people feeling that consequences, restrictions and rewards are used inconsistently. Children and young people's social and emotional development is compromised by a lack of stable, secure attachments with adults. The care and support they experience is driven by processes or tasks or it is at a basic level.

All transitions are minimised and support trauma-free and successful outcomes. The decision for a child or young person to move into the house has a positive impact on them and also takes into account the needs and rights of others. Children and young people benefit from well-managed, positive and individualised pathways and transitions throughout their care experience. This includes moving to another home or loss and bereavement.	Children and young people are disadvantaged as their rights regarding support options into adulthood are not fully known with little or no support or access to advocacy to support choices. They may feel they have no choice but to move on, even if they do not feel ready to do so. There is a lack of understanding and commitment to promoting lifelong relationships for children and young people. Approaches to children and young people moving on mean they leave in a disjointed or rushed way, resulting in uncertainty or distress.
If children and young people will eventually require the support of services for adults, the process of consultation, assessment and planning begins well in advance. There is a strongly collaborative approach between children's and adults' services, in which they are fully involved at all stages. The transition is implemented at a pace that suits them and reflects best practice.	Pathways and transitions are poorly managed, with children and young people experiencing further trauma and rejection.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Review:

- relevant records such as daily logs, assessments, reviews, personal plans, reviews, admission and transition records
- continuing care policies and practices and aftercare support
- relevant policies and procedures including admissions guidance
- welcome and introductory information for children and young people.

Consider:

- the extent to which the service adheres to its aims and objectives and whether they positively influence care and support.

Key question 2: How good is our leadership?

This key question has four quality indicators associated with it.

They are:

- 2.1. Vision and values positively inform practice
- 2.2. Quality assurance and improvement are led well
- 2.3. Leaders collaborate to support children and young people
- 2.4. Staff are led well

Quality indicator 2.1: Vision and values positively inform practice

Key areas include the extent to which:

- the service's vision, values, aims and objectives are clear and inform practice
- innovation is supported
- leaders lead by example and role model positive behaviour, driving forward the promise.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
The vision, aims and values of the service are clear, understood by all and fully implemented. They have the voice of children and young people at their centre and are inspiring, inclusive and embrace equality. Co-production principles are integral to service design and future plans. Children and young people and staff contribute to any review of the service's aims and objectives and development plan, which strongly inform the way care and support is provided and experienced. Leaders are ambitious in actively seeking to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people, aligned with the promise.	The vision for the service lacks clarity or collective ownership and does not focus sufficiently on improving outcomes. An inclusive, rights-led and personal outcomes approach is not fully embedded in the culture and systems of practice. Staff have limited awareness of the service's ethos, values and aims and there is minimal focus and understanding of guiding principles such as the promise.
The culture inspires and supports creative contributions from children and young people, their families, staff and other stakeholders to collaboratively design the service around what matters to the children and young people.	Where improvements are needed, there is limited strategic or innovative thinking. The management culture is focused on organisational goals, which are prioritised over the needs of children and young people.

	Staff do not feel confident about making suggestions or implementing improvements. They do not adapt practice and tailor care and support in order to meet children and young people's needs and wishes.
Leaders ensure that the culture is supportive, inclusive and respectful, confidently steering the service through challenges and driving forward how the promise will be kept. They have a commitment to maintaining, sustaining and protecting loving relationships for children and young people. They model consistently high standards of practice, guiding the service's strategic direction and the pace of trauma-informed change.	Leadership is weak, lacks stability, energy, understanding of trauma and is ineffective. There may be a blame culture. Leaders are not well known to either children and young people or staff. The values of the service do not promote the importance of loving relationships with children and young people in achieving positive outcomes.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice
- interactions with children and young people.

Review:

- quality assurance practices
- relevant meeting records
- the statement of aims and objectives/vision
- self-evaluation processes and improvement/development plans.

Consider:

- how staff are supported to develop and exercise leadership.

Quality indicator 2.2: Quality assurance and improvement are led well

Key areas include the extent to which:

- quality assurance, including self-evaluation and improvement planning, drives change and improvement
- leaders effectively respond to feedback and use learning to improve
- leaders have the skills and capacity to oversee improvement.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
There is continuous, robust and evidence-based evaluation of outcomes, experiences and the setting. Identified improvements are appropriately prioritised and actioned, which ensures children and young people receive the best possible care and support in high-quality surroundings. Children and young people’s views are central to the process of evaluation, and they are empowered to provide these in ways that work for them. Stakeholders’ views are also proactively sought and valued, including those of parents/carers, social workers and external professionals. Feedback is actively used to drive ongoing improvement, with any changes being clearly communicated. Leaders ensure that all staff have a meaningful role in comprehensive quality assurance activity. This leads to the development of a dynamic improvement plan which is continuously evaluated and successfully drives the future direction of the care home. This process is well-managed, with research and best practice used to benchmark measurable outcomes.	There are some systems in place to monitor aspects of service delivery and impact, but they are disorganised and ineffective, leading to inconsistent outcomes for children and young people. The voice of children and young people is peripheral to quality assurance and their views are not routinely sought. This means improvement planning is not based on children and young people’s rights. There is a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities. Quality assurance processes, including self-evaluation and improvement plans are not embedded into practice and therefore have minimal impact on improving children and young people’s care and support, and do not demonstrate the impact of any planned improvement. External management arrangements are unclear and responsibilities for safeguarding are not met. Children and young people may not know who external managers are or rarely have opportunities to speak with them and share their views. There is an increased risk of unsafe care and poor outcomes due to this lack of structured oversight independent of the service.

External managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and effectively perform these. They play an essential role in monitoring the quality of children and young people's experiences, safeguarding and improving outcomes.	
Children and young people are well-informed, in an age appropriate, sensitive manner, about the standards they should expect from the service. They are empowered to give feedback and raise concerns, and they know these will be acted on promptly without negative consequences. Children and young people are well informed of how to raise concerns. Where things go wrong with a child or young person's care and support, or their human rights are not respected, leaders learn from this and offer a genuine apology. Reflecting on complaints, concerns and significant events is fully embedded in the service and leads to improvement.	Leaders fail to motivate staff and others to contribute to positive change. Lack of information regarding the rationale for improvement may inhibit change. Changes may happen as the result of crisis management rather than through robust quality assurance. Children and young people are not encouraged to have high expectations of their care and support, are unsure how to raise concerns, or do not feel supported to do so. If complaints and concerns are upheld, or mistakes are made, there is limited learning to drive sustained and meaningful change. There is a lack of analysis of incidents, complaints and concerns and limited efforts to learn from these. Staff may feel anxious and be inhibited in their engagement with children and young people. There may be a blame culture.
Leaders know what is working well and what needs to improve. They collaborate on this effectively with children and young people, staff and external stakeholders. Leaders ensure that the needs and wishes of children and young people are the primary drivers for change, directing and supporting improvement activities. The pace of change reflects the improvements needed.	There is insufficient capacity to support improvement activities effectively or to embed change. The pace of change may be too slow or is unsustainable.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Review:

- children and young people's personal plans, records of reviews and evaluation of outcomes and progress
- self-evaluation/quality assurance/audit records
- accident, incident, complaint and concerns records and analysis, and related action plans
- external management arrangements and visits
- external manager's contact and involvement
- the service's improvement plan.

