

External quality arrangements for the review of Career Information, Advice and Guidance services delivered by Skills Development Scotland

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Foreword

The publication of the policy paper [Career Information, Advice and Guidance in Scotland: A Framework for Service Redesign and Improvement](#) in March 2011 was a key stage in the development and modernisation of the national provision of careers support. The paper highlighted the Scottish Government commitment to an all-age universal Career Information, Advice and Guidance service provided through Skills Development Scotland (SDS). In addition, it highlighted the role of partnerships in developing and improving this provision. Part of this partnership working is the engagement of Education Scotland in supporting quality assurance and improvement.

Education Scotland and SDS have worked closely in partnership over a period of rapid change to develop a quality framework which supports SDS' internal self-assessment processes, and underpins the external review of provision. During this period, SDS has developed a new model of delivery with a greater focus on developing an individual's career management skills. In addition, they have adopted a more sophisticated model of service delivery, using, for example, the web presence My World of Work. In this fast-changing environment, it is helpful to have some wider reflection on how well the new careers delivery model is working and how we can make the delivery of careers support services more effective. The approach to external scrutiny and reporting identified in these arrangements will help support this process.

In the changing landscape of employment, the notion of a job for life is likely to be very unusual. For our economy to grow and our people to prosper, there needs to be a greater emphasis on career management skills throughout life. Scotland's people need greater access to timely and high quality support in developing their skills and their ability to thrive in the job market. It is therefore of growing importance that the style and quality of careers support changes, develops and improves to help individuals in this fast moving environment.

I am delighted now to be able to introduce the arrangements to you in this publication. Looking forward, I am confident that the new arrangements will help the sector develop, and will be of support to those working in careers advice, including those partners outside SDS. We now have a set of arrangements to take forward which will help drive continuous improvement during this time of change, and serve Scotland's people well.

Alan Armstrong
Strategic Director
Education Scotland

1 Education Scotland quality framework

1.1 Introduction

The indicators in this framework are arranged under **three high level principles**, addressing **five key questions** which Education Scotland is adopting for evaluation purposes. These are supported by an overall evaluation of the capacity for improvement

Outcomes and impact

- How well are customers progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?
- How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?

Service delivery

- How good is our delivery of key services?
- How good is our management of service delivery?

Leadership and quality culture

- How good is our strategic leadership?

1.3 Using core quality indicators and sources of evidence

The core quality indicators in the framework and the themes to which they refer will be used as a structure to gather evidence, and as prompts in the production of the final report. In an external review of a local authority area, we will look for evidence against each of the core quality indicators.

The gathering of evidence on which to base evaluations will be kept manageable by carefully-planned sampling and cross-referencing of all evidence sources. The key sources of evidence during external review will come from professional dialogue, from what reviewers actually observe and from various data sets. In addition, we will take account of the views of people who are closely involved with the local authority area, such as customers, schools and partner agencies, as well as staff. We will also use local and national data. Where weaknesses in practice are identified, reviewers will find it helpful to check out the written guidance and documentation of the local authority area. Such documentation could include destination statistics, benchmarking and trend information, partnership feedback, policies, procedures and guidelines.

2 External review methodology

2.1 Aims and objectives of external review

External reviews are designed to:

- support and promote quality enhancement in local authority areas to provide the best possible experience for the customer;
- provide information to Scottish Ministers and the public on the quality of the career, information advice and guidance services delivered;
- provide an independent evaluation to assist local authority areas in informing prospective and current customers of the quality of the services;
- evaluate the services delivered within the local authority areas against the three high level principles of outcomes and impact, service delivery, and leadership and quality culture;
- complement local authority area-led internal review and self-assessment procedures;
- contribute to a strategic overview of the quality of careers information, advice and guidance services for Scottish Government; and
- identify and share excellent practice.

In realising the above aims, the external review will provide a breadth and depth of review that is proportionate to scale and scope of delivery.

