

Early Years Quality Assurance Protocol April 2018

This document details the policies and procedures through which Manchester Local Authority (LA) works with all Early Years Provider in order to ensure that every child achieves the best possible standards

A strong and positive partnership between the Local Authority and all Early Years Providers is central to the success of the city and the City Council's ambition to make Manchester a place where families choose to live and work. To benefit from the opportunities the city offers it is important that children are given the foundation to be successful in school and leave with the skills, qualifications and resilience to fulfil their learning potential.

Accessing high-quality early years childcare has been identified as contributing positively to improving outcomes for children, leaving them well placed for future achievement and lifelong learning. The Early Years Quality Assurance Team supports settings and the Local Authority (LA) to communicate a shared vision for quality, supporting Early Years settings to aspire to providing high quality services

"Everyone working together to make sure that all Manchester children in their early years has the opportunity to be the best they can be"

Statutory Context for Early Years Providers

To be registered on the Early Years Register, all applicants must demonstrate that they meet all the safeguarding and welfare and the learning and development requirements of the Government document, 'Statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 (EYFS).' This sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. Ofsted are the body responsible for evaluating the overall quality and standards of early years provision in line with the principles and requirements of the 'Early Years Inspection Handbook 2018 '

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017 and the Ofsted Early Years Inspection Handbook 2018 make reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- The Childcare Act 2006 39(1)(a).
- The Childcare Act 2006 39(1)(b)
- The Childcare (Exemptions from Registration) Order 2008
- Childcare (Provision of Information about Young Children (England) Regulations 2009.
- Childcare (Early Years Register) Regulations 2012. Schedule 1, Part 1 and Part 2 (amended the 2008 Regulations)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Section 35
- The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations Act 2009 Regulation 12
- The Data Protection Act 1998 (Now amended to the GDPR regulation 2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2015
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- EYFS Annex A: Criteria for effective PFA training

The Role of the Local Authority Early Years Quality Assurance Team

A child's earliest years, from their birth to the time they reach statutory school age, are crucial. All the research shows that this stage of learning and development matters more than any other. If we get the early years right, we pave the way for a lifetime of achievement. We know from the outcomes of Ofsted inspections that the overall quality of provision for this age group in England is better now than it has ever been. In March 2016, 86% of all registered early years providers (that is, nurseries, pre-schools and childminders) were judged as good or outstanding. (Unknown children – destined for disadvantage? Ofsted July 2016, No. 160044)

The Local Authority Early Years Quality Assurance Team has regard for duties under section 2 of the Childcare Act 2016 and sections 6, 7, 7A, 9A, 12 and 13 of the Childcare Act 2006 in the following ways:

Secure information, advice and training for providers in their area on the following matters:

- meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, vulnerable and disadvantaged children; and
- effective safeguarding and child protection.

Secure information, advice and training on the matters for the following providers:

- those registered on the Ofsted Early Years Register who are judged less than 'good' by Ofsted in their most recent inspection report;
- newly registered providers on the Ofsted Early Years Register who have not yet had an inspection report published;
- those on Part A (the compulsory part) of the Ofsted General Childcare Register who are assessed by Ofsted as not having met the requirements of registration or the requirements relating to their activities.

Local authorities have the power to:

Provide information, advice and training for all early years and childcare providers (including employees and prospective providers). Local authorities may provide information, advice and training if this is requested by the provider. Local authorities are able to offer support to settings rated good or outstanding if there is evidence of need but cannot require this support is taken up.

The Quality Assurance Process

The Quality Assurance process strives to ensure that all children have access to good quality childcare and are able to take up their free hours in a high quality setting. Evidence shows that higher quality provision has greater developmental

benefits for children, particularly for the most disadvantaged children leading to better outcomes.

All registered Early Years Providers have a named Quality Assurance Officer who plays a key role in visiting settings to maintain an up to date knowledge of individual strengths and areas for development and by signposting to additional support as needed.

A dedicated Early Years Safeguarding Lead works within the Quality Assurance Team to support providers in ensuring that statutory child protection legislative requirements are met and to advise on any safeguarding and/or child protection queries that may arise. Support is given via targeted safeguarding audits, training and regular information sharing.

Senior Quality Assurance Officers additionally retain an overview of performance and outcomes across the city and report to strategy.

All Quality Assurance Officers work with partner agencies to:

- Rely on the Ofsted inspection judgement of the provider as the benchmark of quality
- Not fund providers who do not actively promote fundamental British values or if they promote views or theories as fact which are contrary to established scientific or historical evidence and explanations
- Only fund places for two-year-old children in 'satisfactory' or 'requires improvement' providers where there is not sufficient, accessible 'good' or 'outstanding' provision
- Fund providers with an Ofsted inspection judgement of 'met' until their Ofsted quality inspection judgement is published. Local authorities should not fund providers with an Ofsted inspection judgement of 'not met'.
- Secure alternative provision and withdraw funding from a provider as soon as is practicable, when Ofsted publish an inspection judgement of the provider of 'inadequate'.
- Consider any information published by Ofsted about a provider including the recent history about childcare provision by a particular provider or agency or childcare provision at a particular address. This may include, for example, where the local authority has concerns that a provider judged "inadequate" by Ofsted may have re-registered their setting with Ofsted to avoid making the quality improvements identified by Ofsted.

The Local Authority's approach to securing improvement of Early Years Settings centres on the quality assurance of self-evaluation, providing challenge and supporting next steps for action.

Self-evaluation is delivered via the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF)

What does the QAF consist of?

Five sections including:

- Leadership and management
- Care and welfare
- Learning and development
- Inclusion - supporting children with additional needs
- Partnerships with parents, agencies and the wider community

How does the QAF work?

Settings and the local authority work together to come to a supported judgement about quality in each of the five areas and to set out the next steps for improvement. The setting and the local authority will agree a judgement of quality.

Providers Causing Concern

All settings have at least one annual visit from a Quality assurance Officer. Frequency of further support visits to settings are prioritised in the following way:

Based on Ofsted Outcomes:

- Inadequate judgement - monthly visit
- Requires Improvement judgement - bi monthly visit
- Awaiting First Inspection – termly visit
- Due inspection within 12 months – termly visit
- Setting moving regularly between Inadequate to Requires Improvement judgements– as required

Based on local intelligence:

- Setting with new/inexperienced Manager – termly visit
- MCC Tendered Day-care – termly visit
- Complaints/Concerns raised – as required