Consider:

- participation records and other feedback from children and young people and their parents and carers
- senior staff/management overview of staff training, supervision and professional registration.

Quality indicator 2.3: Leaders collaborate to support children and young people

Key areas include the extent to which:

- leaders understand the roles and responsibilities of other partners
- services work in partnership with others to secure the best outcomes for children and young people.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Leaders have a sound knowledge of the key roles and responsibilities of partner agencies. Effective partnership working and collaboration is facilitated by a clear strategy, including sharing of relevant ideas, successes, pressures and policies and procedures. Leaders confidently work across organisational boundaries and seek to overcome any barriers between different agencies. A culture of accountability, advocacy and shared decision making ensures children and young people benefit from effective multi-agency support and interventions.	Leaders lack understanding of how children and young people may benefit from the involvement of external organisations and they do not ensure that care and support is provided transparently and collaboratively. Leaders do not sufficiently advocate on behalf of children and young people should their organisation, or other agencies, not appropriately fulfil their duties and responsibilities. Leaders lack the knowledge, skills and confidence to access and harness additional or specialist support and expertise.
Where children and young people are supported by more than one organisation, they benefit from all of them working together effectively. This includes sharing information appropriately and coordinating care and support so that they experience consistency and continuity, with decision making being recorded. Where information is being shared between agencies for specific purposes, consent is obtained except where to do so is likely to cause harm.	Communication with partners is ineffective. Progress is constrained by leaders being unclear about the principles of consent and information sharing. Leaders do not implement learning from other organisations to influence and improve the services they provide.

Leaders ensure commissioners always have a full understanding of the service's aims and objectives and resources available. Communication is transparent, honest and proactive. This ensures that all decisions involving children and young people are based on a common set of values which upholds children and young people's rights.	The rights and needs of children and young people are compromised by a misunderstanding of expectations between the service and commissioners, partner providers or other agencies.
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Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Review:

- children and young people's records for evidence of inter-agency working
- the information sharing policy and practice.

Consider:

- admission procedure and practice.
- arrangements for inter-agency working
- the service's links to local resources and how these are used.

Quality indicator 2.4: Staff are led well

Key areas include the extent to which:

- leaders at all levels make effective decisions about staff and resources
- leaders at all levels empower staff to support people
- leadership is having a positive impact on staff.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Leaders engage meaningfully with staff, children and young people, their families and others, taking a collaborative approach to planning and delivering care and support.	Leaders do not anticipate the type and level of resources needed for children and young people or identify potential barriers. This has a detrimental impact and fails to prevent difficulties arising or escalating.
Leaders are skilled at identifying and delivering the resources needed to provide the best care and support, understanding any limitations the service may have.	There is a lack of vision and creativity in identifying resources or interventions which meet the unique needs of each individual.
Leaders model a team approach, encouraging and appreciating the contributions and expertise of others, promoting a supportive culture in which it is safe to challenge.	Staff are not empowered to help identify solutions for the benefit of children and young people. Leaders do not always engage staff, leading to confusion and a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities.
Leaders recognise that children and young people, including those with lived experience, are often experts in identifying their own needs and inspire staff to adopt this approach.	Communication and direction are poor, and the steps required to make improvements are not sufficiently detailed. The rationale for change is not always clear to staff, and this has a negative impact on children and young people's experiences.
Leaders ensure equality of opportunity both among staff and for children and young people.	Equality and inclusion are not embedded within policies, procedures and plans. There is a lack of understanding of how all staff can contribute to delivering high-quality care and support.

Leaders adapt their leadership style to help motivate staff to deliver high-quality care and support.

Leaders promote a good work-life balance which has a positive impact on both staff and children and young people.

Opportunities for staff to use their initiative, take responsibility and influence change are limited. They seldom adopt leadership roles.

Staff may work in isolation rather than as part of a team with shared responsibilities.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice
- interactions with children and young people.

Review:

- records of staff meetings
- records of training/learning and development, supervision and appraisal
- minutes of staff and manager meetings
- external manager's contact and involvement.

Consider:

- the quality assurance policy and procedure, practice and outcomes.

Key question 3: How good is our staff team?

This key question has three quality indicators associated with it.

They are:

3.1. Staff are recruited well

3.2. Staff have the right values, skills and knowledge to care for children and young people

3.3. Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people's needs, with staff working well together

Quality indicator 3.1: Staff are recruited well

Key areas include the extent to which:

- children and young people benefit from safer recruitment principles being used
- recruitment and induction reflects the needs of people experiencing the care
- induction is tailored to the needs, roles and responsibilities of the individual staff member.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
National guidance and good practice inform all aspects of how staff are recruited. There is a strong emphasis on values-based recruitment. High-quality recruitment information ensures that candidates are fully aware of the conduct, qualities and capabilities that are required of them. The process is well-organised and documented. To ensure children and young people are kept safe, staff do not start work until all pre-employment checks have been concluded, and relevant mandatory training has been completed. They are registered with the relevant professional body within the required timescales. Children and young people and their families have opportunities and the necessary support to be actively and meaningfully involved in recruitment and selection.	There is insufficient understanding of the principles and practices of safer recruitment and the part they play in preventing unsuitable people from entering the workforce. This may lead to key elements of the process not being fully implemented, even when good quality recruitment policies are in place. Staff are not appropriately registered with the required professional body, compromising the care children and young people receive. Recruitment and selection are not informed or enhanced by children and young people's views and active involvement.