2.2 Key features of external review

SDS careers information advice and guidance provision will be reviewed over a six year period. The scope of reviews in 2014-20 will be determined from intelligence established and updated through evaluative activities. Adjustments may be made to the timing of external reviews to reflect changing information about the context and effectiveness of the services within each local authority area. The external reviews will be structured according to the quality framework outlined within these arrangements. The review will always involve the core quality indicators, which provide the minimum requirements for Education Scotland to evaluate the local authority area against the five key questions. There will be scope for review teams to use other quality indicators in the framework in a proportionate way, depending on identification of risk or excellence or analysis of the local authority area's context.

The external review will consist of a programme of core activities. Education Scotland will work with SDS to plan and agree a programme of activities appropriate to local authority area provision. However, where intelligence and risk analysis signals concerns in specific areas, the external review may be supplemented by additional quality indicators.

Reviewers will report the outcome of external review in terms of strengths and areas for further development. They will use a six-point scale to assign a grade to each of the five key questions.

2.3 The external review process

External reviews will generally be planned one year in advance. Approximately eight working weeks before the review, Education Scotland will brief the local authority area manager about the external review process. At this stage, the managing inspector will confirm the scope of the review, which will be based on latest intelligence provided by SDS.

In the pre-review period, the managing inspector will liaise with the SDS area manager to discuss the scope of the review including the nature and extent of any additional activity necessary beyond the core quality indicators. The managing inspector will work closely with the area manager. The area manager is a person appointed by SDS to help in the coordination of the review. The area manager will be invited to provide current information for the review team. The managing inspector will plan and deliver a programme of review activities.

Before the review, Education Scotland will discuss and agree with each local authority area manager the proposed nature and levels of reviewer engagement with managers and staff. Education Scotland will encourage managers to work in partnership with reviewers to identify appropriate evidence.

The external review will normally last for five days, three of which are spent undertaking evaluative activities, usually over the period Monday to Wednesday. Over the period spent in the local authority area, the review team will:

- engage with customers, stakeholders and partners;
- observe group and one-to-one activities and provide feedback on strengths and areas for development;
- conduct meetings and undertake other activity required to determine the extent of consistency between documentary evidence and practice;
- evaluate evidence against the quality indicators; and
- identify key strengths and areas for development.

On the final day of the external review, the review team will return to the local authority area to provide verbal feedback on the findings of the external review, including the provisional grades for each of the five key questions. In the third week following the review, Education Scotland will send accuracy report and the confirmed grades after moderation has taken place.

The general timings of the review process are as follows

Prior to the planned review week

Twelve weeks before review	Confirmation of local authority area to be reviewed. Nine weeks before the review – planning meeting with managing inspector and local manager and area manager to help plan the activities
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During the review week

Monday to Wednesday	Meetings with customers, staff and stakeholders, observation of group and one-to-one activity and collection of evidence.
Thursday	Review team is off-site and considering findings.
Friday	Managing inspector and team return to share provisional findings with SDS managers.

Following the review week

One week after	If SDS challenge the grades, further evidence may be presented by the SDS area team for consideration.
Three weeks after	Following moderation by Education Scotland, key findings are shared with SDS.
Three weeks after	A draft report will be shared with senior staff in SDS to be checked for accuracy, and to ensure no individuals are identified.
Shortly after the accuracy check	The managing inspector and SDS area manager will meet with the local authority education lead.
Eight weeks after	The review report will be published electronically on the Education Scotland website.

2.4 Composition and deployment of review teams

The review team is likely to include a managing inspector and team members who will be a combination of HM Inspectors (HMI) and associate assessors from SDS. The number of reviewers will be adjusted to take account of the size and complexity of the local authority area.

Additional reviewers may be appointed to extend or enhance coverage of themes as part of the external review process. Education Scotland will give due consideration to requests from local authority areas for additional engagement by reviewers to undertake additional review activities.

