

How good is our third sector organisation?

How do we know?

March 2014

Version for piloting

Education Scotland

How good is our third sector organisation?

Foreword

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Foreword

To be agreed.

1. The Third Sector

The third sector makes a direct impact on the growth of Scotland's economy, the wellbeing of its citizens and the improvement of its public services.

The third sector - comprising community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, social enterprises, co-operatives and individual volunteers - has an important role in helping the Scottish Government achieve its purpose of creating a more successful country with opportunities for all to flourish, through achieving sustainable economic growth. The term 'third sector' is used throughout this resource to reflect the wide and rich diversity of these organisations.

While this resource is designed to help third sector organisations self-evaluate and plan for improvement more effectively, there is no expectation that this needs to be used for this or any other purpose. Many third sector organisations already have very good systems and processes in place for this which they should continue to use.

2. Building Capacity for Improvement

The continuous improvement process is one that builds the capacity of an organisation or service to understand its local context better and review its own effectiveness in driving improved outcomes. It is also about building the capacity of the workforce to carry out effective self-evaluation, understand and reflect on research and best practice and find creative and innovative approaches to bring about sustained improvement. This process relies on the need to consider each of these elements as part of an integrated process and not as separate or distinct activities.

The culture for self-improvement

Fundamental to the delivery of excellence is a culture where all involved aim for the highest standard of service delivery possible. An embedded culture of self-improvement is the basis for progress towards excellence in provision.

The key components:

- **Looking Inwards** – to evaluate performance at every level and use the information gathered to decide on what needs to be done to improve (self-evaluation);
- **Looking Outwards** – to learn from others, research, best practice and use this to facilitate innovation and creativity and inform improvement actions; and
- **Looking Forwards** – to explore what the future might bring and use this information to anticipate what change is required to ensure the organisation is responsive to future needs.

3. Looking Inwards: Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is about looking inwards. It is about change and improvement, whether gradual or transformational, and is based on reflection, challenge and support. It involves taking considered decisions about actions which result in clear benefits for the people we work with and stakeholders.

Self-evaluation is not a bureaucratic or mechanistic process. It is a reflective process through which organisations and partnerships get to know themselves well and identify the best way forward for the people they work with and other stakeholders.

At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

How are we doing?

- Are we providing appropriate, accessible, high quality services?
- Are we setting and achieving ambitious targets for our services?
- Are we systematically improving the quality of our services?

How do we know?

- Are we gathering evidence to assess how we are doing?
- Are we continuously measuring and evaluating the impact of the services we provide?

What are we going to do now?

- Are we using the evidence we have gathered to support services that have strong outcomes and change those that need more development?
- Are we using robust evidence to plan for future developments so they best meet the needs of the people we work with and other stakeholders?

**How good is our
third sector
organisation?**



How do we know?



Self-evaluation

What key outcomes have we achieved?

**What impact have we had in meeting the needs
of our stakeholders?**

How good is our delivery of key processes?

How good is our operational management?

How good is our strategic leadership?

What is our capacity for improvement?



**What are we going
to do now?**

Self-evaluation can take many forms. There are a wide range of available tools and models that can be used and a range of organisations that can support effective self-evaluation.

This document emphasises a culture in which organisations engage in discussion and reflection based on a shared understanding of quality and a shared vision of their aims. Self-evaluation should be an on-going, reflective process which helps all public services to get to know themselves better. It should promote well-considered innovation and creativity and identify the agenda for change and improvement.

Self-evaluation should be continuous. Using self-evaluation as an integral part of every piece of work provides a good understanding of what is improving and what needs to be adapted or changed.

4. The Three Step Improvement Framework

The Three Step Improvement Framework for Scotland's Public Services has been developed to help unlock and channel the collective knowledge and energy of staff towards a common goal of real and lasting improvement across all public services. The Framework is designed to prompt self-reflection, self-assessment and debate. It is about getting started and creating conditions for implementing improvements that will make a difference.

The following cycle can be used to turn ideas into action and connect action to learning so that the right changes can be developed and spread to maximise improvement.



'The Improvement Guide, Langley et al, 2009, 2nd edition'

This approach is one amongst many that are proven to be effective in certain circumstances. To be effective the change for improvement process must place an emphasis on:

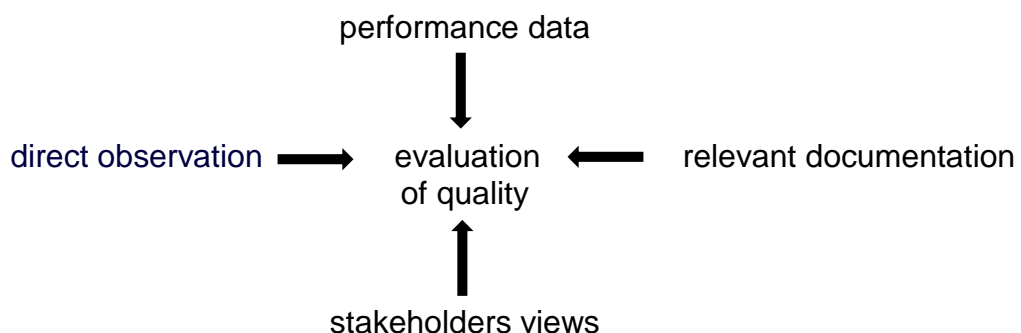
- Individual and organisational leadership;
- Professional learning;
- Process; and
- Improved outcomes and measurable impact.

Having a toolkit of different approaches is important to match most appropriately to specific circumstances. What needs to be done should be informed by provider's self-evaluation activity and other available performance information.

