



A quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors:

childminding

February 2025



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Introduction

This self-evaluation framework supports quality improvement in early learning and childcare (ELC) settings. It can be used by all early learning and childcare (ELC) services. This includes childminders and school age childcare providers. The Care Inspectorate and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) will use the framework for the inspection of settings.

This rights-based framework provides a holistic approach to assessing care, play and education. It contains quality indicators (QIs), which support reflection. These can help you identify practices that work and areas that need improvement.

At the heart of the Care Inspectorate and HMIE's work is ensuring that children are:

- safe and protected from harm
- cared for and able to thrive
- offered high-quality learning and development opportunities

The Care Inspectorate and HMIE will use the framework to work with ELC services and sector-wide bodies to build the capacity for self-evaluation.

Framework quality indicators

Quality indicators (QIs) will help you to evaluate performance at every level. You should use evaluations from all areas to consider opportunities for improvement. Quality indicators will help you to understand the difference you are making, what you need to do next, and how to make positive changes.

The QIs are grouped under four important headings:

- leadership
- children thrive and develop in quality spaces
- children play and learn
- children are supported to achieve

The framework offers QIs for the following sectors:

Early learning and childcare

The QIs for ELC should be used for all provision types, except for childminding and school age childcare services.

Childminding

Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate agree that childminders who deliver funded or non-funded care should self-evaluate against the quality indicators found within the childminding-specific content. This means that childminders providing funded care do not need to self-evaluate against any additional quality indicators from elsewhere in the wider framework or other sector specific content.

Childminders delivering school age childcare can also self-evaluate their service using the quality indicators within the childminding sector specific content.

School age childcare

The QIs for school age childcare should be used by services providing out-of-school care.

Principles of this framework

The framework is underpinned by the principles of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#). We are committed to ensuring that children grow up loved, safe and respected.

Children's rights are central to every aspect of their care, play, learning and education. Every child should be loved, safe, respected, and supported to achieve their potential.

UNCRC principles

This framework considers four general principles of children's rights:

Non-discrimination: children are protected from discrimination and treated fairly.

Best interests of the child: when making any decision, adults must do what is best for children rather than themselves. This includes governments and businesses.

Survival and development: children must be supported to grow up into what they want to be without harmful interference.

Respect for children's views: children have opinions that must be taken into account in all the things they care about.

National standards

Every setting is required to meet [The Health and Social Care Standards](#). We are also dedicated to keeping [The Promise](#) and [The Pinky Promise](#) made to care-experienced people and their families.

The self-evaluation process

The framework contains quality indicators that focus on specific areas of practice. They will help you identify strengths in the ways you are currently working. They will also highlight ways to improve outcomes for children and their families.

Self-evaluation will help you explore your progress, development, and practice. The self-evaluation process uses evidence to reflect on achievements. It will also help you develop action plans for improvement.

The process of self-evaluation is part of a wider quality assurance approach. It requires a cycle of reflection based on the following three questions:

1. How are we doing?
2. How do we know?
3. What are we going to do now?

It is important for self-evaluation to be manageable. You should consider which areas you wish to assess and why. Use evidence to support your analysis.

Self-evaluation can also be a forward-looking assessment. Consider any factors that might affect your ability to improve. Such factors might include staff changes, restructuring, or funding cuts.

Roles and responsibilities of inspectors

The Care Inspectorate has statutory obligations under section 53 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 to carry out inspections of all ELC and school age childcare settings that are registered with them.

The Care Inspectorate will inspect all children's services whether or not the setting delivers the funded entitlement for ELC. The aim of inspection is ensuring all children, whatever their age or setting type, have the highest quality care, play and learning experiences.

HM Inspectors of Education have powers to inspect schools and educational establishments under section 66 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980. This includes powers to inspect 'nursery schools' and other settings that are providing funded ELC to children, which may be nursery or childminding settings. HMIE support improvement and provide public accountability and assurance on the quality of education to children, their parents/carers and Scottish Ministers.

Inspections of education are carried out by His Majesty's Inspectors. Excellence, equity and steps to close the poverty-related attainment gap remain important priorities of their work. The work of HM Inspectors is underpinned by the drive to ensure that every child experiences high-quality education.

As well as providing assurance, HM Inspectors share evidence and innovative practice about education to support services to improve and inform the development of educational policy and practice.

Both inspectorates will retain their current roles and responsibilities. The Care Inspectorate will continue to inspect all ELC settings, including childminders and school age childcare settings, whether or not they provide funded ELC. Education Scotland will inspect settings providing funded ELC (other than childminders).

Inspection

Both the Care Inspectorate and HMIE will use the framework for the inspection of ELC. This includes inspections they undertake independently of each other and when they work together as part of a shared inspection of ELC.

Having a shared framework will enable both organisations to work more closely together, using their professional expertise to evaluate the quality of the care and education.

The Care Inspectorate will apply this framework within their inspection and regulatory role to ensure all elements of funded or unfunded ELC, childminding and school age childcare receive the highest standards of care and learning.

HMIE inspections will continue to evaluate the quality of children's educational experiences and major changes in the education system. The framework has distinct quality indicators for the inspection of education. HMIE will use these quality indicators to inspect settings providing funded ELC (other than childminders).

The Care Inspectorate has core assurances that they inspect against at every inspection. An element of the core assurances is safeguarding. HMIE will continue with their safeguarding arrangements as part of their inspections.

Both organisations will continue to promote a culture of self-evaluation and quality improvement.

Grading criteria

The six-point scale is a tool for evaluating the quality indicators. It is used by His Majesty's Inspectorate, and the Care Inspectorate for reporting on the outcomes of inspections. Local authorities and other governing bodies may choose to use it for the purpose of national and/or local benchmarking across a number of settings.

It is not necessary for individual settings to measure themselves against the six-point scale although they may choose to do so to help assess and understand their performance.

The Care Inspectorate will retain the term 'adequate' for the time being, in order to align with the National Standard and Education Scotland will retain the term 'satisfactory'. Where an adequate evaluation has been made, the Care Inspectorate will revisit the service in the following inspection year.

Level 6 'excellent': outstanding or sector leading

An excellent grading means that this aspect of the setting's work is outstanding and sector leading. The experiences and achievements of all children are of a very high quality.

This represents an outstanding standard of provision which exemplifies very best practice. It is based on achieving equity and inclusion.

Settings show a deep professional understanding which is worth sharing to support system-wide improvement. It implies that very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

Level 5 'very good': major strengths

'Very good' means that there are major strengths in this aspect of the setting's work. There are very few areas for improvement and any that do exist do not significantly diminish children's experiences.