There is a clear link between the service's aims and objectives, children and young people's needs and the values, skills and knowledge of those being recruited.	The service may not fully understand the essential characteristics required by staff. New staff may therefore not have the appropriate attitudes and values or the potential to gain the necessary knowledge and skills to support high-quality outcomes.
All staff take part in a thorough, comprehensive, well-planned induction to enable staff to support the individual needs and outcomes of children and young people. This includes significant emphasis on implementing the Health and Social Care Standards and keeping the promise. The pace and length of induction ensures that staff become familiar with expectations and demonstrate competence in all key areas. There is sufficient flexibility to take into account individual learning needs and styles. A variety of induction methods is likely to be used. Those caring for children and young people are clear about their roles and responsibilities and conditions of employment. They have written information to which they can refer and a named member of staff for support. There is additional supervision during the induction and probationary period. This allows them to receive the necessary opportunities to discuss learning needs or other issues. Children and young people and their families are enabled to contribute their views to evaluation of staff performance during the induction phase.	Induction is minimal and provides limited opportunities for genuine learning. There is no expectation that staff will perform to a required standard and demonstrate potential for continuous development, compromising safe care practice. Induction policies, procedures, guidelines and structures of support do not provide an adequate framework for new staff to develop confidence in their new role, impacting on positive outcomes for children and young people. There may be a lack of clarity about their role or the provider's responsibilities for promoting their development. Formal supervision is limited and there is no shared understanding of next steps.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Review:

- staff job descriptions and roles
- new and existing staff supervision records
- recruitment and selection and induction records, including any participation by children and young people and parents and carers
- the staffing needs analysis.

Consider:

- the recruitment and induction policy and procedure against national guidance and best practice
- induction records.

Quality indicator 3.2: Staff have the right values, skills and knowledge to care for children and young people

Key areas include the extent to which:

- staff competence and practice lead to improving outcomes for children and young people
- staff learning and development lead to improving outcomes for children and young people
- staff practice is supported and improved through effective support, supervision and appraisal.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Staff practice fully demonstrates the values and principles of the Health and Social Care Standards, the promise and relevant professional codes. Staff consistently form warm, enduring and loving relationships with children and young people. Imaginative planning and adequate resources are in place to empower dependable and lifelong relationships between staff and children and young people. Staff model positive behaviour and have realistic expectations based on individual development rather than chronological age, using suitable assessed and person-centred strategies. They provide emotional containment, using their relationships to support conflict resolution.	Staff may be registered with relevant professional bodies but lack understanding of and commitment to what is expected of them. There is limited staff awareness of relevant guidance and principles that support improved outcomes for children and young people. Staff adopt an overly procedural approach to their work, which is not based on relationships and values. Positive relationships do not develop as staff have limited understanding of the impact of trauma and adversity on children and young people's development. Staff do not have a comprehensive, informed understanding of child development and attachment.

Staff are empowered and equipped to deliver the best quality practical and emotional care and support. All learning and practice are firmly based on trauma responsive care, holistic wellbeing, child development and an insight into the rights of children and young people. Staff understand and confidently build relationships with children and young people from diverse backgrounds by acknowledging, understanding, respecting, and valuing their cultures. There is continual assessment of competency at all levels, with clear learning pathways in place to support the highest quality outcomes and experiences for children and young people. Concerns regarding staff practice are always taken seriously with robust and transparent investigations undertaken and timely reporting to external agencies as required. This is supported by robust whistleblowing procedures.	Staff may not feel supported or confident and leaders do not value stable, therapeutic relationships as central to children and young people's care and support. There is a lack of awareness of children and young people's identity with respect to gender, race, disability, sexual orientation or religious beliefs, and the impact these may have. Arrangements for assessing staff practice are underdeveloped. There is limited support for staff to reflect or for identifying and meeting learning needs. The culture makes it difficult to report poor practice, and the provider does not consistently take positive action regarding whistleblowing and staff practice concerns. This may lead to children and young people's safety being compromised due to therapeutic, trauma-informed care not being delivered.
There is a strong culture of reflection and learning in the home, with a commitment to time and resources for all staff to develop. Staff have high-quality continuous learning opportunities based on research evidence and good practice. These are regularly evaluated to meet the changing needs of children and young people and staff.	Continuous learning has a low priority in the service. There is limited access to best practice and research or opportunities to ensure knowledge is consolidated and embedded into practice. Learning opportunities lack breadth and scope, with little reference to values and codes. There is no effective training analysis for the service or individual staff. This means the plan for training is static and may not reflect children and young people's needs.

There is a range of approaches to learning, including the opportunity for group and face-to-face training. A clear structure of training and learning and development is in place for each staff role and all staff have individual plans. They consistently implement and embed their learning to provide high-quality care and support. Staff fulfil their responsibilities for continuous professional development and for meeting any registration requirements.	Learning opportunities lack breadth and scope, with little reference to values and codes. There is no effective training analysis for the service or individual staff. This means the plan for training is static and may not reflect children and young people's needs. Staff do not take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and development. They have few opportunities for exercising autonomy, using their initiative and developing other leadership skills.
Staff benefit from a framework of support which reflects the demanding and rewarding nature of their work and promotes high-quality, sensitive care and support. The wellbeing of staff is valued and prioritised with wellbeing supports readily available as a vital part of ensuring children and young people can thrive. This includes debriefing on the management of difficult situations. Regular, effective and high-quality structured supervision and appraisal is prioritised and used constructively by staff. These contribute to their professional development and enable them to become competent, confident and reflective practitioners. Supervision and appraisal inform the development of the service's staff skills analysis and training plan. The views of children and young people and their families inform and enhance the quality of supervision and appraisal.	Insufficient attention is paid to staff welfare and support, including following critical situations. As a result, they may regularly experience stress, or their ability to manage setbacks and challenges and provide attuned care and support is compromised. They may be tired and react to children and young people in negative ways. Supervision takes place infrequently or is given insufficient priority as a key element of a staff support and development framework. It is limited in its breadth and scope and provides few opportunities for reflection. Supervisors and staff are unclear about the purpose and principles of professional supervision. Records do not reflect discussion and decision-making. Systems for identifying and meeting learning needs are not robust enough and result in gaps remaining unfilled.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice and interactions.

Review:

- the service's training analysis, plans and records and the extent to which these reflect the aims and objectives and needs of children and young people experiencing care
- records of observation of staff practice, records of supervision and appraisal
- the system for staff support and welfare, and learning and development policies and procedures.

Consider:

- any disciplinary records, including how the service responds to practice issues
- the system for monitoring staff registration with professional bodies and achievement of minimum qualifications.