5. How do we gather evidence

Self-evaluation includes gathering evidence which can tell us how well we are meeting the needs of the people we work with and other stakeholders, and what difference we are making for the children, adults, families and communities. There are four main sources from which evidence can ultimately be drawn and these are:

- performance data;
- relevant documentation;
- stakeholders views and feedback; and
- direct observations of practice.



No single source will be sufficient to provide robust evidence and hence good self-evaluation will include a mix of evidence from a range of sources. The principle of **triangulation** has been tried and tested over many years. It entails looking at of one source of evidence, backed up by another and agreed by at least a third line of enquiry.

Performance data

Examples of performance data would be statistical information relating to local and national outcomes.

Relevant documentation

Examples of relevant documentation could be a statement of an organisation's vision, values and aims, improvement plans and public performance reports.

Stakeholders' views

Information can be collected systematically when the people we work with are accessing and using the services. Information should also be collected systematically from non-users and community groups. Organisations should have procedures for surveying the views of the people we work with and other stakeholders using questionnaires and/or focus groups.

Whatever approach is used, gathering information from the people we work with is an essential part of the self-evaluation process. Without it, organisations will find it very difficult to understand the impact of their work. It is almost impossible to have any degree of confidence in the outcomes of self-evaluation without including the views of the people we work with.

Direct observation

Direct observation involves evaluators actually visiting activities and observing the inputs of staff/volunteers and the outcomes for participants first hand. This would involve looking at delivery models, methodology and resources as well as the motivation of the people we work with.

Appendix 1 provides a link to Evaluation Support Scotland's webpage which includes support guides that provide more information on evaluation including common evaluation terms and will be useful for those less familiar with self-evaluation.

6. The Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations

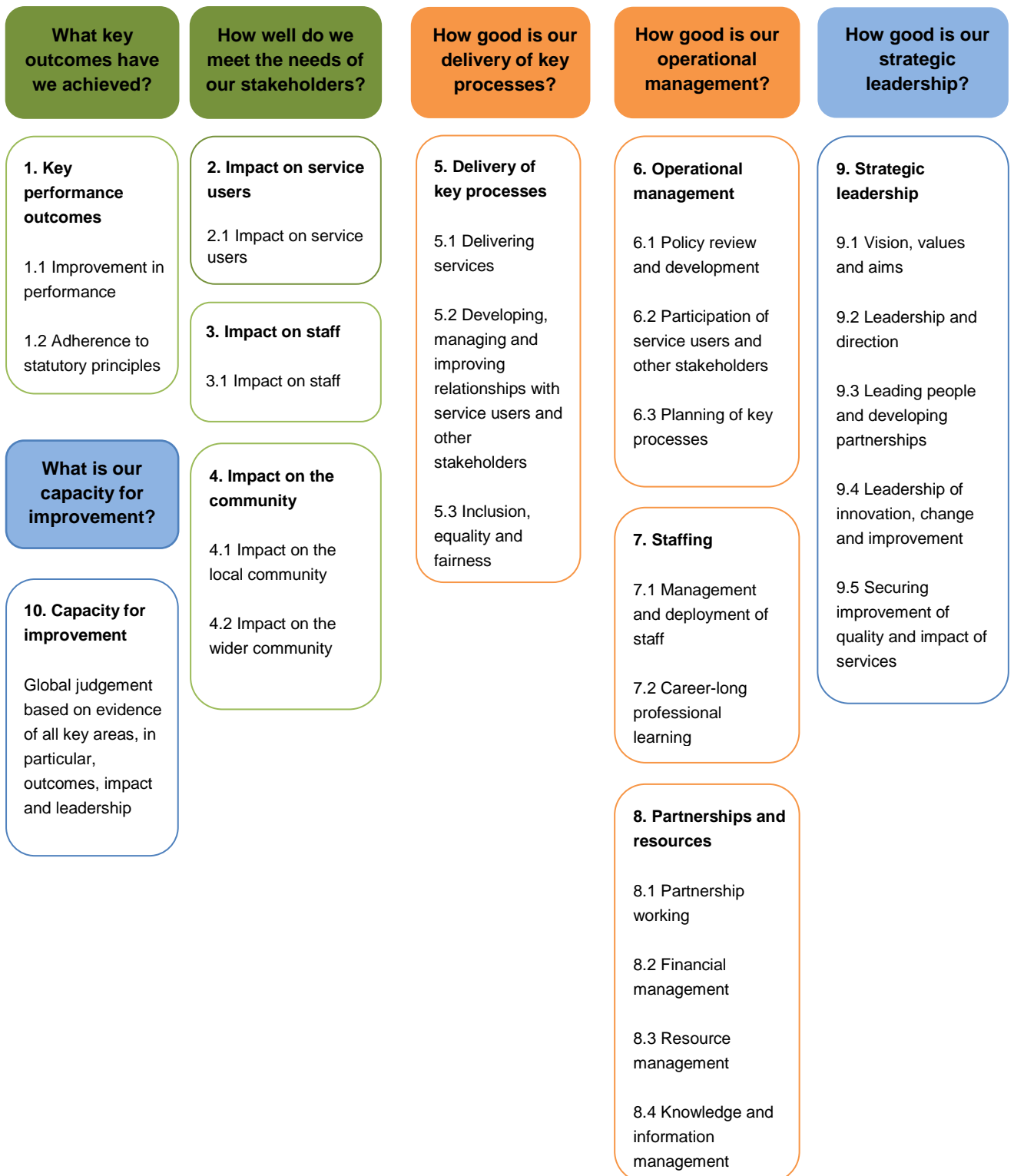
This document is based on the Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations (known as the Overarching Framework). This framework is the basis for many models of evaluation across public services and the third sector.

The Overarching Framework provides a systematic structure for self-evaluation. It is firmly based on the principle that the most effective way of improving standards is to use a combination of rigorous evidence-based self-evaluation alongside independent external inspection or review.