2.5 Expressing the outcomes of external review

Education Scotland will express the outcome of and evaluations from external review through a six-point scale. These are:

- excellent
- very good
- good
- satisfactory
- weak
- unsatisfactory

A more detailed explanation of the six-point scale is given in [Annex 3](#) of this document. A report on the external review will normally be published on the Education Scotland website within eight working weeks following the completion of the external review.

2.6 The Area Manager

SDS has agreed that the area manager will undertake the nominee role. The area manager will play a key role in supporting the smooth operation of the external review.

The managing inspector and review team will work closely with the area manager to ensure that all required information and evidence is made available to the review team. This relates to information to be provided prior to and during the external review.

The area manager is invited to each evening meeting during the review week. At these meetings, the team discuss findings as team members progress with their activities. The area manager will be able to answer questions from the team or make points of clarification during these meetings.

2.7 Concerns

If, after the external review is complete, a local authority team believes that the review team has arrived at an evaluation or grade in the absence of all relevant information or evidence, the local authority team should submit any additional evidence in writing to the managing inspector within five working days of the verbal feedback by the review team. This material must consist of evidence which is new in nature and is not a further submission of evidence of the type already considered by the team. Education Scotland will consider additional new evidence and convey the decision to the local authority team in writing, after full consideration by the team.

Any other concerns should be raised in the first instance with the managing inspector by the area manager during the course of the review. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the manager involved, it should be raised with the Lead Officer responsible for the review programme, who will seek to resolve the issue.

All the key participants in an external review will be invited to provide feedback on the review process itself. This feedback will inform future reviews.

2.8 Follow-up to external review

All local authority areas will be required to address areas for development and main points for action identified during external review. Education Scotland will follow up progress against these actions through HMI visits, typically eighteen months after the initial review. Where an external review results in a grade of weak or unsatisfactory, Scottish Government or SDS may request Education Scotland to conduct a formal follow-up review of the local authority area. The scope of such reviews will be customised to address the specific context of each local authority area.

2.9 After the review

After the external review, Education Scotland will produce a draft report for accuracy. The managing inspector will visit the local authority team to meet with the area manager and SDS national managers to ensure accuracy of the report. The report will be published on the Education Scotland website eight working weeks after the review.

2.10 Complaints

If concerns are not satisfactorily resolved through the processes outlined in 2.7, the local authority team should pursue the matter through Education Scotland's published complaints procedure, which is available at <https://education.gov.scot/>.

3 Planning for external review

3.1 Pre-review briefing

Purpose

- to analyse available data and information to create a draft programme for the external review;
- to identify any signals of potential excellence, signals of potential risk or important aspects on which there is no, insufficient or apparently contradictory data or information; and
- to use local authority team reports and public-domain information to plan a programme of activities for the review.