Quality indicator 3.3: Staffing levels are right and meet children and young people’s needs, with staff working well together

Key areas include the extent to which:

- there is an effective process for assessing how many staff or staff hours are needed
- the skill mix, numbers and deployment of staff meet children and young people’s needs
- staff are flexible and support each other to work as a team to benefit children and young people.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Informed by national guidance and best practice, with adherence to the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act 2019, there is a process of continuous assessment to determine the numbers, experience, qualifications and skill mix of staff required. This ensures children and young people are proactively supported in all aspects of their lives and takes account of the complexity of individual and group need, alongside any risks. The staff team is stable, which allows children and young people to develop and enjoy enduring and trusting relationships.	The number of staff or staff hours being deployed at one time is relatively static, with infrequent reviews or adjustments to meeting the changing needs of children and young people. There is an over-reliance on agency or sessional staff. This leads to children and young people experiencing a lack of consistency and stability in how their care and support is provided, and limits their ability to build trusting relationships with staff. Minimal and regular changes to staff significantly impacts on the ability of the service to provide support to and maintain relationships with children and young people who have moved on.

The home has the right number of staff with the right skills and experience working at all times. Providing care and support with compassion, and recognising the impact of trauma is prioritised, with staff being available to spend lots of meaningful time with individual children and young people. Staff are clear about their roles and are deployed effectively. The staff group is sufficiently diverse to meet needs and allow children and young people to have a meaningful say in who is caring for them.	There is a minimal number of staff at any one time and this is sometimes insufficient to fully meet diverse needs. Staff frequently work excessive hours or under pressure, leading to some aspects of care and support being neglected, with negative outcomes. Children and young people or visitors perceive staff to be too busy to meet children and young people's needs. Planned activities are disrupted and relationships with important people cannot be prioritised.
Children and young people and the adults caring for them benefit from a warm atmosphere created by good working relationships, support and mutual respect. There is effective communication between staff, with opportunities for discussing their work and how best to improve outcomes for children and young people. Staff turnover is minimal and continuously monitored. There is proactive use of a range of strategies for retaining skilled and experienced staff so that children and young people benefit from stable, lifelong relationships. There is recognition of the important role played by staff who are not involved in providing direct care for children and young people. They are empowered to contribute to their support and to build positive relationships with them.	Care and support are at a basic or superficial level, with insufficient time for fostering and enjoying trusting and nurturing relationships. Communication and team building may suffer due to lack of time and affect staff motivation and morale. This has a negative impact on children and young people. There is a lack of understanding of attachment and the importance of continuity of relationships for children and young people. The service does not use targeted actions to address high turnover.
The staff team helps each other by being flexible in response to changing situations to ensure care and support is consistent and stable.	Pressure on staff leads to an overemphasis on completing designated tasks without regard for the wider needs of either children and young people or colleagues.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice and interactions.

Review:

- the system for assessing staffing levels and deployment
- staff handover practices and records
- staff rotas.

Consider:

- how children and young people's assessments and personal plans and incident analysis inform staffing assessments.

Key question 4: How good is our setting?

This key question has three quality indicators associated with it.

They are:

- 4.1. Children and young people experience high-quality facilities
- 4.2. The setting enables children and young people to thrive and develop their independence
- 4.3. Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community

Quality indicator 4.1: Children and young people experience high-quality facilities

Key areas include the extent to which:

- the house is well furnished, comfortable and homely
- the house and equipment are safe, secure and well-maintained
- children and young people's information is securely stored and managed.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
The house is very comfortable, furnished to a very high standard, welcoming and homely, with plenty of natural light and ventilation. It gives a strong message to children and young people that they matter. They have ample space for their needs and care has been taken to ensure children and young people have been actively involved in the design and decoration. Children and young people have access to safe, accessible and well-maintained outdoor areas that provide opportunities for outdoor adventures, sensory experiences and social interaction. Children and young people are fully engaged in individualising and personalising their bedrooms.	The house may look or feel institutionalised or stand out from its neighbours, and therefore attracts negative attention. It is a clinical or functional environment, rather than domestic and homely in nature which limits therapeutic opportunities. There is a lack of attention to detail such as homely touches, decoration and the quality of furniture. There may be unpleasant smells or intrusive noise levels. Outdoor space is not used to its potential, it may not be accessible or safe. Children and young people do not physically and mentally benefit from having access to outside adventures and positive sensory experiences as part of their day-to-day care. Children and young people are not given opportunities to personalise their own bedroom.
Effective arrangements for monitoring maintenance and repair of the home, equipment and vehicles are consistently implemented. Damaged items are promptly replaced.	Essential equipment does not fully function or breaks down regularly, with systems for ongoing maintenance being inadequate. Standards of hygiene or food safety are deficient.

Robust infection control and food safety practices provide high levels of safety for children and young people. These are supported by appropriate quality assurance practices.	
The setting provides security and safety without impinging on children and young people's rights, and reflects the service's aims and objectives. Any use of CCTV or surveillance is lawful, fair, proportionate and protects children and young people's dignity. It is individualised and only used for purposes that support the delivery of safe, effective and compassionate care. It is always regularly evaluated and agreed on a multi-agency basis.	The service is not successful in achieving a balance between safety and security, and children and young people's freedom and independence. Children and young people are not told or consulted about any CCTV or informed of their rights.
Protection of children and young people's personal information is paramount and complies with relevant best practice. Children and young people are routinely made aware of how their information is being used or shared.	There is a poor approach to safeguarding children and young people's confidentiality. This puts the security of their personal information at risk. They do not know how their information is used or with whom it is shared.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff practice and interactions.

Review:

- accident, incident and complaint records, relevant risk assessments, maintenance and repair records (including for service vehicles and equipment), and food and water safety records
- staff training records
- use of CCTV and the confidentiality/data protection policy.

Consider:

- the environment inside and out including, for example, equipment and furnishings and first aid equipment.

Quality indicator 4.2: The setting enables children and young people to thrive and develop their independence*

Key areas include the extent to which:

- the setting enables children and young people to thrive and develop the skills they need
- children and young people influence the layout and how the setting is used
- the setting contributes to children and young people experiencing a good childhood in line with the promise.

*In this setting we recognise children and young people can be interdependent on others to support their independence. Interdependence means the dependence of a child or young person on other people.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Children and young people have high-quality care and support in a setting that is designed or adapted to meet their needs. To promote truly trauma responsive care, the physical environment, sensory considerations and accessibility are prioritised. The setting strongly enhances children and young people’s experiences and reflects best practice and guidance resembling that of a family home. Opportunities for brothers and sisters to share a bedroom are available.	Aspects of the design, size, layout, location or number of children and young people, have a negative impact on children and young people’s quality of life. Insufficient attention is paid to ensuring that the house is trauma responsive and considers sensory needs. The limitations and restrictions of the physical environment impacts on the day-to-day experiences of children and young people. There is a lack of flexibility to support what is best for them such as having the opportunity to share bedrooms with their brothers and sisters, if they wish.