The Overarching Framework is generic. It does not assume a particular organisational structure, type or size. It can be used in its entirety, or quality indicators can be selected to reflect the purpose of individual organisations and meet the specific needs of their stakeholders. Quality indicators can also be used selectively for external scrutiny or validation. The framework can also be used in conjunction with a number of other quality models and awards, for example, the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF), Investors in People, Customer Service Excellence Award and ISO 9001 (British Assessment Bureau). It can be used by individual services, but will have particular value where provision across partnerships is being evaluated.

The framework can also be used thematically by extracting key quality indicators or elements for a specific purpose. The Overarching Framework is organised under six high-level themes which enable systematic evaluation of the quality of services across ten inter-related key areas. The six high-level themes focus first on the demonstrable outcomes and impact of an organisation or service, and then look at the key areas which contribute to these.

Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations, (Overarching Framework)



7. A Framework to Support Evaluation of Third Sector Organisations

This document will focus on some of the key quality indicators developed from the Overarching Framework that may be used by third sector organisations to support their own self-evaluation for improvement.

The quality indicators highlighted in the document will help identify strengths in the work of the third sector organisations and signpost areas for improvement. It will help them identify what difference they are making and what they need to do next.

HM Inspectors will use these quality indicators when carrying out an external review of third sector organisations. The use of shared quality indicators supports a partnership approach to evaluation where internal and external reviews have a shared language and agenda.

The framework has been designed to be used at more than one level and, or by very diverse organisations. For example, it can be used at the level of:

- strategic management across a large third sector organisation;
- operational management of a coherent group of services or individuals; and
- an individual or the delivery of a specific service or activity.

The following pages provide examples of the kinds of evidence which should be taken into account when identifying strengths and weaknesses and assessing the impact of these on the people we work with and other stakeholders. Illustrations of **very good** are provided for each quality indicator. These illustrations are intended to provide examples of evidence and practice, not to be fully comprehensive nor used as a checklist. Outcomes and practice not described in the illustrations will still contribute to the evaluation. By using evidence to gauge performance against the illustrations, evaluators can arrive at decisions about strengths and weaknesses and the level of performance using the six-point scale.

What key outcomes have we achieved?

1.1 Improvement in performance

This indicator relates to knowing how well the service or organisation is improving. It measures how effectively organisations gather and utilise performance data to assist them to improve. There is a clear expectation that performance data will be routinely collected, analysed, shared as appropriate and used to inform future planning and continuous improvement.

Themes

- Performance in relation to key purposes.
- Progress against aims, objectives and targets.
- Meeting strategic priorities, aims and objectives including relationship to national priorities.
- Delivering the agreed outcomes as per funding agreements.
- Performance data and measures showing change over time.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Data which shows change, including any trends.
- Measures relating to improvements.
- Measurable outcomes from strategic and operational plans.
- Data which provides indications of the success of a service or organisation in maintaining or improving the quality of the service it provides.
- Information against the outcomes established in any funding agreements.

Illustration of very good

- Performance information clearly demonstrates improvement over time against national priorities and planned outcomes.
- Clear, quantifiable targets are set and regularly reviewed in a systemic way.
- Emerging trends within data are identified and suitably responded to.
- Outcomes agreed with funders are met and in some cases exceeded.
- Progress is regularly reported to key stakeholders.
- Outcomes are improving over time.
- Almost all the outcomes achieved by the organisation are as good as, and most are better than those achieved by similar organisations.
- The numbers of people we work with from protected and vulnerable group's shows sustained increase.
- Systems are in place to regularly review and analyse performance to sustain improvements throughout the timescale of an area of work.

Challenge questions

- What performance information do we have in place and how is it used to inform improvement planning?
- What quantitative and qualitative targets are in place? How are these set and

evaluated?

- What targets have we achieved or not achieved?
- What measures of outcomes do we use? How do we measure the impact?
- What changes or impacts do they reveal? How do we know?
- What trends in the data, if any, have we identified? How have we responded?
- How well does our organisation use data over time to improve outcomes?
- What does performance information reveal against set targets?
- Have we regularly reviewed our performance and what action have we taken as a result of these reviews?

What key outcomes have we achieved?

1.2 Adherence to statutory principles

This indicator relates to how well the organisation manages finances, meets appropriate legislative requirements, and responds to national and local guidance, and codes of practice.

Themes

- Financial performance.
- Compliance with legislation, regulation and codes of practice.
- Responsiveness to policies, guidance and codes of practice.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Quantitative and qualitative data from discussions with stakeholders.
- Analysis of financial performance, including analysis of data and any financial reviews or audits.
- Evidence of compliance with appropriate legislation, regulation, codes of practice and guidance.

Illustration of very good

- Financial performance takes account of local and national standards and priorities. The budgetary management and financial decisions we have made reflect the needs of our organisation and the people we work with and have led to clear improvements in people's lives and their communities.
- Services are cost effective.
- The organisation meets and/or exceeds requirements set down in legislation, regulation codes of practice and policy.
- The management board, staff at all levels and volunteers are aware of and comply with their responsibilities in respect of legislation, regulation and codes of practice.
- There are high levels of staff awareness of legislation, regulation and codes of practice applying to their work and clear adherence to standards.
- The organisations the service supports are aware of and comply with their responsibilities in respect to legislation, regulation and codes of practice.
- The organisation has a system in place to ensure they promptly become aware of and respond to changes in legislation, regulation and codes of practice.
- The organisation works towards and contributes to local and national guidance and policies.

Challenge questions

- How do we know that we comply with appropriate legislation, regulation, codes of practice and policies?
- How well do we ensure the organisations we support comply with appropriate

legislation, regulation, codes of practice and policies?

