

## Resource 10

### Using 'How Good is the Learning and Development in Our Community?' for Self-Evaluation and Inspections

The extract below is taken directly from 'A Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations (Overarching Framework)': Education Scotland Nov 2012 and refers to 'How Good is Our Community Learning and Development 2?'. The relevance of the overarching framework still applies to the new framework, 'How Good is the Learning and Development in Our Community?'

'The Overarching Framework provides a systematic structure for self-evaluation or self-assessment.

By looking first at outcomes and impact (Key Areas 1- 4), evaluators can identify key issues for further exploration, observation and analysis using the tools provided within Key Areas 5-9. In other words, the framework helps them to diagnose the drivers of the strengths and causes of the weaknesses demonstrated. Finally, those using the framework are encouraged to arrive at an evaluation of the overall capacity for improvement of the service or organisation, using the guidance in Key Area 10.

'The Overarching Framework remains firmly based on the principle that the most effective way of improving standards of service is to use a combination of rigorous evidence-based self-evaluation alongside independent external inspection. QIs drawn or adapted from those in the Overarching Framework would, in most public sectors, form the core of the set of QIs used for external scrutiny.

Beyond this, scrutiny activities might focus on specific key areas and indicators selected from the rest of the framework. The selection would depend on decisions taken if scoping activities highlighted specific areas which required further exploration. Scoping might consider, for example, the results of self-evaluation by the service being considered, themes suggested by the service itself, and evaluations and evidence from other recent inspections, reviews or audits, including analysis of stakeholders' views. In this way, quality frameworks developed for different services or organisations can be used as part of a proportionate, intelligence-led approach to evaluation, which builds on the outcomes of self-evaluation.

'The framework has been designed to be used at more than one level within the structure of an organisation or service. For example, it can be used at the level of:

- strategic leadership across a broad/range of services or establishments;
- operational management of a coherent group of services or establishments within a broader structure; and
- an individual establishment or the delivery of a specific service.

'This means that evaluations made at an operational level, and the evidence on which they are based, can contribute to evaluations at a strategic level. The framework can also be used thematically by extracting key QIs or elements for a specific purpose. It might be, for example, that an organisation wants to take a close look at equalities through its arrangements for compliance with legislation and how this translates to its services. Another organisation might want to focus on impact on staff and the effectiveness of staff development arrangements. Inspectors from HMI evaluate using six levels of effectiveness.'

Practitioners engaged in self-evaluation can use the same six-point scale, though it is not always necessary to do this.

#### Characteristics of the six-point scale:

The extract below is taken directly from 'A Framework For Evaluating The Quality Of Services And Organisations (Overarching Framework)': Education Scotland Nov 2012. 'An evaluation of excellent applies to services which are a model of their kind. An evaluation of excellent will be characterised by innovative, sector-leading practice that represents an outstanding standard of service worth disseminating beyond the organisation. It implies these very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

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

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

'An evaluation of satisfactory applies to services characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of satisfactory indicates that service users have access to a basic level of provision. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on stakeholders' experiences. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they will constrain the overall quality of service users' experiences. It implies that the organisation should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.

'An evaluation of weak applies to services which 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 service users' experiences in substantial ways. It implies the need for structured and planned action on the part of the organisation.

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