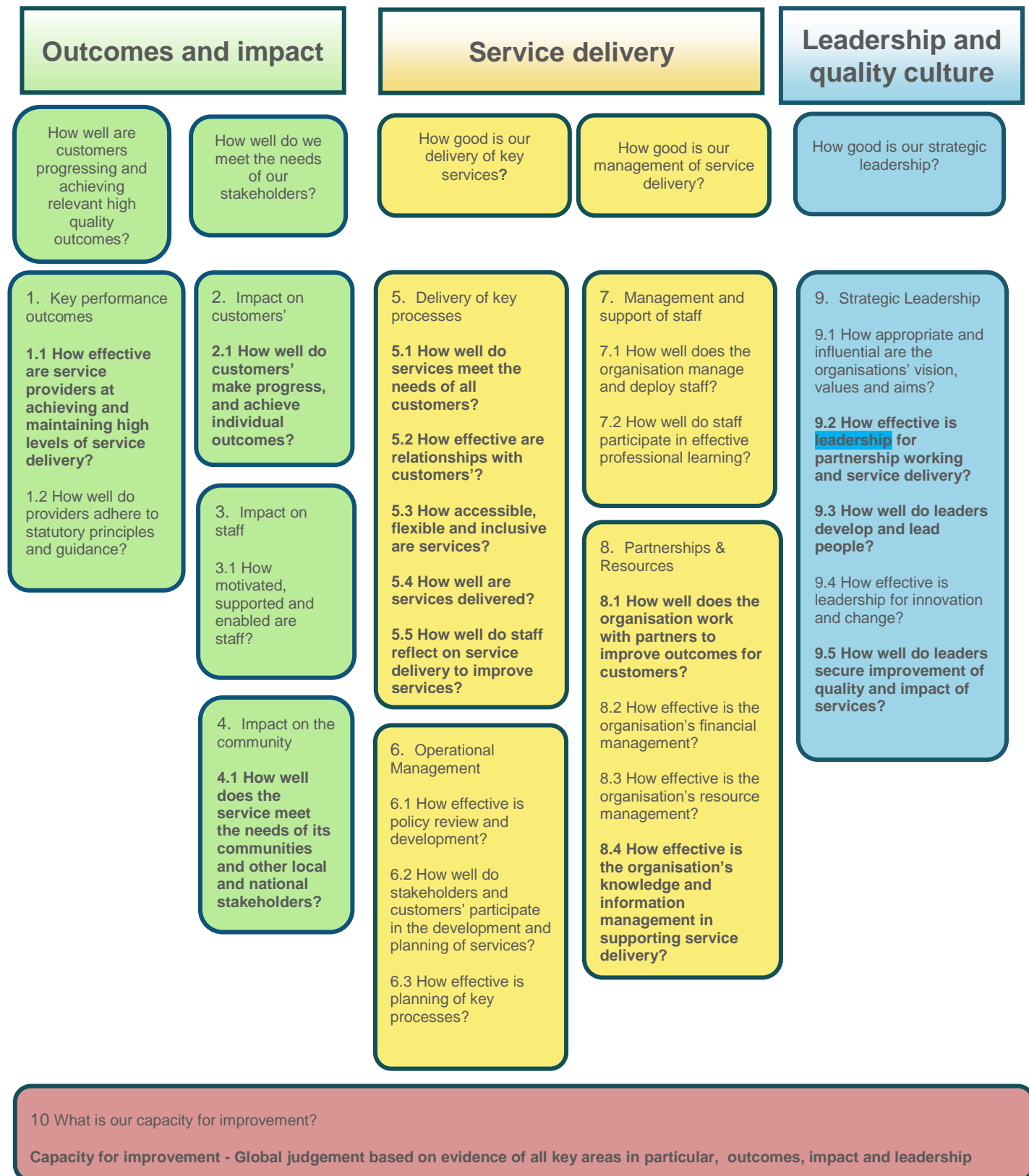
Activity

In this briefing, the managing inspector will aim to use the publicly-available information to scope and plan the work, and will be supported by the local area managers and team leaders. This will build on the knowledge of the local area managers. In addition, key documentation supplied by SDS will be used to look at activity in the area, trends, analysis of those customers at most risk, planned work programmes and partnership activity.

Scale and timing

Normally one day of activity for the team including HMI and AAs.

Annex 1 The quality indicators: indicative themes for external reviews



NB: the core quality indicators are indicated in bold

The quality indicators – indicative themes for external reviewers of Career Information, Advice and Guidance

Element 1: Key performance outcomes

This element is concerned with the providers' progress in achieving key aims, objectives and targets and the extent to which action taken leads to improvement. It considers progress against targets and performance indicators over a three-year period. It also evaluates how well the organisation has responded to legislation and national directives.

Quality indicators	Themes
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1.1 Improvement in performance

- Achievement of aims, objectives, targets and key performance indicators.
- Progress on key aims and objectives.
- Performance data and measures showing improvement against agreed targets over a three-year period.

How effective are area teams at achieving and maintaining high levels of service delivery?

1.2 Adherence to statutory principles and fulfilment of statutory duties

- Relevant legislation.
- Relevant directives and regulations.
- Requirements of statutory bodies.
- Meeting expectations regarding access, equality and diversity.

How well do area teams adhere to statutory principles and guidance?