- Are we aware of what legislation, regulation and codes of practice we need to comply with? Do we have a process in place to ensure we keep up to date with changes?
- How good are we at adjusting our work in response to changing legislation, regulation codes of practice and policy?
- Are the management board, all staff and volunteers aware of and comply with their responsibilities in regards to legislation, regulation, codes of practice and policies?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

2.1 Impact on the people we work with

This indicator relates to the impact your organisation has on the groups and people you work with, or in the case of intermediary organisations the beneficiaries of the organisations you directly support. The range of evidence you choose to look at should demonstrate that the work you do is having a positive effect on the lives of the people you work with. Overall the evidence should demonstrate the following themes.

Themes:

- The extent to which the people and groups you work with are motivated and actively involved in their own growth and development.
- The extent to which the services you or your members provide which are person, family or community centred.
- Qualitative information and quantitative data that demonstrates the extent to which the people you work with are **included, participating and achieving**.
- The extent to which the people you work with are reporting that their experience of the service or support received is enabling them to be: **safe, nurtured, healthy, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included**. (Please note: To assist you to understand better a simple glossary of these terms can be found in Appendix 3)
- The extent to which services meet the needs of all potential users including those from equalities groups.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Qualitative evidence gathered from direct observation, focus groups and other sources that participation is having a positive impact on the lives of individuals and groups.
- Discussion and feedback with stakeholders and the people you work with which clearly demonstrates they are: included, participating and achieving, safe, nurtured, healthy, active, respected, and responsible.
- Records of accreditation and qualifications achieved by the people you work with.
- Quantitative data showing participation, retention, achievement, progression and access to services by the people you work with.
- Collated and analysed surveys relating to the service provided.
- Information gathered from focus groups.
- Records including correspondence relating to compliments and the prompt handing of complaints.

Illustration of level 5 very good

- Almost all of the people we work with are highly motivated and actively involved in their own development.
- Almost all of the people we work with are included, participating, achieving and progressing very well.

- There is clear evidence that the life chances of more vulnerable groups are being improved a result of our engagement either directly or indirectly.
- Almost all of the people we work with report feeling; safer, nurtured, healthier, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included.
- The service is inclusive. We work with individuals and groups from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Challenge questions

- What evidence do we have that our organisation or member organisations is making a positive difference to people's lives? What is the difference? How do we know?
- What evidence do we have that the people we work with are: participating and included, achieving and progressing? How might we best illustrate this?
- To what extent is our organisation helping the people we work with to be: safer, nurtured, healthier, achieving, active, respected, responsible and included? How do we know this?
- How well do we ensure the people we work with are at the centre of all the work? How good is our person centred planning?
- How do we ensure that the people we work with are treated both fairly and equally and in a timely manner?
- As an organisation how do we value, support and actively promote social, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, language and cultural diversity?
- What does the data tell us about under-participating and under-performing groups? Who are we not working with and why not?
- What evidence do we have that our organisation is making a difference to people's lives? How do we know? What is the difference?
- To what extent are member organisations helped to become more effective and more efficient?
- How good are we at recognising compliments and dealing with complaints?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

3.1 Impact on staff and volunteers

This indicator focuses on the extent to which paid and voluntary staff are supported and empowered to deliver high quality services. It deals with the motivation of paid and voluntary staff, the impact of opportunities for them to learn, develop and improve their practices, peer and where appropriate line management relationships. It also looks at effective management of change. Overall the evidence should demonstrate that staff and volunteer development is resulting in a positive effect on the lives of children, adults, families or communities.

Themes:

The extent to which paid staff and volunteers demonstrate the extent to which they:

- feel motivated, confident and valued;
- share a positive, clear vision across the organisation;
- improve their practice through regular access to relevant, quality training and development activities;
- work in teams effectively;
- enjoy an empowering culture; and
- benefit from effective line management arrangements.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Responses to staff and volunteer questionnaires, surveys, focus groups and interviews.
- Staff and volunteer absence levels, frequency of staff and volunteer turnover.
- Uptake of recent training and development opportunities.
- Formal support and supervision, staff appraisal systems in place.
- Achievement of nationally recognised awards such as Investors in People.
- Knowledge, skills and qualifications of staff and volunteers.

Illustration of level 5 very good

- Staff and volunteer absence and turnover levels are consistently low.
- Staff surveys and questionnaires regularly report high levels of satisfaction.
- Effective support and supervision and, or staff appraisal structures operate.
- Staff and volunteers are highly motivated, committed and enjoy working within an empowering culture.
- Training and development needs are regularly identified and responded to in a timely manner.
- Effective line management arrangements operate across the organisation. A common vision and ethos is shared at all levels.

Paid staff and volunteers:

- Have a clear and shared understanding of what is involved in providing a

high-quality service.

- Are motivated, and meaningfully involved in improving the quality of the organisation.
- Readily engage in professional and voluntary learning which improves our service delivery. They make very effective contributions to improving the organisation and work together well in teams and with partners.
- Recognise their personal responsibility for continuing improvement, they perceive that they are valued, consulted and supported, and that their views and skills, individually and as teams, influence how the organisation improves the quality of its work and its impact on children, adults, families and communities.
- Have very positive views on conditions of work, facilities and services, and development opportunities. They feel supported and enabled to provide a high-quality service.

Challenge questions

- How do you ensure staff and volunteers feel valued and motivated? How do you know?
- Are staff and volunteer absence levels an issue? What is the frequency of staff and volunteer turnover?
- What systems do you have in place for gauging staff and volunteer feedback? How effective are they? What do they tell you?
- How do you use information gathered to take forward improvements?
- How are training needs identified across staff and volunteers? How do you ensure equity of access?
- What records are kept of training? How are these used to capture improved working?
- Who has overall responsibility for learning in your organisation?
- How effective are your support and supervision and, or staff appraisal arrangements?
- Have you won any nationally recognised employer awards in the last three years?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

4.1 Impact on the local community

This indicator relates to the direct impact your organisation is having on local communities whether geographic or of interest. In the case of intermediary organisations this relates to beneficiaries of the organisations you directly support. It focuses on measuring the extent to which communities are stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive. Overall, the range of evidence should demonstrate what difference the services you provide are making to improving specific communities of interest.