An evaluation of very good represents a high standard of provision for all children and is a standard that should be achievable by all.

There is an expectation that the setting will make continued use of self-evaluation to plan further improvements and will work towards improving provision and strive to raise performance to excellent.

Level 4 'good': important strengths with areas for improvement

An evaluation of good means that there are important strengths within the setting's work yet there remain some aspects which require improvement.

The strengths have a significantly positive impact on almost all children. The quality of experiences is diminished in some way by aspects in which improvement is required.

The setting should seek to improve further the areas of important strength and take action to address the areas for improvement.

Level 3 'satisfactory/ adequate': strengths just outweigh weaknesses

An evaluation of satisfactory means that strengths in this aspect of the work outweigh the weaknesses. It indicates that children have access to a basic level of provision.

Strengths have a positive impact on children's experiences. Weaknesses are not important enough to have an adverse impact. They do constrain the quality of children's experiences.

Satisfactory or adequate performance may be tolerable in particular circumstances. For example, where a service or partnership is not yet established, or are in the midst of major transition. Continued performance at satisfactory/adequate level is not acceptable.

Improvements build on strengths. They should address elements that do not contribute to positive experiences and outcomes for children.

Level 2 'weak': important weaknesses

An evaluation of weak means that there are some strengths but there are important weaknesses within this aspect of the setting's work.

These weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish children's experiences. Improvements should be made as a matter of priority. Without improvement the welfare or safety of children may be compromised, or their critical needs not met.

Weak performance requires action. Structured and planned improvement must be made by the provider or partnership. This should demonstrate clearly that sustainable improvements have been made.

Level 1 'unsatisfactory': major weaknesses

An evaluation of unsatisfactory will apply when there are major weaknesses in critical aspects of performance which require immediate remedial action to improve experiences and outcomes for children. It is likely that children's welfare or safety will be compromised by risks which cannot be tolerated.

Those accountable for carrying out the necessary actions for improvement must do so, as a matter of urgency, to ensure that children are protected, and their wellbeing improves without delay.

In almost all cases, this will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This will usually involve working alongside other staff in other settings or agencies.

Using this self-evaluation framework

Education Scotland and the Care Inspectorate will begin to use the new framework for inspection from September 2025.

This framework replaces both [How good is our early learning and childcare](#) and [A quality framework for daycare of children, childminding and school age childcare](#).

There will be a transition period as settings move away from using the existing frameworks. This will allow settings to become familiar with its content and structure.

You may continue to use the existing framework until you are ready to adopt the new framework.

Both inspectorates will engage with settings to support them to become familiar and confident in using the new framework for self-evaluation.

The final version of the framework will be formally launched in autumn 2025.

With help from stakeholders, we have compiled some [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#). Answers address some of the points raised with us so far. We will keep these FAQs updated as new questions arise.

The structure of the framework

The quality indicators for early learning and childcare (ELC) are grouped under four important headings:

Leadership

The quality indicators for leadership are:

- [leadership and management of staff and resources](#)
- [staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment](#)

Children thrive and develop in quality spaces

The quality indicator for children thrive and develop in quality spaces is [children experience high quality spaces](#).

Children play and learn

The quality indicators for children play and learn is [play and learning](#).

Children are supported to achieve

The quality indicators for supporting children to achieve are:

- [nurturing care and support](#)
- [safeguarding and child protection](#)

Illustrations of practice

All quality indicators have themes to support your self-evaluation. There are illustrations of practice for each theme. These describe what we might see in a setting where the quality of provision is 'very good'.

There will be a 'weak' illustration for some quality indicators, where appropriate.

Leadership and management of staff and resources

Leadership and management of staff and resources is a 'leadership' quality indicator (QI). There are illustrations of practice and challenge questions below. These can help you to assess your current practices and identify areas for growth. Illustrations of leadership and management of staff and resources are also available for [early learning and childcare](#) and [school age childcare](#).

Themes for management of staff and resources

The themes for this QI are:

- vision, values and aims
- self-evaluation, quality assurance and implementing change
- staff recruitment and induction (only applicable when employing assistants)

About this quality indicator

This indicator highlights the need for childminders to work in partnership with children, families, and where applicable, assistants, to ensure a shared vision that focuses on improvements and positive outcomes for all. There is a strong ethos of continuous improvement that enhances the delivery of high-quality practice.

Accountability, responsibility and shared values are recognised as important features of building and sustaining a highly professional service. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for a shared understanding of strengths and areas for development, between all those working in the setting, families and children. The impact of self-evaluation can be measured in the evidence of improved outcomes for children and families.

This indicator highlights the need for childminders to have high expectations for all children and a strong ethos of continuous improvement within the childminding context. When employing assistants, values-based, [safe recruitment procedures](#) should ensure that trained, competent and skilled people are employed to promote positive outcomes for children. This would include a comprehensive induction programme to support and guide assistants in their roles and responsibilities. There is a focus on how policy, guidance, legislation, the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#) and the [Health and Social Care Standards](#) are used. This ensures that each child is protected, safe and receives the right support and care from all in the service.

Illustrations for vision, values and aims

'Very good' vision, values and aims

Childminders promote, sustain and are highly committed to a shared vision for their service that reflects the highest possible standards for children, families, partners and the wider community. Children and families are actively included in the design and review of the service vision, values and aims. This ensures any planned developments or improvements meet children's rights, interests, curiosities, needs and preferences.

Childminders create conditions where all those involved in the service feel confident to initiate well-informed change and share responsibility for the process. Effective communication ensures a clear view of the service's vision, values and aims so that children and families are included in achieving them.

The values are embedded in the everyday life of the service and inform practice. The ethos of the setting is clearly founded on principles of high-quality childcare and learning, active engagement with children and their families, and a quality culture.

'Weak' vision, values and aims

The vision, values and aims for the service are unclear or are not effectively communicated to children, families, partners and the wider community. There is a limited focus on the importance of improvement.

Children and families do not experience a service which reflects their shared aspirations. Not everyone involved in the service is aware of the vision, values and aims, or their role in promoting these.

Changes made to practice, routines, and the service have little impact on children and families. The childminder shows a resistance to change which negatively impacts their ability to deliver improved outcomes. Opportunities to reflect and bring about positive change for children and families are missed.