Element 2: Impact on customers

This element is concerned with how well the organisation identifies and responds to the needs of potential and current customers. It explores the availability, appropriateness, accessibility, and effectiveness of services. It also considers customer feedback on services delivery.

Quality indicators

Themes

2.1 Impact on customers

- Accessibility and flexibility of services.
- Relevance and range of services to needs.
- Customer progress on working towards achieving individual goals.
- Preparation for employment and/or further learning.
- Customer participation and satisfaction.

How well do customers make progress and achieve individual outcomes?

Element 3: Impact on staff

This element is concerned with how well the organisation engages staff in working towards meeting organisational aims and objectives. It explores the arrangements for keeping staff informed about objectives and priorities. It considers the motivation and engagement of staff in contributing to service delivery and how well staff reflect and share excellent practice. It also explores collaboration and team working by staff.

Quality indicators

Themes

3.1 Impact on staff

- Staff motivation and engagement to achieve service aims and objectives.
- Communication and direction of priorities for staff.
- Staff involvement with planning.
- Impact of CPD on professional practice.
- Adoption of best practice.
- Team working and collaborative working.

How motivated, supported and enabled are staff?

Element 4: Impact on the community

This element is concerned with how well the organisation meets the needs of the communities it serves. It considers arrangements for contributing and responding to priorities at local and national level and responsiveness to current and anticipated needs. It explores partnership arrangements for providing services to meet specific needs. It also considers stakeholder involvement in the design and evaluation of services.

Quality indicators

Themes

4.1 Impact on the community

- Responsiveness to priorities at local and national level, including PACE activity.
- Links and partnerships with appropriate community and voluntary organisations, and other providers.
- Stakeholder satisfaction with services.
- Stakeholder participation in the design and evaluation of services.

How well do services meet the needs of relevant communities and other local and national stakeholders?

Element 5: Delivery of key processes

This element is concerned with the organisation and delivery of services. It evaluates how well services meet the needs of all current and potential customers. It explores the effectiveness of arrangements to provide accessible, flexible and inclusive services and considers how well services are delivered. It evaluates how well staff reflect on delivery of services to inform improvement.

Quality indicators

Themes

5.1 Meeting customer needs

- Range of services and resources.
- Arrangements to meet the needs of specific groups.
- Delivery approaches.
- Customer feedback.

How well do services meet the needs of all customers?

5.2 Relationships with customers

- Quality of relationships between staff and customers.
- Customers and stakeholder feedback.
- Use of resources and services by customers.

How effective are relationships with customers?

5.3 Accessibility, flexibility, and inclusion

- Identifying and responding to needs.
- Range and flexibility of delivery approaches.
- Use of resources to increase accessibility.
- Promoting and targeting of services.
- Customer and stakeholder feedback.

How accessible, flexible and inclusive are services?

5.4 Delivery of services

- Planning of services.
- Application of professional knowledge and use of resources, including the use of labour market information.
- Appropriateness and range of delivery approaches and resources.
- Promotion of independence and confidence in developing career management skills.
- Delivery environment.
- Customer and stakeholder feedback.

How well are services delivered?

5.5 Reflection and professional discussion

- Arrangements for quality assurance and improvement.
- Use of feedback from customers and stakeholders.
- Reflective practice leading to improvement and enhancement of services.
- Sharing and adoption of effective practice.
- Effectiveness of action taken.

How well do staff reflect on service delivery to improve services?

Element 6: Operational management

This element is concerned with the effectiveness of planning for the range of services. It considers the range of policies, strategies and plans and the extent to which they are understood and acted on by staff and their impact on operations. It evaluates planning for the delivery of services and the extent to which they plan for responding to change.

Quality indicators

Themes

6.1 Policy review and development

- Operational planning and links to organisational strategies.
- Range and appropriateness of policies.
- Coherence with national policy.
- Links to vision, values and aims.
- Managing, evaluating and updating policies.

How effective is policy review and development?