Themes:

- Confident, skilled and active local community organisation members.
- Active and influential roles in local and wider decision making.
- Developed local services, where appropriate, in response to priority needs.
- Effective planning, management and evaluation arrangements, ensured that they are inclusive and value social and cultural diversity.
- Productive networks and relationships with other agencies and organisations, including statutory and Third Sector.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Qualitative evidence gathered from direct observation, focus groups and other sources that participation is having a positive impact on communities;
- Discussion with stakeholders and feedback from community members;
- Attendance at community activities and meetings;
- Quantitative data showing participation, retention, achievement, progression and access to services by communities;
- Achievement of nationally recognised customer service awards;
- Records including correspondence relating to complaints and compliments;
- Collated and analysed surveys; and
- Information gathered from focus groups.

Illustration of level 5 very good

- Community organisation members are confident, skilled and active in their community of interest.
- Members are confident in their ability to influence and shape local and wider decision making about priorities for their community.
- Highly effective partnership working between community organisations and relevant agencies contribute effectively to building community strength and resilience.
- Community organisations are empowered. They are well informed and actively engage as equal partners with both statutory and third sector agencies.
- Community organisations are well informed and able to influence and shape

the impact of changes that affect their specific community of interest.

- Almost all community organisations, where appropriate, deliver high-quality services and activities that respond to appropriately identified and researched priority needs in their particular community of interest.
- Community organisations are open and inclusive in their membership. They promote their activities effectively and welcome participation from a wide cross-section of their community.
- Community organisations value social, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, language and cultural diversity. They ensure that equality and diversity differences including economic factors which cause deprivation are identified and well understood. Equality and diversity differences which could be barriers to participation are overcome.

Challenge questions

- What evidence do we have that our engagement and, or support makes a positive difference to communities of interest?
- What evidence do we have that our members are confident, skilled and active in their community of interest?
- How do we know that member organisations are confident in their ability to influence and shape local and wider decision making about priorities which directly impact on their community of interest?
- How effective are local networks?
- What contribution has our organisation made to improved and increased networking?
- How successful is our organisation and its members in delivering services based on identified need? How do we know?
- How inclusive is our organisation? How do we know?
- Does the evidence show that social, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, language and cultural differences are recognised and celebrated?
- How inclusive are our member organisations? How do we know?
- How do we ensure member organisations value, support and actively promote social, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, language and cultural diversity?

How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

4.2 Impact on the wider community

This indicator relates to the impact the organisation has on the wider community. The wider community means geographic and communities of interest at regional, national and international level. It looks at whether the organisation is open to new ideas, learns from leading practice elsewhere, is adaptable and responds flexibly to change. It also looks at how well the organisation supports other organisations to impact on the wider community when the organisation is acting in an intermediary role.

Themes:

- Encourages and supports creativity and innovation.
- Learns from, and adopts, leading-edge practice and research.
- Influences wider policy or practice.
- Anticipates and responds rapidly and flexibly to change.
- Identifies demographic, economic or social changes and responds by matching resources to meet new needs.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Quantitative and qualitative data from discussions with stakeholders.
- A range of innovative strategies and programmes that impact beyond the services delivered by the organisation.
- Activities that have their origins in best practice developed elsewhere.
- Influential contributions to national and international developments.

Illustration of very good

- The organisation has initiated a range of innovative programmes, many in partnership with other organisations. These are, directly through operational work or indirectly through support to partner organisations, leading to significant improvements in the lives of people you work with, their families and communities.
- Staff are actively encouraged to innovate and any risks are carefully assessed and managed well.
- There are many examples of leading-edge practice from other organisations and areas being adapted and used either within the organisation or by other organisations through support from this organisation.
- The organisation contributes to, and when acting as an intermediary supports other organisations to contribute to, a range of regional, national or international bodies which are influencing national policy and practice.
- The organisation effectively forecasts change, assesses probable impact and plans to effectively meet changing needs.
- The organisation supports other organisations to meet and embrace changing needs.

Challenge questions

- To what extent have we used new thinking and research findings to shape our policies and practices?
- To what extent have we supported others to use new thinking and research findings to shape their own policies and practices?
- To what extent have we developed innovative and creative new practice?
- To what extent have we supported others to develop innovative and creative new practice?
- To what extent have we influenced policy and practice?
- To what extent have we supported others to influence policy and practice?
- To what extent have we anticipated demographic or other changes to improve the relevance and responsiveness of our service and the services provided by those we support?

How good is our operational management?

5.1 Delivery of services

This indicator relates to relevance, suitability and quality of the services we deliver to individuals, organisations and others. It examines structures and arrangements for service delivery. It takes a closer look at how well we tailor services to the needs of others, in doing so ensuring a degree of flexibility to accommodate unplanned changes. It also examines what systems are in place to secure accurate and honest feedback. The use of agreed service delivery agreements and quality improvement systems are also included.

Themes

- Services that are consistently delivered to the highest standard.
- Services that are well planned and tailored to identified need.
- Flexible and adaptable approaches to service delivery.
- Agreements clearly set out services to be provided.
- Effective quality improvement measures.
- Services delivered within agreed timescales and within budget.
- Effective use of stakeholder feedback to inform improvements in service delivery.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- The quality of service delivery plans, service agreements and agreed quality improvement measures.
- Feedback from stakeholders and the people we work with on the quality of service provided.
- Collated and analysed stakeholder satisfaction surveys.
- Reviews of progress against agreed targets.