Illustrations for self-evaluation, quality assurance and implementing change

'Very good' self-evaluation, quality assurance and implementing change

Well considered, purposeful self-evaluation enables the childminder to deliver high-quality care and learning tailored to the particular needs and choices of children and families. The importance of using the views of children, families and partners to inform improvement is central to the self-evaluation process. The childminder can evidence where these views are used to inform change, secure improvement and ensure positive outcomes for all children and families.

Quality assurance supports the childminder to improve and sustain high-quality care for children. Childminders ensure that high-quality learning through play is at the heart of improvement planning.

Highly effective practice is shared within and beyond the setting by engaging in professional discussions with other childcare professionals. Continuous improvement, success and achievement for all children are central to the planned implementation of strategies for improvement. These are relevant to local, national and international advice and best practice guidance is used effectively to support thoughtful changes.

'Weak' self-evaluation, quality assurance and implementing change

Self-evaluation for improvement is at an early stage of development or has not resulted in sustained improvements. Children and families are not meaningfully involved in the process of self-evaluation. As a result, they do not feel well informed about changes or why they are happening. Children and families do not experience quality care, as improvement planning is not used consistently or effectively. There is insufficient skill and capacity to support effective improvement.

Childminders may not enable assistants (if applicable), children or families, to confidently highlight complaints or areas for improvement. They fail to respond promptly to feedback and therefore improvements cannot be identified or progressed.

Opportunities to engage a range of relevant professionals or partners have not been taken or used to inform improvement planning. There are significant gaps in the areas covered by the quality assurance systems in place. Children's experiences and outcomes are poor, as inconsistencies in care are not fully identified and do not highlight areas for improvement.

Illustrations for recruitment and induction

'Very good' recruitment and induction

The importance of recruiting and retaining a stable and skilled workforce is recognised by childminders as essential to the wellbeing of children. Assistants are recruited in a way that has been informed by all aspects of safer recruitment practices. There is a strong emphasis on values-based recruitment, ensuring assistants' values reflect those of the service.

Children and families have opportunities to be involved in the process in a meaningful way. Families and children are kept informed and introduced to any assistants in the team who will be providing care.

Induction programmes are thorough and personalised to support assistants to ensure they are confident in meeting the needs of individual children.

Induction programmes are thorough and personalised to support assistants to ensure they are confident in meeting the needs of individual children. Childminders utilise a range of resources, including the ['Early learning and childcare: national induction resource'](#), to equip newly recruited assistants with the knowledge and skills necessary for providing high quality care for babies and children.

There is a clear process for mentoring and supporting assistants, with time allocated to take this forward. These approaches support high-quality outcomes for all children.

'Weak' recruitment and induction

The recruitment procedures may compromise the welfare or safety of children. Important elements of the process may be ignored. For example, exploring gaps in employment history, disclosure records, or assistants start working before all the required checks have been undertaken or received.

The induction process is not planned to take account of assistants who are new to their role and their ongoing learning and development. Induction may be limited to a one-off event focusing on policies and procedures, with little consideration of the care, play and learning needs of children.

Assistants are unclear of what is expected of them and may lack knowledge of how the UNCRC and the Health and Social Care Standards underpin the provision.

Challenge questions for management of staff and resources

The following challenge questions can support your self-evaluation:

- How included and involved are children, families and other stakeholders, where appropriate, in developing a shared vision and purpose for the service?
- How well does the vision, values and aims inform how the service is delivered?
- How do quality assurance processes improve outcomes for children and families?
- How well do the self-evaluation processes support the monitoring of progress and measure the impact of any changes in the service?
- How has the use of best practice documents and guidance led to improvements in children's experiences and outcomes?
- How have I used children's voice to evaluate and inform my practice and provision?
- How are children and families enabled to have a key role in the continuous improvement journey?
- When employing assistants, how does my recruitment process reflect current best practice and national guidance?
- How do I ensure I employ assistants with the right values, skills and knowledge to support me to provide a high-quality service?
- How do I ensure that the induction process supports my assistants to understand their role and responsibilities and ensure children's needs are met?

Staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

Staff skills, knowledge, values and staff deployment is a 'leadership' quality indicator (QI).

There are illustrations of practice and challenge questions below. These can help you to assess your current practices and identify areas for growth. Illustrations of staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment are also available for [early learning and childcare](#) and [school age childcare](#).

Themes for staff skills, knowledge, values and deployment

The themes for this QI are:

- staff skills, knowledge and values
- staff deployment

About this quality indicator

This indicator focuses on the ability of the childminder to build strong relationships with children, families and assistants when applicable. It highlights the importance of skilled interactions to promote children's confidence and to have a positive influence on their lives as they develop and learn.

Professional learning and development is promoted through training and reflective practice. This is well planned and linked directly to enhanced outcomes for children, their individual needs, and the service improvement plan. A positive, compassionate and responsive culture where children thrive and flourish should be evident.

It focuses on childminders making informed decisions of their own time and resources, and those of assistants where applicable, and the importance of those on the quality of children's overall experiences and outcomes. It recognises the need for responsive deployment to meet children's needs across the day.

Illustrations for staff skills, knowledge and values

'Very good' skills, knowledge and values

Childminders have a clear understanding of how children develop and learn, having high aspirations for children's achievements.

Children benefit from high-quality care as the childminder's practice reflects current best practice documents and guidance materials. They make good use of professional development opportunities that link directly to enhanced outcomes for children, their own individual learning needs and their improvement plan.

Professional reading, best practice, national and local policy, underpinning legislation, UNCRC and the Health and Social Care Standards are used in this process.

A wide range of opportunities is available for childminders to hold professional discussions, and they use these to inform practice. They are highly reflective in their practice and engage in professional discussion to build knowledge and effectiveness.

Childminders maintain effective records of the impact of their learning and development. They can talk with confidence about the difference this has made to experiences and outcomes for children. Celebrating success and learning from mistakes is integral to a culture of openness.

'Weak' skills, knowledge and values

The quality of outcomes and experiences for children and families is negatively impacted as the childminder fails to engage in professional learning to improve their practice.

Where learning needs are identified, these are not fully taken forward. This results in gaps in professional knowledge and skills, which impacts negatively on the quality of children's experiences.

There is an absence of professional discussion to support their development and learning. As a result, children do not benefit from high-quality care based on the latest best practice and guidance.

Illustrations for staff deployment

'Very good' staff deployment

The approach to deployment ensures children experience responsive care that meets their needs. Arrangements are in place to promote continuity of care across the day and ensure positive transitions and communication with families.