6.2 Stakeholder involvement in planning and development

- Communication of plans and service objectives to key stakeholders.
- Involvement of staff, customers and other stakeholders in planning.
- Impact of actions taken as a result of customer and other stakeholder feedback.

How well do stakeholders and customers participate in the development and planning of services?

6.3 Planning for improvement

- Clarity of key processes, responsibilities and targets.
- Managing risk and effective use of resources.
- Monitoring and reviewing progress and effectiveness of new developments.

How effective is planning of key processes?

Element 7: Management and support of staff

This element is concerned with the qualifications and experience of staff. It explores arrangements for the recruitment, selection, induction, deployment and retention of staff and with workforce planning. It considers the relevance and effectiveness of continuous professional development in equipping staff to deliver an effective service. It also refers to arrangements to take account of care and welfare of staff.

Quality indicators

Themes

7.1 Management and deployment of staff

- Clarity of staff roles and responsibilities.
- Recruitment, selection, induction, deployment and retention of staff.
- Qualifications and experience of staff.
- Individual performance management.

How well does the organisation manage and deploy staff?

7.2 Career-long professional development

- Identification of staff development and training needs.
- Professional development.
- Support for training and development.
- Staff and partners participation in CPD activity.
- Effectiveness and impact of training and development.

How well do staff participate in effective professional learning?

Element 8: Partnerships and resources

This element is concerned with the effectiveness of the organisation's partnerships. It considers how well the organisation seeks out appropriate links and uses them to develop services. It focusses on collaboration to design services, support customers, enhance flexibility and promote equality. It also considers the management of resources and the use of management information.

Quality indicators

Themes

8.1 Partnership working

- Strategic links and collaborative arrangements with partners.
- Collaboration arrangements to support customers.
- Responsiveness to government priorities and requirements of other agencies.
- Involvement of partners and stakeholders in planning provision and transitions.

How well does the organisation work with partners to improve outcomes for customers?

8.2 Financial management

- Financial management overview and risk management.
- Cost-effective delivery linked to strategic aims and objectives.
- Collaborative and joint commissioning arrangements.
- Financial reporting arrangements.
- Providing best value.

How effective is the organisation's financial management?

8.3 Resource management

- Alignment with strategic aims and objectives.
- Planning, deployment and monitoring of resources.
- Sufficiency, accessibility and adequacy of resources.
- Sustainable use of resources.

How effective is the organisation's resource management?

8.4 Knowledge and information management

- Use of management information.
- Organisational records management policies, supporting procedures and guidance.
- Compliance with statutory requirements.
- Sharing of appropriate data with partners.
- Linkages between functional areas and sharing of information.
- Processes for analysing, evaluating and using information.

How effective is the organisation's knowledge and information management in supporting service delivery?

Element 9: Strategic leadership

This element is concerned with the leadership of the service. It considers the extent to which national policies and local factors influence strategy development. It evaluates the effectiveness of the leadership for planning and delivery of services. It explores the extent to which there is a culture of innovation and change with the organisation.

Quality indicators

Themes

9.1 Vision, values and aims

- Clarity, comprehensiveness and responsiveness of the organisation's vision, values and aims.
- Responsiveness to local, national and international policy directives.
- Staff understanding, commitment and engagement.
- Promotion of positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity.
- Promotion of positive attitude toward sustainability.

How appropriate and influential are the organisation's vision, values and aims?

9.2 Leadership and direction

- Vision and direction of the organisation's services.
- Strategies for improvement.
- Team leadership.
- Involvement and motivation of staff.
- Strategic links with partners/stakeholders.
- Leadership of collaborative arrangements.

How effective is leadership for partnership working and service delivery?

9.3 Leading and developing people

- Leadership of teams and individuals.
- Development of leadership capacity.

How well do leaders develop and lead people?

9.4 Leadership of innovation, change and improvement

- Vision and direction.
- Staff commitment to a culture of innovation and change.
- Action planning for innovation and change.

