

A Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare, School Aged Childcare and Childminding Services

The Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland have published a draft version of the new shared inspection framework:

https://www.careinspectorate.com/images/documents/A_quality_framework_for_early_learning_and_childcare_school_aged_children_and_childminding_services_Nov_23.pdf

They would like to hear your feedback on this new framework and invite you to answer 12 short questions in this online survey which closes on 19 January 2024:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SIFCSurvey/>

To help you consider the questions and issues from a school age childcare perspective, we have drafted our response to the consultation below. We know you are all busy managers so when you come back in January after what we hope is a well-deserved break, we hope this guidance helps you to quickly respond to the consultation as it is vital your voices are heard.

Draft Response December 2023

The first 4 questions are general information about you.

Relevant Questions:

5. Between the two existing frameworks there were 28 indicators. There are 16 indicators within the draft shared framework document, do you consider this to be suitable? *

- **Yes**
- No
- Don't Know

6. Is it clear which quality indicators in the framework apply to those services delivering funded early learning and childcare? *

- Yes
- **No**
- Don't know

7. Will the content of the shared framework support self-evaluation and action planning for improvement? *

- **Yes**

- No
- Don't know

8. Will the illustrations in the shared framework support the delivery of high quality care, play and learning experiences for children? *

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

9. Is the language within the shared framework easy to understand? *

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

10. Do you think the images of the Health and Social Care Standards and the National Standard are helpful? *

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

11. If applicable, are there any areas of your work that are not covered by the framework that should be? (maximum 250 words)

For school age childcare services and some ELC services, such as playgroups, there should be, under 1.1. Family support, recognition that the manager and staff in over half of school age childcare services, also have to work with a committee, usually parents from the service, or other members of their community. Sometimes parents are there because they have to be, however, in our experience there are often very dedicated long term committee members, and this should be acknowledged as a quality of such services. Their unpaid work benefits their whole community. Indeed some specialist services for children with complex needs would not exist without the dedication of parents in supporting the care provided.

12. Our aim is to include sector specific content within the framework. It would be helpful if you can identify specific areas where additional guidance would support you. Please include the number of the quality indicator. (maximum 250 words)

For quality indicators 2.2 and 2.3 in relation to the premises and outdoor spaces, there should be specific guidance for inspectors and the school age childcare sector in terms of the fact that most are in shared premises and do not control the building. There should be

recognition of the efforts made to add “homely” touches where it is possible to do so. As an example, many services are not allowed to display artwork or notices if using school or community or church premises.

In contrast to a Childminder’s home, or a nursery, school age childcare services in shared spaces have to set up and put away everything each day, often with limited storage. So, what is needed here are specific examples of how school age services can demonstrate adherence to these standards by creative use of, say, a portable notice board, or children’s art and charter displayed on a computer. Whilst paying attention to infection control, having a corner with cushions and throws for relaxing etc.

The provision of snacks at school age childcare is again different from “mealtimes” in ELC, where young children learn social skills as part of enjoying meals together. In large and busy SAC services, children may prioritise their rights to play and leisure activities, and while some may want to sit together for snacks, others may want a buffet type offer and the space may mean this is the only set up possible.

13. Do you have any other comments about the shared framework document. (maximum 250 words).

- For services which are not funded ELC it should be made clear that 11 of 16 indicators apply to them
- Q 6 No – I think this could be made clearer. Having the additional indicators for funded services should be the last indicators for each key question.
- On page 5 it says: “ELC and school-age childcare services are also regulated by the Care Inspectorate as ‘care services’ (either as a ‘day care of children’ service, which includes some school-age childcare services, or childminding services...” Why does it say ‘some’? The regulator should not be creating ambiguity as to what should be considered SAC- the regulator should be defining it.
- School age childcare (SAC) is a non-statutory service and is a child’s leisure-time service; this is not sufficiently recognised in the document- SAC is not ELC for older children. Of course, children should learn new skills and develop (physically, socially, and emotionally), however much of the language associated with ‘learning’ in this document focusses on literacy, numeracy, and curriculum as per ELC. As this is covered by primary education for school-age children and not childcare, we would suggest ‘play and development’ rather than ‘play and learning’, and ‘leisure experiences’ rather than ‘learning experiences’ when talking about SAC.
- Indicator 1.1 in Family learning, take out “literacy and numeracy” in the Very Good category for SAC- there should be no expectation for SAC services to meet a family’s literacy and numeracy needs as this is the responsibility of formal primary education.