Children are kept safe and are effectively supervised by the childminder and their assistant, should they have one. This is well considered when children are moving between the childminder's home and another setting or educational establishment. This supports children to feel confident and secure when in the childminder's care.

'Weak' staff deployment

The approach taken by the childminder to keeping children safe and effectively supervised does not support children to feel confident and secure. Gaps in supervision and opportunities to improve are missed. The lack of reflective practice, and ineffective deployment, significantly compromises the quality of experiences and outcomes for children. This has the potential to lead to harm to children.

Arrangements for busier times of the day, such as mealtimes and transitions to and from the home, are ineffective in ensuring that childminders can fully meet children's needs. Activities become task-oriented opportunity for high-quality engagement and interaction. Children's routines and experiences are disrupted due to poorly managed arrangements for planned transitions.

Challenge questions for skills, knowledge, values and deployment

The following challenge questions can support your self-evaluation:

- What professional development opportunities have I engaged with that have enhanced outcomes for children?
- How do I ensure that I have the appropriate knowledge and skills to support children to be the best that they can be?
- How do I make rights real for children?
- How do I ensure I reflect on my practice and service to enhance outcomes for children?
- How do I ensure I am in the right place at the right time to support all children in my care?
- How do I ensure continuity of care for children throughout their day?
- How do I consider my own wellbeing and the wellbeing of my assistants, if applicable, to ensure my service provides safe, high-quality care and the best outcomes for children?

Children experience high quality spaces

Children experience high quality spaces is the 'children thrive and develop in quality spaces' quality indicator (QI). There are illustrations of practice and challenge questions below.

These can help you to assess your current practices and identify areas for growth.

Illustrations of children experience high quality spaces are also available for [early learning and childcare](#) and [school age childcare](#).

Themes for children experience high quality spaces

The themes for this QI are:

- quality, safety and maintenance of spaces
- children influence and affect change
- information management

About this quality indicator

This indicator highlights the importance of children feeling welcomed and at home in the childminding environment. Whatever the style or size of the childminder's home, the childminder ensures very good use is made of the available space indoors and outdoors to enhance children's experiences. Indoor spaces benefit from natural light and effective ventilation. All children have [space to grow and thrive](#).

There is a recognition of [children's right to enjoy outdoor play](#) and the importance of outdoor play for children's health and wellbeing. It highlights the importance of having a safe, secure and inspiring childminding setting where children are encouraged to shape their experiences and activities throughout the day. Children's access to safe play and learning opportunities is encouraged and promotes a 'risk-benefit' approach to children's play, learning and development. This should impact positively on their health, wellbeing and happiness.

This indicator recognises the importance of a well-maintained environment for children, highlighting the need for regular maintenance of the home, resources and equipment used in the service. Inclusive spaces recognise and celebrate diversity. The physical environment should support an appropriate level of risk assessment to minimise potential risks and to keep children safe from harm, including the need for rigorous infection prevention and control. All aspects of security should be considered, including the security of the home and the storage of confidential records and information.

Illustrations for quality, safety and maintenance of spaces

'Very good' quality, safety and maintenance of spaces

The childminder's home is welcoming, fully meets children's needs and is maintained to a very high standard. It gives a strong message to children that they matter. Childminders are confident in making best use of available spaces and resources to create, sustain and enhance a motivating physical environment for learning. As a result, the physical environment supports children to feel safe, secure and loved while they experience play and learning centred on their needs and interests.

Childminders understand and uphold children's right to play and learn. They enable children to enjoy daily outdoor play. Children are supported to actively explore and learn about the wider world. Childminders embrace a benefit-risk approach with children where appropriate. This enables children to engage in a broad range of interesting play opportunities to challenge and extend their development and learning. This builds self-confidence and develops skills for life.

Childminders work well to minimise risks to children, both indoors and outdoors. Prompt action is taken to ensure the safety and security of all those in the service. Children are kept safe as appropriate risk assessments have been developed and implemented. Children are accounted for as the childminder is vigilant whether indoors, outdoors or in the wider community. As a result, children are safe and their opportunities to enjoy challenging and fun play experiences are not compromised ([Keeping children safe: Practice notes](#)).

Children are accounted for as the childminder is vigilant whether indoors, outdoors or in the wider community. As a result, children are safe and their opportunities to enjoy challenging and fun play experiences are not compromised. Childminders have completed robust training on infection prevention and control measures. There is a clear understanding and confidence to provide and promote a high-quality, clean, safe environment. This includes understanding of the arrangements for cleaning as well as in practising food safety.

Where children require personal care, arrangements are effectively planned, and high levels of infection prevention and control are implemented. Children's privacy, dignity and preferences are fully respected and there are appropriate spaces to support their care needs. Arrangements for monitoring, maintenance and repair of the physical environment, equipment, and any vehicles, function well and are consistently implemented. Damaged items are promptly replaced.

'Weak' quality, safety and maintenance of spaces

The childminder's home and resources to support play, may look or feel neglected, rather than warm and welcoming for children. There is limited attention to detail such as homely touches, decoration, and the quality of furniture and resources is poor. There may be unpleasant smells or intrusive noise levels.

The breadth and balance of resources do not sufficiently meet children's stages of development or offer challenge and exploration. The physical environment, furniture and fittings are inadequate.

The physical environment does not enable children to lead their own play and learning. The resources provided do not support children to achieve. Childminders demonstrate limited understanding of the benefits of the outdoors to children's play and learning.

Children's views do not influence their access to outdoors. Current best practice is not used effectively to increase knowledge in this area. The childminder does not always recognise when children need more energetic experiences. Potential barriers to play and learning have not been recognised or given adequate consideration. This means that the physical environment does not meet children's needs.

Childminders do not always promote a safe environment for children. They may have limited understanding of children's development and may not recognise when everyday items can pose risk. As a result, children may be at risk from avoidable harm.

Childminders may unnecessarily limit children's experiences and children's confidence may be affected. Excessive restrictions may be placed on their play and learning opportunities, compromising the quality of children's experiences. Procedures for infection prevention and control are not robust and heighten the risk of infection.

Arrangements for security in the home, outdoors and in the wider community may not be well considered and there is the potential for children to leave the home or be unaccounted for across the day, exposing them to risk of harm.

Illustrations for children influence and affect change

'Very good' illustrations for children influence and affect change

The childminder uses their home well to promote high-quality experiences for children. Children have high levels of involvement in influencing experiences and opportunities in the home, which gives them a strong, clear message that they matter.

Childminders actively engage with children to enable them to direct their play and experiences in the way they choose. Children are listened to and know that their views are respected.