Children and young people have access to the facilities and equipment they need when they need them. These include enough toilets and bathrooms, with separate facilities for staff and visitors, and somewhere quiet with a desk and chair to do their homework or other projects. Technology, including Wi-Fi should be safely available to ensure children and young people can access this for education, remaining connected to family and friends and for entertainment. Children and young people use kitchen and laundry facilities, other communal areas and outdoor areas with or without support. These encourage children and young people to develop life skills at a pace that suits them. There may be opportunities to grow food either in the outdoor space or local community. Any restrictions to areas of the house are under regular review and individualised rather than a generic approach. Children and young people enjoy access to a wide selection of appropriate reading materials, toys and games.	Facilities, equipment or technology are lacking or do not meet children and young people's individual and group needs. This impacts on their privacy when they want it. The setting does not support children and young people to develop the skills they need to thrive and get the most out of life. Their freedom of movement may be restricted or may be unnecessarily reliant on staff. Shared areas are locked without a clear justification based on risk. Practice and decisions are institutional and impact on the rights of children and young people. Children and young people do not benefit from access to a wide selection of appropriate reading materials, toys and games.
Children and young people exercise a high degree of choice and control over their environment. In particular they can adjust the heating, lighting and ventilation in their own rooms to suit their needs and preferences. They can lock their bedrooms if they wish and have somewhere safe to store medication and other possessions. They may choose or bring their own furniture and soft furnishings and other possessions and have a say in the décor of their rooms to suit their taste and personality.	There is a risk-averse or bureaucratic approach to the way the setting is managed, designed or furnished. This leads to limited control, choice and flexibility for individual children and young people.

Children and young people are regularly involved in giving their views regarding how space in the house is used, including how well it works for them and what could be improved. They feel listened to and can influence new design, changes and upgrades.	Children and young people are not involved in decisions about how the space in the house is used. Their views are not sought and when their views are expressed, they are ignored and not valued.
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Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- children and young people making use of the environment.

Review:

- records of children and young people's meetings or responses to questionnaires about the setting.

Consider:

- the environment inside and out.

Quality indicator 4.3: Children and young people can be connected with and involved in the wider community

Key areas include the extent to which:

- the setting supports children and young people to stay connected to family and friends
- the setting provides a sense of community and belonging
- children and young people benefit from meaningful links with the local community.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
The home is as close as possible to those who matter to children and young people, especially their family and friends, where this is safe and in their best interests. Parents, siblings, other relatives and friends are confident of a welcoming and inclusive culture that actively supports them to visit and may allow them on occasion to stay over. Children and young people maintain a strong connection with the wider world. This includes television and radio, as well as easy access and support to safely use social media, to help them regularly stay in touch with others.	The service is not committed to or has limited ways of supporting the inclusion of family and friends. The house is particularly remote, or the child or young person has moved a significant distance, making it difficult for children and young people to benefit from the continuity provided by significant relationships or a familiar environment. While there may be access to the internet, it may be unreliable. Creative use of other options are not routinely supported to allow children and young people to stay in touch.

Children and young people's positive relationships with their peers are developed and promoted. They have space to socialise, including spending time in small groups as well as taking part in larger group events. In addition to high-quality practical and emotional support when they have left care, children and young people benefit from continuing and enduring relationships with the people who matter to them. Staff proactively take steps to develop children and young people's interpersonal skills as they support them in their journey to adulthood and independence.	There is limited flexible space for promoting peer relationships or a sense of community. Children and young people lack choice or privacy to have friends visit or develop friendships outside the house. When they leave their care setting, children and young people experience unnecessary disruption in their lives and in key relationships. They may feel unprepared or lacking in the support they need to sustain them at this critical time. Enduring relations are not understood, promoted or supported for children and young people when they move on.
Children and young people benefit from being active members of the local community, to which there are strong links. They are routinely supported to meet new people, developing individual interests and accessing facilities beyond the house, to encourage a strong sense of belonging.	The culture of the home is insular, with limited links to the local community. Positive relationships with the local community are not promoted, meaning children and young people can be negatively affected and stigmatised. Children and young people may spend most of their time in the house, even when they could be more involved in their local community. The setting's remote location or limited transport links make it difficult for children and young people to get out and about either independently or with support. They are less able to benefit from the opportunities provided by a diversity of relationships or membership of groups and networks.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff working with children and young people.

Review:

- children and young people's personal plans and daily records for evidence of their involvement in the community.

Consider:

- how staff support children and young people to keep in touch and make connections
- local community resources and their usage.

Key question 5: How well is our care planned?

This key question has two quality indicators associated with it.

They are:

- 5.1. Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs, outcomes and wishes
- 5.2. Parents, carers and family members are involved

Quality indicator 5.1: Assessment and care planning reflects children and young people's needs, outcomes and wishes

Key areas include the extent to which:

- the service uses personal plans to deliver care and support effectively
- personal plans are reviewed and updated regularly, and as children and young people's circumstances, needs and desired outcomes change
- children and young people are involved in directing and leading their own care and support.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Children and young people benefit from dynamic, innovative and aspirational care and support planning which promotes positive, healthy, enjoyable and meaningful lives. Care planning strategies are implemented through high-quality, SMART* care plans and risk assessments. These consistently inform all aspects of care and support. The service actively seeks and enables multi-agency involvement in assessment and planning processes. Children and young people's records are of a consistently high standard and are informed by rights, values, principles and codes of practice. *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound	The standard of assessment or personal planning is weak, with insufficient attention to children and young people's strengths and potential. The quality of their outcomes and experiences may be limited by the low expectations of those involved in planning. Leaders do not maintain oversight of the assessment and planning process, and there is a lack of effective quality assurance. Plans are static documents rather than tools to inform staff practice and approaches to care and support. They may not reflect the care and support provided, experienced or needed by children and young people.

There is high-quality evaluation and recording of children and young people's development and progress. Their personal plans are regularly reviewed and amended in accordance with their changing needs, circumstances and desired outcomes. This process is informed by research and good practice and considers the views of all relevant professionals.

Children and young people are always at the heart of plans for their care and support. They are enabled to lead and direct their development so they feel a real sense of ownership and can clearly recognise their own voice.

Children and young people receive full support to communicate what their outcomes should be, including advocacy where required. Their plans detail in plain language what matters to them, to support a clear shared understanding.

