

Table 2.2: National Framework Summary: High Level Questions/Key Areas Quality and Performance Indicators

Considering the **six High-Level Questions**

The extract below is taken directly from 'A Framework For Evaluating The Quality Of Services And Organisations (Overarching Framework)': Education Scotland Nov 2012

'Evaluations of the quality of impact in these key areas will take into account direct observation together with quantitative and qualitative data, including evidence of stakeholders' views.

'What key outcomes have we achieved?'

Key Area 1 focuses on the overall performance of an organisation or service in relation to its key purposes. *There are no major changes within this area of the Overarching Framework.* This area provides a structure for organisations and services to use when evaluating their success in delivering demonstrable, high-quality and improving outcomes for the users of its services. In schools or pre-school centres, for example, this would include children's and young people's attainment and achievement levels. In children and families social work, it could include reductions in the number of homeless or temporarily accommodated children and young people under 25. In public colleges, it could include trends in learner retention or successful post-college destinations.

'It also helps an organisation to evaluate whether its own strategic priorities, aims and targets have been achieved, including those locally, regionally or nationally determined within its own context. Finally, it helps organisations or services to evaluate whether it is fulfilling its statutory duties, meeting legislative requirements and following appropriate codes of practice. This might include the *Equality Act 2010, Public Service Reform Act 2010, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003* and appropriate health and safety practices. Evidence of demonstrable outcomes would include trends over time and other aggregated data which provides indications of the success of a service or organisation in maintaining or improving the quality of the service it provides both overall and in comparison with similar services/organisations.

'How well do we meet the needs of our stakeholders?'

Key Areas 2, 3 and 4 focus on the impact on key groups of stakeholders of the organisation's delivery of its key processes. *There are no major changes within this area of the Overarching Framework.* Stakeholders include those who are in direct receipt of the service, for example, learners within education establishments or users of social work services, together with those who support them and who also have a significant interest in the delivery of high quality services, for example, parents and families. Stakeholders also include the staff within the organisation. Their motivation, satisfaction and contribution to the development of the organisation is of considerable importance if the service is to operate effectively. Evaluations would draw upon the views of staff together with other information, such as rates of staff absence or turnover. Finally, stakeholders might include members of the community. These stakeholders include those from the immediate local community on whose lives and experiences the service has a demonstrable impact or who make a contribution to the services provided. This would include, for example, community learning and development partners who work alongside schools to deliver activities for young people. It might include

employers who work closely with education partners in the delivery of training. They also include the wider regional, national and international community. For example, staff may be actively involved in working groups, influencing national practice and sharing innovative practice with others.

‘How good is our delivery of key processes?’

Key Area 5 focuses on the work of the organisation or service in relation to its key functions, in particular the delivery and development of the services it provides, by itself or in partnership with others.

There is one change in this area of the framework:

- *the move of the QI for Improving the quality of services to stakeholders from this area, and its incorporation into one within Key Area 9.*

In education, delivery of services relates mainly to the quality of provision in education establishments. In social work, it could relate to assessment processes, the provision of support and the development and review of care plans. Child protection agencies and staff might focus on their processes for submitting referral reports and for assessing risks. Education and health services might together use the indicators to help them jointly evaluate their processes for working together to reduce rates of teenage pregnancy and, with social work services, for supporting young women who do become pregnant but wish to continue their education. An integral aspect of service delivery is consultation with services users and other stakeholders about their individual needs and how these are being met. As with the other Key Areas, issues arising from Key Area 5 may originate or affect issues in the other Key Areas. For example, they may signal issues with staffing (Key Area 7) or strategic leadership (Key Area 9). Issues in Key Area 5 will also have a direct impact on the performance outcomes in Key Area 1. In short, evidence of the effectiveness of the organisation’s key processes will be seen in the impact they have on stakeholders and in its overall performance.

‘How good is our operational management?’

Key Areas 6, 7 and 8 focus on the operational management activities necessary to ensure effective service delivery and to deliver best value.

There are a number of changes to this area of the framework:

- *the addition of the word ‘operational’ to the title;*
- *re-titling of QI 6 to Operational Management;*
- *re-titling of element 6.3 to Planning of key processes*
- *re-titling of QI 7 to Staffing;*
- *the reduction to two elements within this key area, now titled 7.1 Management and deployment of staff and 7.2 Career-long professional learning;*
- *re-titling of QI 8 to Partnerships and resources; and*
- *re-titling of element 8.4 to Knowledge and information management.*

Evaluative activities in this area include the organisation’s arrangements for developing and updating policies, for involving its stakeholders, for operational planning, for managing and developing staff, for managing finance, information and resources and for developing productive partnerships. Strengths and areas for development in these areas will normally

affect the quality of the key processes delivered (Key Area 5), their impact on stakeholders (Key Areas 2, 3 and 4) and the performance of the organisation as a whole (Key Area 1).

‘How good is our strategic leadership?’

Key Area 9 focuses on the strategic leadership and direction of the organisation or service in relation to its key functions.

There are a few changes to this area of the Overarching Framework:

- *change of title to Strategic leadership;*
- *change in the title of QI 9 to Strategic leadership; and*
- *the addition of element 9.5, titled Securing improvement of quality and impact of services, which looks at how the outcomes of self-evaluation are used to bring about improvement.*

This area looks at an organisation’s vision and aims and the expression and delivery of its aspirations by means of strategic planning with its partners. This area considers the quality of leadership and direction at strategic level, but also at other levels, for example within teams and organisational units or for specific projects. Strengths and areas for development in leadership will reflect the extent to which leaders make a difference to the quality of outcomes achieved by the organisation as a whole and by the impact on service users and other stakeholders. Finally, this area looks at the how an organisation secures improvement in its services, through consultation with partners and through development and innovation. This includes how organisations apply the findings of self-evaluation to bring about improvement.

‘What is our capacity for improvement?’

Judgement of an organisation’s capacity for improvement takes into account all the evaluations arrived at in Key Areas 1-9. The organisation’s focus on improvement and its track record in bringing about improvement are particularly important, as is the accuracy of its self-evaluation, which is used as the basis for planned improvements. The judgement about capacity to improve also takes into account any significant aspects of the organisation's internal or external context, for example, impending retirements of senior staff, plans to restructure or significant changes in funding. The judgement is based on an evaluation of the past, but more importantly, uses this to look forward to the future. Judgements of a service or organisation’s capacity for improvement could be expressed in terms of a degree of confidence that it has the capacity to continue to improve. This allows the organisation to affirm its view that it is heading in the right direction but also acknowledge those areas which need to improve or be monitored more rigorously.’