The physical environment provides very good opportunities for children to be independent and make choices. Children have uninterrupted time to become absorbed in their play and have fun. Children are engrossed and motivated in their play and are progressing well in all aspects of their learning and development.

Childminders understand the positive impact that rich, multi-sensory play and learning has on children's resilience, health and wellbeing. Appropriate resources and materials support children's play, learning and interests. Children have control over what they do and how they play. The childminder provides opportunities for children to learn about sustainability and caring for the natural environment.

Resources are adaptive and responsive to children's differing emotions and interests. These promote interesting opportunities to develop learning in literacy, numeracy and across a broad range of learning outcomes.

Childminders understand and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the provision of high-quality resources and spaces. Children, their families and communities are positively reflected in the resources, spaces and experiences available, promoting a sense of inclusion and wellbeing. This means all children feel included and are developing their knowledge, respect and understanding of differences.

'Weak' illustrations for children influence and affect change

Children's needs and views are not consistently sought or taken into consideration when developing resources, planning experiences and considering daily routines. Children's independence is not supported, and they are unable to direct their own play and activities in the way they choose. Children are not engaged and motivated enough in their play, compromising their progress in their learning and development.

Practice related to caring for resources including the natural environment, does not take account of sustainability. Very few, if any opportunities are provided for children to learn about sustainability and caring for their natural environment, encouraging poor habits in respect of reducing waste and the impact of our use of natural resources.

The provision of play resources and equipment is limited and, in some cases, outdated and inappropriate. Children may lack motivation and interest due to the lack of stimulating resources and activity. Those available lack breadth and balance and do not sufficiently meet children's development needs or offer challenge and exploration.

In some cases, children and their families may experience discrimination as a result of outdated, inappropriate resources being used. This has the potential to negatively influence children's self-esteem and children's knowledge and understanding of difference.

Childminders demonstrate an approach to risk that is either risk averse or not well considered. This is evident in their daily routines and experiences provided indoors and outdoors. This may result in the potential for harm. Childminders may not engage effectively with parents and carers to deepen their understanding of the benefits of riskier outdoor play and learning experiences.

Illustrations for information management

'Very good' information management

The childminder's home provides security and safety without impinging on children's rights and reflects the service's aims and objectives. Any use of CCTV is lawful, fair and proportionate and protects their dignity. It is only used for purposes that support the delivery of safe, effective and compassionate care for children.

Protection of children's personal information is paramount and complies with relevant best practice and legal requirements. Childminders and assistants, where applicable, are well informed about their responsibilities and the skills to carry these out robustly. Efficient and effective record keeping systems are in place and this includes the management of electronic information in line with general data protection requirements and advice on cyber threats.

Weak' information management

The use of CCTV is not well understood. Childminders and assistants, where applicable, are not well informed about their responsibilities and infringements of the rights of children and families may occur as a result. Families may not have been consulted about any CCTV or informed of their rights. The arrangements for CCTV do not meet the requirements of current legislation.

Arrangements for the storage of and processing of children's personal information are poorly managed and do not comply with relevant legislation and best practice. Where electronic systems are in place, they are not suitable or secure.

Challenge questions for children experience high quality spaces

The following challenge questions can support your self-evaluation:

- How can I be confident that the physical environment is maintained to the highest standards, ensuring a welcoming and healthy environment for children?
- How do I provide a wide range of challenging outdoor play and learning experiences which support children's health and wellbeing?
- What steps are taken to ensure the physical environment is safe?
- How do I ensure the service is secure and that children cannot leave unsupervised?
- How do I ensure children's privacy, dignity and preferences are fully respected?
- In what ways are children enabled to be independent and make choices, shaping their individual play and learning needs?
- How well are children enabled to select and make use of high-quality resources appropriate to their needs, wishes and development and learning needs?
- How inclusive is the setting for all children and families? Does it accommodate and promote emotional safety?
- How do I facilitate and support understanding of difference and diversity for all children?
- How are children's files and information stored to ensure they are secure?
- Do I demonstrate an understanding of how data protection laws operate?

Play and learning

Play and learning is a 'children play and learn' quality indicator (QI). There are illustrations of practice and challenge questions below. These can help you to assess your current practices and identify areas for growth. Illustrations of play and learning are also available for [early learning and childcare](#) and [school age childcare](#).

Themes for play and learning

The themes for this QI are:

- children's engagement
- quality of interactions
- child-centred planning

About this quality indicator

This indicator focuses on children's right to play, demonstrating that they should have fun, experience joy and have high-quality learning experiences indoors and outdoors. It is essential that children are meaningfully and actively involved in leading their own play and learning.

There is an expectation that childminders recognise the value of play as an opportunity for developing skills for life and learning. Interactions, experiences, and spaces should successfully enrich play and learning, taking into account the needs, interests and development of each child. Children should make sustained progress in their learning through responsive planning approaches.

This QI highlights the importance of childminders using observations effectively to recognise and extend children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements. These inform children's next steps in their development, learning and wellbeing, enabling them to progress well.

The indicator highlights the importance of childminders using observations effectively to recognise and extend children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements. These should inform next steps in planning to support children's development, learning and wellbeing, enabling them to progress well. Childminders skilfully use interactions to enhance and extend children's thinking. Children are supported to recognise, enjoy and celebrate their successes.

Illustrations of children's engagement

'Very good' children's engagement

Children are successful, responsible and confident in their play as a result of high-quality experiences. Children are highly motivated and fully engaged by the range of rich, challenging, planned and spontaneous experiences both indoors and outdoors. Well considered innovations and creative approaches successfully engage children's imagination and enrich their play and learning. Children's skills in language, literacy and numeracy are enhanced through play and learning experiences.

Childminders work effectively with families to support their understanding of the benefits to children of play and learning experiences which challenge and delight them. This partnership approach fosters the development of trust and cooperation which supports children's wellbeing and development and gives them opportunities to flourish.

Children make informed choices about leading their play and learning within an enabling, challenging and creative environment. Their interests are extended and sustained through the use of high-quality interactions, experiences and spaces. This includes developing strong connections to their own and wider communities. Children have time, space and support to make decisions and develop their learning, creativity, resilience and independence.

'Weak' children's engagement

Children have limited opportunities to lead their play and learning or to influence the range of spaces and experiences available to them. The play and learning environment overall lacks inspiration. There is little to challenge or ignite children's imagination and curiosity, or to encourage them to explore their ideas.