Personal plans are not reviewed in line with guidance or legislation. There is a lack of multi-disciplinary involvement in the care planning and review process and this may compromise its quality. Assessment and evaluation against intended outcomes do not form an integral part of the review process.

Children and young people have limited involvement in the care and support planning and review process. This means they do not consistently experience care and support in line with their wishes and preferences. When plans conflict with their wishes, there is no clear legal justification or they do not receive a proper explanation.

Plans and reviews are not routinely made available or provided in an accessible format to children and young people and their representatives.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation actions

There are some suggested actions that may help with self-evaluation of this quality indicator.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff working with children and young people.

Review:

- children and young people's assessments, personal plans and reviews.

Quality indicator 5.2: Parents, carers and family members are involved

Key areas include the extent to which:

- underpinned by the fundamentals of the promise, parents, carers and family members are involved in delivering care and support
- the views of parents, carers and family members are heard and meaningfully considered.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
The service is influenced by the promise and wherever possible by parents, carers and family members. Their views and wishes also strongly inform the individual assessment, planning and review process, even where this challenges previous approaches. Where they have additional communication needs, or English is not a first language, they have ready access to the right services and tools to ensure they are fully included. There is a supportive and inclusive approach to working in partnership with parents, carers and family members in the delivery of care and support. They make suggestions, comments or complaints, knowing that these are always listened to and acted on in an honest and transparent way. Leaders and staff always sensitively manage any conflicts between children and young people and family members' views and wishes. This shows due regard for consent and other legal considerations. At all times, high expectations and aspirations and the best interests of children and young people are at the forefront of the way care and support is delivered.	Parents, carers and family members may feel overlooked or are not given enough encouragement and support to make their views known or contribute to decision-making. The quality of assessments, plans and evaluation may be compromised because insufficient weight is given to their knowledge about what is or is not likely to work for children and young people. Leaders and staff either seldom engage with children and young people's families or fail to do so in a meaningful way. There are limited ways for parents, carers and family members to be actively involved. Changes to how care and support is provided are rarely made because of their involvement. Leaders and staff are not well-informed about who has parental responsibility or other legal powers and may fail to fulfil their legal obligations in relation to information sharing and consent.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Assurance, improvement and support actions

While we do not routinely inspect this quality indicator, these actions outline what inspectors may do to make evaluations. They can be similarly used to help with self-evaluation activity.

Discussions with:

- children and young people
- family and friends
- visitors
- staff
- managers
- other professionals.

Observe:

- staff working with parents, carers and family members.

Review:

- children and young people's assessments, personal plans and reviews.

Key question 6: What is our capacity to keep the promise and ensure children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected – so that they realise their full potential?

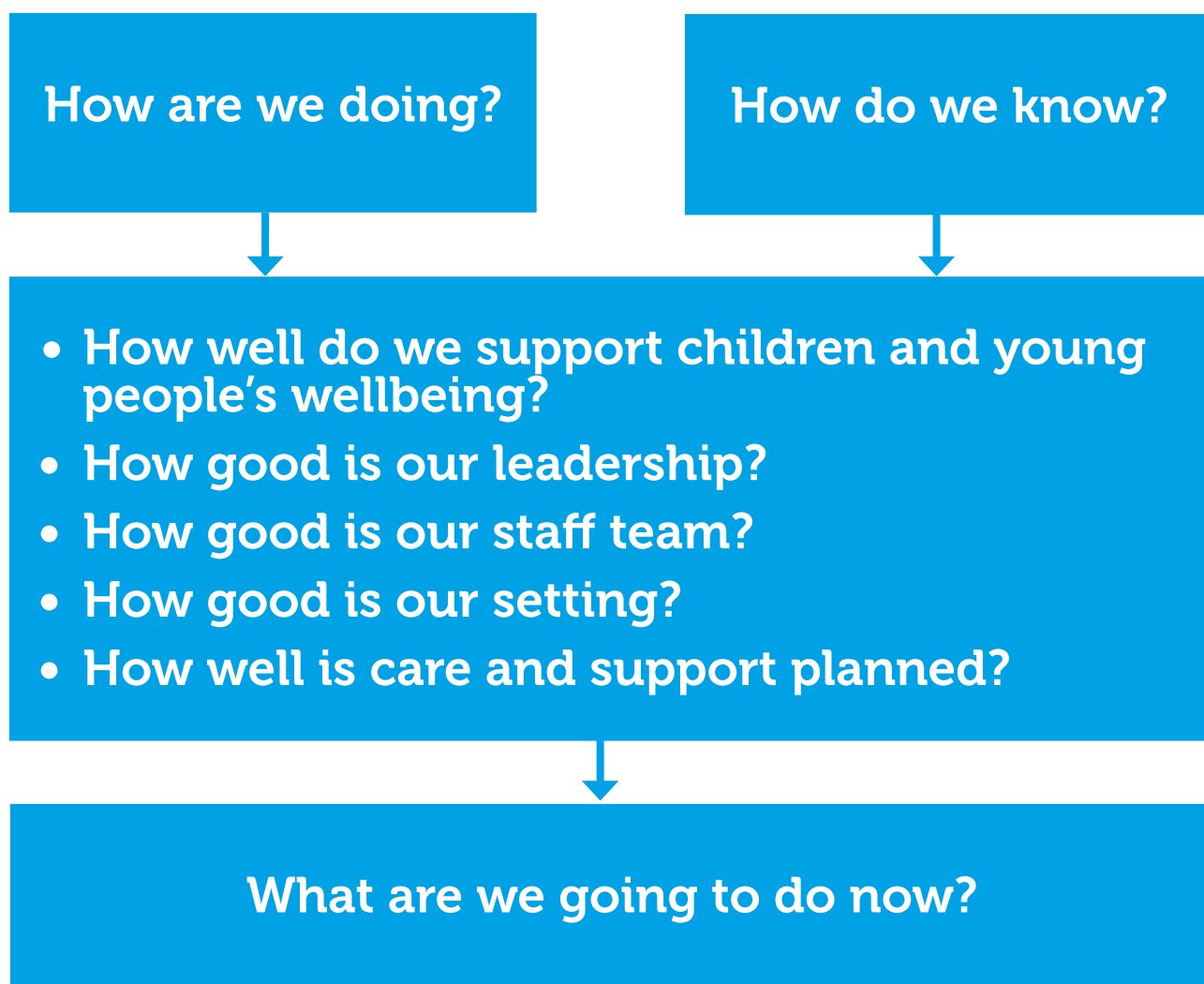
This key question is designed to help you understand your service's capacity to keep the promise through improvement. As such, it is framed around the three stages of self-evaluation and capacity to improve rather than specific quality indicators.