Illustration of very good

- Successful organisations are successful in sustaining the quality of service delivery at a high level.
- The structure for the delivery services is very well planned, flexible, responsive to change and includes aspects of innovative practice.
- Services based on identified need are successfully delivered within the timescales agreed.
- Detailed agreements are in place. These clearly set out the specification for the services being delivered. Robust quality improvement measures are agreed and acted on.
- The organisation regularly seeks feedback from stakeholders and participants on the service delivered. It is acted upon without delay. Considerable emphasis is placed on positive customer satisfaction.

Challenge questions

- How do we know the services we deliver are what the people or member organisations we work with need?
- How do we ensure our services are consistently delivered to a high standard?
- How well do we plan the services we deliver? How often do we sit down with the people we work with and review progress against agreed delivery targets?
- How detailed are our service delivery agreements? How robust are we in ensuring quality improvement measures relating to service delivery are acted upon?
- How much value do we place on feedback from the people we work with and other stakeholders? How well do we use this information to improve the services we deliver?

How good is our operational management?

5.3 Inclusion, equality and fairness

This indicator relates to how well the organisation reduces barriers to access and participation, foster positive attitudes to social, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, language and cultural diversity, and includes excluded or marginalised communities, groups and individuals.

Themes

- Inclusion of excluded or marginalised communities, groups and individuals.
- Addressing barriers to access and participation.
- Access to specialist services to meet specific needs.
- Promoting and celebrating positive attitudes to social, disability, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, language and cultural diversity.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Quantitative and qualitative data from discussions with stakeholders including those from potentially excluded or marginalised.
- Needs analysis demonstrating both needs and unmet needs.
- Planning and performance data which demonstrates effective planning to meet the needs of, and then inclusion, of those potentially marginalised or excluded.
- Data which provides indications of the success of a service or organisation in maintaining or improving inclusion, equality and fairness both directly and through organisations it supports and within partnership working.

Illustration of very good

- A strong ethos and practice of inclusion permeates all the work of the organisation at all levels.
- Staff at all levels are clear on their roles and responsibilities in regard to inclusion, equality and fairness.
- The organisation provides effective services, or supports other organisations to provide effective services, for otherwise marginalised service users including early intervention, support within universal services and targeted additional support are effective.
- The organisation effectively promotes and celebrates inclusion, equality and fairness and positive attitudes to diversity.

Challenge questions

- How good we are at ensuring excluded and marginalised communities, groups and individuals are included?
- How effective are we in removing barriers to participation?
- How readily do participants have access to specialist resources or services to meet their needs?

- How effectively do we target our work to reach those intended? How do we know?
- How well do we promote inclusion, equality and fairness and positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity?

How good is our operational management?

6.3 Planning of key processes

This indicator relates to the quality, coherence and impact of planning, monitoring and evaluation arrangements within the organisation. It takes a closer look at the role and effectiveness of internal management structures such as boards of management and their contribution to decision making. It also relates to how well the organisation supports others to have effective planning, monitoring and evaluation arrangements. It can also be used to look at the coherence and impact of planning, monitoring and evaluation arrangements that are shared with partners.

Themes

- Effective operational management.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities within the decision making process.
- Developing, implementing and evaluating plans.
- Structure and content of plans.
- Effective use of management information.
- Joint improvement planning with partner organisations and services.
- Planning for sustainability.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Coherent, effective, linked plans which articulate well across the organisation.
- Analysis of performance information which demonstrates measurable outcomes from strategic and operational plans.
- Plans developed with partners are regularly monitored and evaluated by the partnership.

Illustration of very good

- Decision-making processes are effective, responsive and clear to staff the people the organisation works with and other stakeholders alike.
- Board of management members and senior managers have a clear understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.
- The organisation actively seeks out board members with specific skill sets which are beneficial in ensuring the organisation is effectively managed.
- Communication between staff and board of management is regular and effective. Management decisions are fully informed as a result.
- The organisation has coherent plans which provide a sound basis for delivering and evaluating services. Different plans within the organisation; operational, business, strategic, are clearly linked and provide a coherent picture across the organisation.
- The organisation has clear targets and priorities, including those set out in various funding agreements, embedded in their plans. Reporting mechanisms are in place to ensure high levels of feedback on performance against these targets and priorities. An appropriate level of performance information is gathered and analysed to inform conclusions on performance.

- Staff are clear about their roles in planning, monitoring and evaluation. Staff and volunteers at all levels are clear about their role in delivering against the organisations' plans.
- Channels of communication are clear and effective. Senior staff make effective use of planning cycles to monitor and manage the work of the organisation.
- Planning supports the sustainability of services. Partnership plans are shared and set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of each partner organisation. All partners are actively engaged in developing, implementing and evaluating these shared plans.
- The organisation effectively supports organisations it is in a support role with, to develop coherent, sustainable plans which include effective monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Challenge questions

- How effective are our decision making processes?
- How effective are our mechanisms for developing, implementing and evaluating plans?
- How accountable are we to the people we work with and our other stakeholders? How can we demonstrate this?
- How do operational plans articulate with the strategy and business plans?
- How well do we use performance information in planning?
- How involved are staff and volunteers at all levels in planning and evaluation?
- How well do we ensure that plans are sustainable?
- How well do we evaluate the outcomes of planned activities?
- What improvements have resulted from reflective practice and self-evaluation?
- What improvements have resulted from planning?
- How effective is the input of partners to planning?
- How effectively do we enable the organisations we support to plan, monitor and evaluate?

How good is our operational management?