Children's individual development needs and their interests are not reflected within the interactions, experiences and spaces. As a result, children are not engaged. They miss opportunities to learn, build confidence and make choices. Children therefore lack interest and motivation and may experience boredom, distress or frustration.

Children have few opportunities to access their own or wider communities. This limits access to a wide range of resources and experiences to enhance their play and development opportunities.

Illustrations of quality interactions

'Very good' quality of interactions

Childminders have a good understanding of how children learn and progress. They make use of relevant theory and practice, and skilfully use this to support high quality play and learning experiences. Childminders support the emotional resilience of children through holistic and nurturing approaches to secure children's wellbeing, including the right to play.

Careful observations are used to interpret children's interests and provide opportunities to extend their thinking without directing their play. Childminders use a variety of approaches to respond to children's cues to support development of self-regulation, empathy, confidence, creativity and curiosity.

Responsive and caring interactions support the development of communication, language, movement and social development through effective modelling of these skills. Childminders support children using concepts such as sustained shared thinking, wondering aloud and by engaging in meaningful conversations. They understand that interacting and exploring with children is a valuable way to build vocabulary and foster understanding, and a sense of wonder and excitement about the world. They enable next steps and give praise for trying things out.

Children have frequent, appropriate opportunities to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills through imaginative play and storytelling. This helps children to extend their own thinking, practice new skills and consolidate their learning in ways which are meaningful to them.

Childminders enable children to play and learn at their own pace, having fun as they explore the world around them. They understand when to engage and when to stand back and observe. Childminders encourage children's interactions with each other and take account of interactions that take place through actions, including verbal and nonverbal communications. This enables children to make the most of interactions, experiences and the physical environment for their learning and development.

'Weak' quality of interactions

Conversations and interactions with children lack structure and challenge and miss opportunities to build on their interests. Childminders lack understanding around children's emergent communication and language needs or their preferred ways of communicating. This results in missed opportunities for children to make progress and can mean children become passive, distressed, or frustrated in their learning.

Childminders are not child-focused in their interactions and fail to recognise and value children's thoughts, interests and processes during play. Children's play is often interrupted by adult led routines and interactions that are task oriented. As a result, children lack opportunities to become absorbed in their play, solve problems and follow their own interests.

Illustrations of child-centred planning and assessment

'Very good' child-centred planning and assessment

Children are at the centre of all planning for play and learning. Childminders are skilled in recognising the different stages in children's play and learning. They use observations of individual children's patterns of play to plan, support, challenge and extend their learning. This enables children to make progress at their own pace.

Children are highly motivated and fully engaged by the range of rich, challenging play and learning opportunities, offered through a balance of intentional and spontaneous planning. Experiences reflect children's ideas, aspirations, curiosities and meaningful next steps in their learning.

Careful observations and effective assessments recognise and promote children's progress and achievements. Any additional supports are identified, planned for and implemented. This highly responsive approach ensures children are developing a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills for life and learning.

Childminders work together with children, families and partners to support children to enjoy their successes and share their achievements in play and learning.

'Weak' child-centred planning and assessment

Opportunities to observe and assess children in their everyday play are missed, leading to gaps in understanding around their interests and overall development.

Childminders either do not have, or do not use, information needed to effectively respond and plan to meet children's individual needs and interests, including additional supports where required. As a result, some children are not experiencing appropriate opportunities to support and consolidate their own learning through play and are not sufficiently challenged at an appropriate level.

There are limited or inconsistent approaches in place to evaluate children's progress and achievements, or to use this information to plan for next steps in learning. Information gathered is not individualised or used effectively to plan the spaces, experiences and interactions each child needs to thrive. Observations are irregular, and do not link to individual children's interests or their stages of play and learning. This results in a lack of understanding of progress over time. Families are not involved or given high quality information on their children's learning, which results in a lack of consistency and continuity.

Challenge questions for play and learning

The following challenge questions can support your self-evaluation:

- How well is children's natural curiosity, creativity and problem solving encouraged and supported in the service?
- What approaches are used to promote children's developing skills over a broad range of areas such as emotional and social development, emergent language skills, literacy and numeracy?
- How can children be supported to have confidence in leading their own learning?
- How do I ensure I keep up to date with relevant theory and demonstrate how my understanding of child development supports high-quality play and learning experiences?
- How do I ensure my approach to children's needs recognises the independent thoughts and feelings of children as individuals?
- How does my service approach support for children to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills?
- How do I ensure planning delivers experiences that are developmentally appropriate for all children in the service?
- How effective are processes to monitor children's development, progress and achievements?
- How well does the information gathered about children's progress inform planning in the service?
- How do I maximise opportunities for children to be challenged, creative and engaged in their play and learning?

Nurturing care and support

Nurturing care and support is a quality indicator (QI) for 'supporting children to achieve'.

There are illustrations of practice and challenge questions below. These can help you to assess your current practices and identify areas for growth.

Illustrations of nurturing care and support are also available for early learning and childcare and school age childcare.

Themes for nurturing care and support

The themes for this QI are:

- nurturing care
- personal planning
- connections with families

About this quality indicator

This indicator focuses on how well children are nurtured, cared for and supported.

Children's care and, where appropriate, their learning routines are individualised to meet their needs and are delivered with kindness and compassion.

There is a focus on [personal planning](#) that reflects the holistic needs of each child, promotes their wellbeing and supports positive outcomes. The indicator highlights the need to involve children and their families in making decisions about their care and support. Importance is placed on planning for safe and supportive transitions between different care settings, such as the childminder's home, the child's home or school.

This indicator highlights the importance of a childminder connecting with children and their families. They should create a welcoming environment and consider each child's unique circumstances to ensure smooth transitions and positive experiences. Fostering strong connections with children's families can have a significantly positive impact on a child's wellbeing.

Illustrations of nurturing care

'Very good' nurturing care

Childminders practice is built on the understanding that nurturing relationships are essential for children's growth and development. As a result, children experience warm, consistent and responsive care that fosters their wellbeing. They are safe, sensitively cared for and skilfully helped to express their needs.

Childminders recognise the importance of supportive transitions and understand that their significance can vary for each child. They regularly assess each child's individual needs and evaluate the effectiveness of the transition strategies in place. They ensure consistent relationships to support smooth transitions and to minimise disruptions to children's care and their experiences. Guided by best practice, such as ['Realising the ambition: Being me.'](#) childminders evaluate their approaches and continually strive to improve practice. The varied age groups of children positively impact transitions because older children are encouraged to welcome, support and guide younger or newer children.