How effective is leadership for innovation and change?

9.5 Securing improvement of quality and impact of services

- Involvement of customers' and staff in enhancing customers' experiences and outcomes.
- Impact of self-evaluation and action planning for improvement.
- Improvement and enhancement trends.

How well do leaders secure improvement of quality and impact of services?

Annex 2 The Area Manager

1 The role of the area manager

The inclusion of the area manager in external review aims to:

- reinforce and support partnership working between Education Scotland and SDS in assuring and improving provision;
- further develop a culture of partnership, openness and transparency in evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision;
- provide a point of reference for Education Scotland reviewers prior to, during and after external review;
- provide a point of reference for SDS staff prior to, during and after external review activities; and
- increase opportunities for staff to engage in activities which contribute to continuing professional development and succession planning.

2 The involvement of the area manager in external review activities

The area manager will be involved in the external review of their local authority area. The following table indicates the types of activities the area manager may undertake.

External review	Activity
Prior to the review	Act as the primary contact between Education Scotland and the local authority area.
	Work with the MI in the scoping and planning of review activities.
During the review	Direct reviewers to sources of evidence across the local authority area, including the appropriate staff with whom to discuss specific issues.
	Attend meetings of the review team (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings) in order to provide information or clarification where necessary. The area manager has no evaluative role.
	Work with MI to ensure effective communication between the review team and the local authority area.
	Attend and contribute to the sharing of findings with local authority area staff.
After the review	Collaborate with the MI in the early stages of production of the report of review findings.

3 Identification of the area manager

The role of the area manager is to reinforce and support partnership working between Education Scotland and SDS. It is therefore important that SDS have ownership of selecting the member of staff who will carry out this role.

Although AA experience may be useful, it should not be viewed as prerequisite for staff undertaking the role of area manager. The following provides a guide for SDS when nominating a member of staff.

The area manager should have sound knowledge and understanding of:

- all aspects of the work of the local authority area, including analysis of data;
- local authority area planning processes, strategic priorities and direction of travel;
- local authority area quality assurance and enhancement processes;
- the regional and local contexts and partnership arrangements;
- external quality arrangements for SDS CIAG; and
- current national directives and sectoral priorities.

Experience in the following would be helpful but not mandatory:

- working with Education Scotland as an AA;
- working with national bodies in a developmental or evaluative role; and
- working with local external partners in the planning and coordination of local authority area provision.

Annex 3 Grades used in reporting

A common grading scale will be used in making judgements for organisational inspections.

Grade 1	excellent	Outstanding and sector leading
Grade 2	very good	major strengths
Grade 3	good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement
Grade 4	satisfactory	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Grade 5	weak	Important weaknesses
Grade 6	unsatisfactory	Major weaknesses

Global judgements for capacity for improvement

Grades will be awarded in the following five areas:

- Outcome and impact
 1. How well are customers progressing and achieving relevant high quality?
 2. How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?
- Service delivery
 3. How good is our delivery of key services?
 4. How good is our management of service delivery?
- Leadership and quality culture
 5. How good is our strategic leadership?

- An evaluation of **excellent** applies to provision which is outstanding and sector-leading. Participants' experiences and achievements 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 current provision. 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 participants' experiences. While 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 provider 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 significant positive impact. However, the quality of participants' experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required. It implies that the provider should seek to improve further the areas of important strengths, but 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 participants have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on participants' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they do constrain the overall quality of participants' experiences. It implies that the provider should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.
- An evaluation of **weak** applies to provision which may have some strengths, but where there are important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of weak may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses will, either individually or collectively, be sufficient to diminish participants' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for prompt, structured and planned action on the part of the provider. Where a grading of weak is given, it may lead to a follow up review in this area typically one year later.
- An evaluation of **unsatisfactory** applies when there are major weaknesses in provision requiring immediate remedial action. Participants' experience 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 immediate support given by the provider. Where a grading of unsatisfactory is given, it may lead to a follow up review in this area typically one year later.

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