8.1 Partnership working

This indicator refers to the role of the organisation in promoting and encouraging effective partnership working. It can be used for organisations to consider their roles and engagement in other appropriate partnerships. Where the organisation has a national or lead role, how effective is it in bringing together key partners at a strategic level to ensure effective partnership working at a local level.

Themes

- Clarity of purposes and aims.
- Service level and funding agreements, roles and remits.
- Working across agencies and disciplines.
- Clarity of staff roles and responsibilities in partnerships.
- Sharing of skills, knowledge and experience to improve outcomes.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Qualitative evidence of effective partnership working including feedback from all partners involved.
- Partnership agreements that are clear, staff work to and are regularly reviewed and evaluated.
- Evidence gathered from discussion with staff at all levels that they are clear about their roles and contribution to partnerships.
- Evidence from supported organisations about the enabling role this organisation plays in their partnership arrangements.
- Partners learning from each other which lead to better outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.

Illustration of very good

- Partners are clear about their roles and contributions to achieving the planned outcome. Partnership agreements set a framework in which joint working between partners is well established.
- Engagement and communication between partners is regular, structured, supportive and efficient.
- The organisation is actively engaged in planning, delivering, monitoring and evaluating joint projects. These joint projects result in improved services for the people they work with and offer value for money.
- Staff and volunteers understand their roles and responsibilities within partnerships. They constantly seek opportunities for improvement and development in all partnerships. They are clear about how their time is best spent within partnerships to secure positive impacts for service users, their families and communities.
- The organisation provides strong leadership and is a role model for other organisations in terms of building, sustaining and evaluating partnership

working to improve outcomes.

Challenge questions

- How clearly have the purposes and aims of partnerships been communicated to our own staff, volunteers and partner organisations?
- How useful and clear are the partnership agreements we have entered into including those with funders?
- How effectively do we work together across agencies and disciplines?
- How well do our staff and volunteers work with others in partnerships?
- How effectively do we support organisations to develop effective partnerships?
- Do we actively seek out and respond positively to potential partnerships which will lead to better outcomes for the people we work with?

How good is our operational management?

8.2 Financial management

This indicator refers to the organisation taking a rigorous and thorough approach to managing budgets and an enterprising approach to seeking funding. It relates to the organisations capacity to manage finances to deliver effective, efficient services which result in positive impacts on individuals, families and communities. Where the organisation acts as an intermediary or broker it also relates to their capacity to effectively manage the allocation of funding to deliver positive impacts.

Themes

- Setting budgets.
- Enterprise in securing funding.
- Range and implementation of financial procedures and controls.
- Processes for collecting, analysis and communication of financial information.
- Providing effective intermediary or broker services.
- Financial planning that takes account of risk management and sustainability.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Financial plans which are coherent and rest within wider strategic and operation planning and include risk management and aim for sustainability.
- Successful securing of funding from a wide variety of sources.
- Sound financial procedures and checks which ensure income received by the organisation and which is allocated by the organisation to others supports positive impacts on individuals, families and communities.
- Regular communication of accurate financial information to the people we work with and other stakeholders.
- Funding arrangements set up by the organisation when acting in an intermediary, grant awarding or broker role are clear and effective.

Illustration of very good

- Senior staff and management boards contribute effectively to financial sourcing, planning and management. This process demonstrates clear links to the organisations plans and to financial scrutiny within the organisation.
- Senior staff and management boards receive high quality financial reports and actively monitor budget performance across all of the organisation's services. There are clear procedures in place to identify and deal effectively with budget variances. Arrangements for financial planning and expenditure are transparent, fully use a wide range of performance information, involve risk management and aim for sustainability.
- All budget holders and all other staff with financial responsibilities are clear about and follow the organisation's financial procedures. Staff are effectively supported in this by those with specific financial responsibilities for the organisation.
- Budgets are sourced and allocated to meet the priorities of stakeholders

including funding bodies.

- When acting in an intermediary, funder or broker role the organisation has clear and transparent financial procedures, including where necessary audit procedures, which are understood and followed by those organisations receiving funding.
- The organisation has an appropriate level of reserves.
- The organisation is clear about its financial risks and has controls in place to reduce these risks.
- Annual accounts are produced to an appropriate timescale and understood by senior staff and the management board.

Challenge questions

- How comprehensive and effective are our financial procedures and controls?
- How well equipped are budget holders to implement financial procedures and controls?
- How well do we allocate budgets in line with planned priorities?
- How enterprising are we in securing additional funding? How do we know?
- How consistent are our budget allocations with local and national priorities?
- How well do we manage funds in the role of broker or funder?
- How well do we manage and reduce financial risk? How do we know?
- How well do we plan for the sustainability of our finances?
- How engaged are the board and all senior staff in reviewing the financial position of the organisation?

How good is our strategic leadership?

9.3 Leading people and developing partnerships

This indicator relates to the effectiveness of the organisation in building capacity for leadership at all levels within the organisation, with any organisation it supports and where relevant across the sector. It covers building positive working relationships and ensuring successful outcomes with stakeholders and partners. It also looks at the effectiveness of senior staff and management boards in regard to leadership, co-working with partners and empowerment of the wider staff team.

Themes:

- Developing leadership capacity
- Building and sustaining relationships
- Teamwork and partnerships

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Planning and performance data which demonstrates effective leadership.
- Qualitative evidence of staff and other stakeholders being empowered to build their leadership skills and take on leadership roles.
- Evidence gathered from discussion with staff at all levels that they feel supported to take on leadership roles and that this is enhancing the impact of the services they provide.
- Data which provides indications of the success of the organisation in maintaining or improving leadership and team working internally, through organisations it supports and within partnership working.
- Feedback from partner organisations and those the organisation supports indicating strong and effective relationships.