Children's privacy and dignity are respected. There is a balance to promoting children's independence with providing support where it is needed. Childminders continually reflect on their practice to ensure it adapts to children's evolving needs and development.

Children are supported to socialise, play in small groups or alone if they wish. This positively impacts children's ability to regulate their emotions and build social skills.

Children's food choices are nutritious, culturally appropriate and aligned with current dietary guidelines. For example, [Setting the table](#) and [Food matters](#). Fresh water is readily available throughout the day. Childminders consider daily routines, such as mealtimes as valuable opportunities to promote children's involvement, independence and enhance their experiences.

Consistency in routines such as mealtimes, nap times and personal care provide children with a sense of safety and security. Childminders recognise these daily routines offer time to connect with children and support their growth and development.

Childminders work closely with families and, when appropriate, children to [administer medication safely](#). Childminders are committed to the safety of all children and ensure their care and support approaches align with current best practice, guidance and policy.

'Weak' nurturing care

Responses to children's verbal and nonverbal communication is inappropriate. The rushed nature of interactions can lead to a tone and manner that conflicts with children's needs. This often results in children not seeking comfort or support from the childminder, compromising their wellbeing.

A rigid approach to daily routines limits children's opportunities to build confidence and grow through their own experiences. Children are not actively involved in planning routines or the experiences offered, and their preferences and needs are often overlooked.

Food choices are not healthy. Meals and snacks are not planned in line with current nutritional guidance. There is limited understanding of children's individual cultural and dietary needs, making it challenging to keep them safe and respected.

When meals or snacks are provided, there is little involvement of children in the planning or preparation. Childminders are busy during mealtimes and do not have time to sit with children to supervise them or enhance the mealtime experience.

Children's access to water is limited. Childminders fail to recognise signs indicating a child might need a drink of water. They do not understand the importance of supporting children to stay hydrated.

Illustrations of personal planning

'Very good' personal planning

Children's wellbeing is supported through effective personal planning. All children, regardless of their personal characteristics, are recognised as capable individuals who are listened to, valued and respected. Personal plans promote children's rights and value the individuality of each child and their family.

Personal plans are tailored to each child's individual strengths, needs and interests. Achievable goals are set, and childminders regularly review progress to ensure plans are suitable and effective. Children and their families are meaningfully and sensitively involved in their plan.

Childminders work proactively with children, families and other professionals to identify support needs and have clear strategies in place to ensure that children's wellbeing is sustained.

When a child requires support from multiple agencies, other professionals contribute to children's personal plans. Each child's personal plan is achievable, adaptable and includes strategies for care, learning, support and protection, as necessary.

Approaches to personal planning considers best practice guidelines and is grounded in the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework, utilising wellbeing indicators to assess and plan for children's overall wellbeing. The indicators provide a common language for assessing and discussing children's strengths, needs and progress with families and other professionals.

A child-centred approach guides strategies for transitions. Childminders place children and families at the heart of any decision-making process. This includes when a child starts in the service or moves between services. Key information to support continuity and progression in a child's care, support and/or learning is shared appropriately, securely and in good time. Childminders use well-planned and flexible approaches to enable children to feel safe and secure with any changes.

'Weak' personal planning

Personal plans are not individualised or meaningful and do not effectively meet the needs of each child. Children requiring additional support, whether short or long term, are not receiving adequate care. This has the potential to adversely impact children's development.

Childminders place an overemphasis on what children cannot do and have limited consideration of their strengths and interests, leading to unrealistic and ineffective goals and strategies of support.

Opportunities to work collaboratively with other professionals to achieve positive outcomes for children are missed. When childminders do collaborate, they do not effectively share information, update children's written plans or improve their care. This adversely impacts on the consistency and quality of care and support provided.

Personal plans do not comply with national guidance or legislation. Childminders do not have opportunities to reflect on personal plans to help develop interactions, experiences and spaces to meet children's needs. This means opportunities to make children feel comfortable, safe and appropriately challenged are missed.

Approaches to transition do not consider the needs and views of individual children and families. This means key information to help planning for any changes to care, play and routines are missed, resulting in distress and/or a sense of insecurity for some children.

Childminders do not include the voices of children and families. This means their views have not been valued or used to plan for children. This contributes to a lack of continuity and consistency in children's care and support.

Serious inconsistencies in information sharing and record-keeping have put children's safety at risk. Childminders do not always have the information or knowledge needed to keep children safe, nurtured and supported. This has resulted in oversights, such as frequent errors in the timing or dosage of medication administration, jeopardising children's wellbeing.

Illustrations of connections with families

'Very good' connections with families

Childminders know their children and families very well. They strive to create a warm and welcoming environment where [children and families feel valued and supported](#). The care they provide children is deeply influenced by the insights gained from their family. This supports them to create spaces which are culturally sensitive, accessible and inclusive for all.

Connections with families increase their engagement in the service, positively impacting the quality of children's experiences. Childminders recognise, learn from, and build upon the strengths that families bring, while sensitively responding to individual needs and circumstances. This collaborative approach allows them to learn from families, share insights on their child's development, and ensure their care remains responsive to children's unique needs.

Families have regular opportunities to informally and formally discuss their children's care, development and where applicable their child's learning. Childminders have systems in place to support regular communication with families, both verbally and in writing. They recognise and address many of the potential barriers that can make it difficult for families to be involved in their child's experiences.

Childminders understand that each child's development is shaped by their family, friends, community and experiences. They warmly welcome families into their home to share in their child's experiences and encourage updates about children's hobbies and interests. This impacts positively on the quality of children's care and support, both at home and when in the care of the childminder.

'Weak' connections with families

Engagement with families is not planned or purposeful. As a result, there is little evidence of the impact on, or benefits to, children's care or development. Consultations with families fail to gather their views on what matters to them or their children.

The childminder rarely provides follow up responses to requests for further information. As a result, many families feel unheard.

Childminders place little value on building trusting relationships with families to improve children's wellbeing. Early opportunities to respond effectively to the needs of children and families are missed. This means that families are not always understood and treated with dignity and respect. Families tell childminders they do not feel welcome in their service.

Childminders have limited understanding of the strengths and knowledge that families can contribute. There are no opportunities for families to engage in shared care or play experiences with their child and the childminder. This contributes to children feeling unsettled and can restrict their experiences.

There is a lack of quality feedback given to families across all aspects of their child's care and support. Childminders avoid informal interactions with their families during key times such as, drop-off and pick-up of children. Opportunities for regular information exchanges are limited. By not actively seeking to build strong relationships with children's families, they miss opportunities to keep children safe and to enhance their care and/or learning experiences.