In terms of self-evaluation, our approach is illustrated in the diagram below, which asks services to consider three questions.

How are we doing?

How do we know?

What are we going to do now?



Self-evaluation plays a key part in understanding the quality of outcomes that children and young people are experiencing in your service as well as how you are keeping the promise and supporting improvement. Well-led and better performing services know where they are performing well, and where they need to improve.

Self-evaluation should be carried out so you can deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people. It is a process that your service leads on, so you can determine the frequency and focus of your self-evaluation. If you have not undertaken self-evaluation before, it can appear daunting. This may mean you want to begin by focussing on one aspect of your service or particular outcome for children and young people, or exploring the quality framework with the staff team. You can also use self-evaluation to inform where you need to target your efforts to support improvement. It should be an ongoing process that supports continuous improvement, rather than being a one-off activity. The key question 6 toolbox has links to bespoke guidance, tools and templates for using the quality framework for self-evaluation and improvement.

The three-question approach is outlined in more detail below, with the voice of children and young people being at the core to answering each one. Our [self-evaluation toolkit](#) provides all the support and tools necessary to assess against this quality framework, the promise and the Health and Social Care Standards. In addition, our self-evaluation toolbox contains specific promise-related self-evaluation resources.

- **How are we doing?** This is the key to knowing whether you are doing the right things and that, as result, children and young people are experiencing high-quality, safe and loving care and support that meets their needs, rights and choices.
- **How do we know?** Answering the question ‘how we are doing?’ must be done based on robust evidence. The quality indicators in this document, along with the views of children and young people experiencing care and support can help you to evaluate how you are doing. You should also take into account the views of staff, external professionals, parents/carers, good practice documents and data collected by your service, provider, or nationally.
- **What are we going to do now?** Understanding how well your service is performing should help you see what is working well and what needs to be improved. From that, you should be able to develop plans for improvement based on the voice of children and young people, effective practice, guidance, research, testing and available improvement support.

We also understand that many services already have well-established and effective processes for evaluating their performance, and they should continue to use them. There is no requirement for services to use this tool, however we do want all services to recognise the value that self-evaluation has in supporting improvement and better outcomes for children and young people.

Capacity to improve

During the process of self-evaluation, whilst identifying strengths and areas for improvement, it is vital that you also consider your service’s ‘capacity to improve’. This means assessing whether the service has the resources, stability and skills to identify improvements and then progress and sustain them. This requires a judgement based on evidence and evaluations from across the key questions and could include factors such as changes to staffing, plans to restructure, or significant changes in funding. If it is judged your service does not have the necessary resources, skills and stability, leaders need to consider how best to equip the service to be able to make and sustain the improvements. Our inspectors will always consider the service’s capacity to improve in determining our evaluations. The judgement includes consideration of the level of assurance we have that providers, managers and leaders can make improvements.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key self-evaluation resources

Key self-evaluation resources are available on our website [here](#).

Self-evaluation activity

There is no single way to carry out self-evaluation. Each service is unique, and your approach should reflect what works best for you. You might choose to involve a small group of people to share tasks and keep things on track, especially in larger services. Involving a range of voices - staff, children and children and young people experiencing care, and their families - is a strength. It brings different perspectives and helps ensure that your evaluation is **meaningful and inclusive**.

We recognise that services vary in size and structure. Whether you are a lone provider, part of a small team, or working in a larger setting, your approach to self-evaluation should be **scaled to suit your service**. What matters most is that it supports improvement and puts people at the heart of the process.

Strong leadership plays a vital role in creating a culture where self-evaluation can thrive. Leaders should empower staff at all levels to reflect on their practice, share ideas, and contribute to the development of the service. It's important that everyone feels safe to share their views, explore what's working well, and consider what could be better. Feedback from people experiencing care should also be **actively sought and valued**.

Key question 7: How well do we support children and young people's rights and wellbeing?

This key question has two quality indicators associated with it.

They are:

- 7.1. Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life
- 7.2. Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights

Quality indicator 7.1: Children and young people are safe, feel loved and get the most out of life

Key areas include the extent to which children and young people:

- feel safe and are protected from harm
- feel loved and their views, wishes and rights are of utmost importance to everyone
- have their aspirations met and can reach their potential.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Children and young people feel, and are kept, safe - both emotionally and physically. This is because they benefit from knowledgeable, responsive staff who understand their needs, listen to them and help build their skills. These staff work authoritatively with other agencies and effectively use preventive, risk-assessed, practice.	The extent to which children and young people are protected from harm is compromised. Safe care practice is reactive. Staff do not consistently identify indicators of concern and strategies to manage risk are ineffective. There is insufficient collaboration with relevant external partners.
Children and young people always have access to responsible adults outside the service who always act in their best interests, including advocacy.	Children and young people may not feel safe, and some experience being bullied, feeling threatened, afraid or excluded. Their wellbeing is affected by insensitive responses to their concerns.
The service fully implements national guidance and best practice in child protection, including child sexual abuse and exploitation.	Networks of support outside the home are limited and do not provide the safeguards required. Children and young people have limited access to either informal or independent advocacy.
Children and young people experience therapeutic and stable care, which supports their emotional wellbeing. The significant risk of children and young people experiencing trauma from being subject to or witnessing restraint is minimised by a culture, policy and practice, which progressively reduces the likelihood of this. All restrictive practice interventions follow best practice.	Daily life for children and young people is stressful and uncertain. Children and young people feel restraint is not always undertaken in a caring and safe manner. They may experience being unnecessarily subjected to restrictive practices, which do not follow best practice.

Children and young people enjoy warm, trusting, and nurturing relationships with those caring for them. They are based on compassion and a full understanding of the impact of their trauma on behaviours and development.

Supporting recovery and building children and young people's resilience, as well as their ability to manage risk, is central to all staff interactions.

Children and young people experience spontaneity and fun with staff who know them really well.

Children and young people always experience a high level of respect from everyone involved in looking after them. This respect is also reflected in the quality of environment and the resources available for children and young people.

Children and young people are fully engaged in their care and support. They participate meaningfully and easily in all decisions affecting them.

There is effective and passionate championing of children and young people's legal and human rights. Their sense of wellbeing, worth and identity is protected and nurtured.

Children and young people get the most out of life because all their mental and physical health needs are promptly and comprehensively met.