Illustration of very good

- Senior staff and the management board use a wide range of effective leadership skills and motivate others to give of their best.
- The organisation has an empowering culture which supports all staff, partners and other agencies the organisation supports to develop their leadership capacities.
- Staff across the organisation understand that they have a key role to play in taking forward the work of the organisation. They feel able and are confident to exercise initiative, share responsibility and adopt lead roles in their area of responsibility. Talents are recognised and nurtured.

Challenge questions

- To what extent does our leadership support a shared ethos of quality improvement and staff empowerment?
- To what extent are staff, volunteers and the organisations we support empowered to take appropriate leadership in their own areas of work?

- How do we ensure that staff and volunteers are enabled to give of their best?
- How well do we develop the leadership capacities of staff and volunteers at all levels?
- How do we ensure that relationships with staff, volunteers and partners are characterised by trust?
- How do we ensure that the enthusiasm and commitment of staff, volunteers and key partners is mobilised and focused on securing improved impacts on the people and communities we work with? How do we know?
- To what extent does our ethos promote teamwork and collegiality?

How good is our strategic leadership?

9.5 Securing improvement of quality and impact of services

This indicator relates to the how organisations secure improvement in services through self-evaluation, being innovative and contributing to national and local outcomes. This includes how organisations with an intermediary role support other organisations to apply the findings of self-evaluation to bring about improvement. It provides a basis for evaluating how well services are evaluated, improved and reported to stakeholders. It examines the rigour, robustness and consistency of organisations' quality assurance and improvement arrangements.

Themes:

- Evaluating information from stakeholders.
- Evaluating outcomes and impact.
- Arrangements for reflective practice and self-evaluation.
- Planning for improvement and monitoring progress.
- Reporting progress to stakeholders.

Evidence of demonstrable outcomes will include but is not limited to:

- Qualitative data from feedback from stakeholders.
- Data from funded organisation showing systematic self-evaluation.
- Evidence demonstrating a cycle of self-evaluation is present and informing planning in each organisation.
- Evidence of work priorities and methods changed in light of information gleaned from evaluation.
- Examples of feedback reporting to stakeholders.

Illustration of very good

- The organisation uses a variety of effective methods to gather feedback from the people they work with and other stakeholders.
- Evaluation is rigorous, comprehensive, systematic and transparent.
- Staff systematically evaluate the outcomes and impact of services they provide.
- Staff and volunteers reflect regularly on their practice and make improvements.
- Self-evaluation is conducted at regular intervals using self-evaluation frameworks and improvements are made as a result.
- The organisation has effective arrangements to plan and implement service improvements.
- The organisation regularly uses a range of effective methods to report progress to key stakeholders, including the people the organisation works with.

Challenge questions

- How effective are our mechanisms to evaluate information from the people we work with, communities and other stakeholders?

- How well do we evaluate the outcomes of planned activities? How do we know?
- How do we ensure that the feedback we obtain from participants and stakeholders gives us the information we need to improve?
- What improvements have resulted from reflective practice and self-evaluation?
- What improvements have resulted from planning?
- How do we ensure that stakeholders are kept fully informed about improvements?

Appendix 1 Useful links

[Evaluation Support Scotland's website home page](#)

[Education Scotland's webpages on inspection and review](#)

[Scottish Government's webpage showing the national outcomes](#)

Appendix 2 The six-point scale

Evaluation can be carried out using a six-point scale, though it is not necessary to do this.

Level 6	excellent	outstanding or sector leading
Level 5	very good	major strengths
Level 4	good	important strengths with areas for improvement
Level 3	satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Level 2	weak	important weaknesses
Level 1	unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

An evaluation can be arrived at in a range of contexts. We need to bear in mind that awarding levels using a quality scale will always be more of a professional skill than a technical process. However, the following general guidelines should be consistently applied.

An evaluation of **excellent** applies to provision which is sector-leading and where the experiences and achievements of the people we work with are of a very high quality. An evaluation of excellent represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice and is worth disseminating beyond the organisation/partnership. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

An evaluation of **very good** applies to provision characterised by major strengths. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish service users' experiences. Whilst an evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It implies that it is fully appropriate to continue to make provision without significant adjustment. However, there is an expectation that the organisation/partnership will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.

An evaluation of **good** applies to provision characterised by important strengths which, taken together, clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of **good** represents a standard of provision in which the strengths have a significantly positive impact. However, the quality of service users' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the organisation/partnership should seek to improve further the areas of important strength and also take action to address the areas for improvement.

An evaluation of **satisfactory** applies to provision characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of **satisfactory** indicates that service users have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on service users' experiences. However, while the weaknesses are not important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of service users' experiences. It implies that the

organisation/partnership should take action to address areas of weakness by building on its strengths.

An evaluation of **weak** applies to provision which has some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of **weak** may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish service users' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the organisation/partnership.

An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** applies when there are major weaknesses in provision requiring immediate remedial action. Service users' experiences are at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, staff responsible for provision evaluated as **unsatisfactory** will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside other staff or agencies in or beyond the organisation/partnership.

Appendix 3: Glossary of terms

Programmes and activities that are:

Safe

We support individuals and group members in a safe and secure environment.

Healthy

We ensure individual's health needs are met. Through our activities we encourage people to maintain a healthy lifestyle in terms of mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

Active

We encouraged people to pursue active interests and join local organisations and community groups.

Nurtured

We provide a nurturing and caring environment for all participants.

Achieving

We support, encourage and guide people in their learning and development through education, and within the community. We can evidence personal progression, personal achievement and increased motivation which is improving circumstances and life chances.

Respected

We value each person as a unique individual.

Responsible

We encourage children, young people and adults to learn values and respect for others. We also encourage and support them to participate in activities that help them to develop these values and skills.

Included

We ensure children, young people and adults are directly involved in making plans for their future. We actively encourage them to express their views.