Challenge questions for nurturing care and support

The following challenge questions can support your self-evaluation:

- What best practices, theories and guidance underpin my care and support of children?
- How do my observations and knowledge of a child influence the routine of the day?
- Does my approach to transitions help children to feel safe and secure? How do I know my approach is effective?
- What systems, processes and approaches do I have in place to keep children safe? How do I know they are effective?
- How do I ensure the voices of all children, both verbal and nonverbal, are heard and responded to?
- What are my approaches to ensuring inclusion, equity and the celebration of diversity?
- How well do I understand and champion the rights of care experienced children and families?
- What do I do to promote sociable and healthy eating experiences?
- In what ways do I communicate with children, families and/or other professionals to jointly plan children's care and support?
- When children and their families arrive at my home, how do I know they feel welcomed?

Safeguarding and child protection

Safeguarding and child protection is a quality indicator (QI) for 'supporting children to achieve'.

There are illustrations of practice and challenge questions below. These can help you to assess your current practices and identify areas for growth. Illustrations of safeguarding and child protection also available for [early learning and childcare](#) and [school age childcare](#).

Themes for safeguarding and child protection

The themes for this QI are:

- arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection
- children are safe, secure and protected from harm
- national guidance and legislation

About this quality indicator

This indicator highlights the responsibilities of staff and partners to ensure that all children are safe, well cared for and protected from harm. This includes how the setting takes account of statutory requirements as well as local and national policies to promote the safety of children.

Safeguarding children requires strong partnerships and communication between the setting and its local community. It is important that staff are skilled in recognising and responding to wellbeing, child protection and safeguarding concerns. The QI also recognises the importance in promoting children's ability to keep themselves safe.

Illustrations of arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection

'Very good' arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection

Childminders have clear, accessible, up-to-date policies and procedures in place to ensure the safeguarding of children, including child protection. Policies and procedures take account of the unique context of their setting and the needs of all children and their families.

Childminders have strong lines of communication and effective partnerships with other agencies that are involved in helping to keep children safe and healthy. Arrangements for making a safeguarding or child protection concern are well-publicised and understood by childminders, their assistants, professional partners, and families.

Childminders (and assistants where applicable) take part in regular professional learning and have a very good understanding of the setting's policies and procedures. As a result, they are highly skilled and confident in identifying and responding to any child protection or safeguarding issue.

Childminders have been trained in safeguarding matters to a high level, resulting in sound knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate strong leadership in ensuring arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are integral to their work.

'Weak' arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection

Childminders' policies and procedures for safeguarding children, including child protection, are unclear and not well understood by staff. There is limited consideration given to the unique context of their service. Childminders have not sufficiently developed and implemented effective child protection policies and procedures. This means lines of communication regarding protection and health concerns for children are not robust or clear. As a result, there is an increased risk of harm to children.

Childminders (including when working with assistants) have failed to address and identify their training needs in relation to safeguarding or child protection. This means they are not confident to recognise or respond to child protection or safeguarding concerns.

Safeguarding or protection concerns might be missed, compromising children's safety.

Record keeping is inconsistent and does not always show a clear understanding of risks to children. Opportunities to ensure appropriate supports are missed. Partner agencies are not kept informed to support children and families. This shows links with other organisations, which could assist in the protection of children, are not fully effective.

Illustrations of children are safe, secure and protected from harm

'Very good' children are safe, secure and protected from harm

Children feel safe and cared for. The childminders' ethos and vision strongly promote children's rights and equality. All children experience positive, trusting relationships with adults. Children are actively encouraged to give their views and voice any concerns.

Childminders know children and their families very well. Positive and supportive relationships with children and families result in high levels of trust and effective communication. As a result, childminders are skilled in identifying children who may be at risk of harm.

The needs and concerns of children and their families are dealt with in a timely, sensitive and effective manner. Through well-planned experiences and interactions, the safety and resilience of children is a key feature of learning and play with a strong focus on promoting children's ability to keep themselves safe.

'Weak' children are safe, secure and protected from harm

Childminders' ethos and vision fail to effectively promote children's rights. Opportunities to develop trusting relationships and actively listen to children are missed.

Children's views are not always taken into consideration or respected. Childminders do not know children and families well enough to build meaningful relationships. Information required to keep children safe and protected from harm is not available to relevant partner agencies. As a result, children's safety and care are potentially compromised.

Children and families do not feel listened to and concerns that may arise are not taken seriously by childminders or dealt with sensitively and in a timely manner. Overall, they have not taken the necessary steps to uphold the rights of children to be safe and protected from harm.

Illustrations of national guidance and legislation

'Very good' use of national guidance and legislation

Childminders have a very good understanding of legislation, national and local guidance that impacts on the care and safety of children in their setting. Childminders ensure that they comply with their child protection duties under legislation.

They are proactive in ensuring that practices and approaches take appropriate account of new guidance and emerging issues. Approaches to reporting, responding to and recording concerns are robust and in line with national guidance.

'Weak' use of national guidance and legislation

Childminders have a limited understanding of legislation or national and local guidance. Therefore reporting, responding to and recording of concerns are inconsistent and not always effective. This has the potential to compromise children's safety and care.

Childminders (and assistants where appropriate) have a limited understanding of their roles and responsibilities, therefore there is a potential increased risk of harm to children. Their understanding and implementation of national guidance is not effective and could impact on care and safety of children and families.

Challenge questions for safeguarding and child protection

The following challenge questions can support your self-evaluation:

- Do I have appropriate policies and procedures in place for child protection?
- Do all families and stakeholders know what these are and how to raise a concern if necessary?
- To what extent are approaches to safeguarding reviewed as part of my self-evaluation arrangements?
- How often are arrangements to support and keep children safe reviewed and updated?
- How do I ensure effective partnerships with all parties, including assistants (where appropriate), families and external agencies, to ensure children's safety and wellbeing?
- How well do I support children and their families to ensure children are safe, secure and protected from harm?
- How effectively are children who are on or were previously on the child protection register and/or care experienced being supported?
- How do I ensure information is shared appropriately and sensitively to ensure effective support for children and families and to protect dignity whilst maintaining safety and wellbeing?
- How do I ensure that assistants, where appropriate, understand the arrangements to keep children safe and are kept up-to-date with effective safeguarding practice and current national guidance and legislation?

Contact

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The quality improvement framework for the early learning and childcare sectors is also available on the [Education Scotland website](http://www.education.gov.scot).