Meaningful connections to family, including siblings, friends and the community are championed, fostered and sustained.

Children and young people may feel unsupported at times. They are not always valued or understood by the people looking after them. The care and support children and young people receive does not recognise all behaviour is communication.

Children and young people experience relationships overly focussed on rules and routines. Staff are not always sensitive and gentle in their response to distressed behaviours.

Children and young people may not feel respected as the accommodation, facilities and resources do not reflect their needs, wishes and choices.

Children and young people's views do not consistently make a difference. There are limited opportunities for children and young people to express themselves or have their voices heard. Where children and young people's views are provided, these are not listened to or used to support the development of the service.

Children and young people's rights are compromised as staff fail to recognise and address exploitation, discrimination and intolerance.

Children and young people's physical and mental health is not given sufficient attention and these needs are not fully known or effectively met.

Children and young people's sense of belonging and identity are compromised because they are not supported to keep and develop bonds with family, siblings, and friends.

Children and young people's individual ambitions, interests and life skills are consistently supported and developed. They also experience exciting experiences, which broaden their horizons.

Children and young people receive individually tailored support to participate fully in learning and maximise attainment and attendance. Going to, or taking part in preparation for, school, college, or higher education is the norm.

The commitment to children and young people staying in the service, as they become an adult, is absolute. This is reflected in planning, advocacy and enduring relationships and support.

The meeting of children and young people's needs and aspirations is maximised through the implementation of high-quality, SMART* and person-centred personal planning and risk assessment strategies.

*Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

Care practices and activities are institutionalised, repetitive or largely limited to, or aimed at, groups.

Children and young people are disadvantaged because there is limited ambition or support to build on their individual strengths and develop skills. School attendance is low and there is little broader achievement.

Children and young people's right to continuing care is not advocated for and they feel pushed into making a decision to move out before they feel ready and properly prepared.

The extent to which children and young people's needs are met is limited because necessary personal planning and risk assessment strategies are not identified or put into practice.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Assurance, improvement and support actions

Observations of:

- staff practice
- interactions and communications with children and young people
- the experiences of children and young people.

Discussions with:

- people using the service
- relatives, friends and carers of people using the service
- key professionals and other stakeholders
- staff.

Sampling of:

- personal plans (tracking children and young people's experiences)
- service training plan and records
- complaints received by the service
- records relating to the physical environment
- infection prevention and control records
- protection issues and practice frameworks including the child and/or adult protection policy
- accident/incident/restraint records
- continuing care welfare assessments.

Consideration of:

- children and young people's access to advocacy and the use of communication support tools in obtaining their views
- how the physical environment meets children and young people's needs
- how children and young people are supported to be involved in the community and engage in activities/hobbies that they enjoy
- how personal plans are informing care and evidencing changes in children and young people's needs, wishes and choices
- processes in place to support children and young people to keep in touch with those important to them and to engage in their community
- how the service has sought and responded to feedback.

Quality indicator 7.2: Leaders and staff have the capacity and resources to meet and champion children and young people's needs and rights

Key areas include the extent to which:

- leaders and staff are confident in their practice and are well supported
- staffing levels and skills are right to meet the needs and rights of children and young people
- self-evaluation and quality assurance maintain safe care and children and young people's rights. They drive improvement in every aspect of children and young people's lives.

Quality illustrations	
Very good	Weak
Leaders ensure the culture is supportive and empowering. They model consistently high standards of practice and successfully champion the best possible outcomes for children and young people.	The vision for the service lacks clarity and is not sufficiently focussed on children and young people's rights. Leadership lacks the necessary stability, energy or direction.
External managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities and effectively perform these. They play a key role in monitoring the quality of children and young people's experiences, safeguarding and improving outcomes.	External managers are not visible and do not effectively contribute to keeping children and young people safe and improving outcomes.
All transitions are minimised and support trauma-free and successful outcomes. Leaders ensure that the decision for a child or young person to move into the service has a positive impact on them and also takes into account others' needs and rights.	Transitions are poorly planned and decisions are not based on children and young people's needs or best interests. As a result, children and young people may experience unnecessary upset or trauma, which impacts on their wellbeing.

The service has the right number of staff, with the right skills and experience. The staff team is stable, which allows children and young people to develop and enjoy enduring and trusting relationships. Staff are individually equipped and supported to successfully meet all the needs of children and young people and provide the best quality therapeutic, trauma-informed care. Effective support and supervision underpin this and helps staff feel confident and valued in their role. Staff are consistently safely recruited and registered. There is an emphasis on values-based recruitment. Children and young people are actively involved in this process.	Staffing arrangements and the mixture of skills do not meet children and young people's needs and keep them safe. There is a lack of consistency and continuity, which limits children and young people's ability to build trusting relationships. Staff may not feel supported or confident in ensuring children and young people experience therapeutic relationships and trauma-informed practice. Leaders and staff do not value stable, therapeutic relationships as central to children and young people's care and support. There is limited understanding of safer recruitment practices, or these are not followed.
There is continuous, robust evaluation of children and young people's outcomes, experiences and the setting. This ensures they receive the best possible care and support in high-quality surroundings. Leadership and improvement activities drive forward how the promise will be met. This is underpinned through the effective implementation of both child-centred care planning strategies and sustained service development.	There are some systems in place to monitor aspects of service delivery, and the quality of the setting, but they are largely ineffective. The ability of leaders and staff to support children and young people is impacted by this. Opportunities for children and young people to achieve the best outcomes are limited as personal planning and service development do not fully inform practice, are not suitably aspirational and are not guided by risk.

Self-evaluation and improvement support toolbox

Key improvement resources

Key improvement resources are available on our website [here](#).

Assurance, improvement and support actions

Observations of:

- staff practice
- interactions and communications with children and young people
- the experiences of children and young people.

Discussions with:

- people using the service
- relatives, friends and carers of children and young people using the service
- key professionals and other stakeholders
- staff.

Sampling of:

- development plan/improvement plan, including how service is meeting the promise
- personal plans (tracking children and young people's experiences), including risk management strategies
- staff recruitment procedures and records
- service induction and training plan and records
- staff rotas and tools for assessing staffing
- transition plans, including admissions and matching
- accident/incident/restraint records.

Consideration of:

- management oversight and governance of risk
- the analysis of staff skills required to meet the outcomes of those using the service
- how induction is tailored to staff that are new to the service
- how children and young people, or where appropriate, relatives, and carers can be involved in the recruitment process
- how information in personal plans informs staffing
- how leaders monitor staffing levels and skill mix, and when adjustments are made.

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