Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK
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Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance Framework

Quality Matters

The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities and their partners to improve outcomes for all young children and reduce inequalities between them. Fulfilling this duty requires a broad and inclusive strategy, part of which should focus on the provision of high quality early learning and care.

Children who experience high quality early years provision are well placed to achieve better outcomes in school and beyond, and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for lifelong learning. Poor quality provision, however, adds no value in the long term.

Quality is the key to securing improved outcomes for children and giving them a better start in the early years. It is important that all early years settings and providers work in partnership with the local authority, parents and the setting’s community to consider how best to create, maintain and improve continuously their offer to secure better experiences for all young children and their families.

This framework is a summary of the range of strategies and tools used by the local authority as part of its focus on raising and sustaining the quality of early years and childcare experiences for children and families.

High quality pre-schooling is related to better intellectual and social/behavioural development for children. The beneficial effects of pre-school remain evident to the age of 11 years. *Sylva, K. et al. (2008)*

By building a child’s social and emotional capabilities we enable children to be happily engaged with others and with society, and to learn, to develop fully, to attain and to achieve.

In essence, it delivers school ready, life ready, and child ready members of society. *Allen, G. (2011)*
Meet the Team . . . .

Rachael Williams  
*Early Years and Childcare Manager*

I am passionate about the importance of getting it right at the earliest time, which has resulted in me working in the field of early years for the majority of my career. I have continually worked with others to create, challenge and provoke discussion to ensure children are given motivating and inspirational experiences. My most rewarding role as both a Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher has been directly working with children and families and visibly seeing the difference that can be achieved. I have spent time as a leading teacher, completed work with the Department for Education, been a university guest lecturer and worked for both Plymouth and Torbay Early Years Teams. I am qualified by the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors as a Moderator and most recently qualified as a Primary Head teacher.

I feel honoured and professionally challenged to now be leading Early Years Practice in Torbay. I am responsible for managing both the highly motivated Early Years and Childcare Service and the Children Centre Services delivered by Action for Children. I bring enthusiasm and energy to succeed and overcome barriers, regarding them as opportunities to open doors and create new ways of working. I believe that every child, practitioner and provision can thrive given the right conditions. It is a privilege to do a job that I love, working to create the best conditions to empower others.

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Stephen Corline  
*Early Years Business and Commissioning Officer*

I have worked in Early Years for the last 8 years with my main role being supporting pre-schools, nurseries and childminders with the business and financial side of what they do. I also manage and administer the free early education entitlement in Torbay.

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Louise Arrow  
*Early Language Consultant*

I qualified as a speech and language therapist in 1995. Before moving to Torbay in 2006, I lived and worked in Essex and London. I have always worked with children and have had the opportunity to work in a variety of settings including community clinics, early years settings, mainstream and special schools. I have also worked with babies and children with feeding difficulties.

Through these experiences my passion for working within the early years was born. If we ‘get it right’ from the beginning, then all children will be given the foundations they need to achieve their full potential.

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Verity Hyde  
*Early Language Consultant*

I qualified as a speech and language therapist in 2007 in Perth, Western Australia and worked as the sole therapist for the 0-3 year old
population in the area that I lived. I moved to the UK in 2009 and worked in Plymouth as a speech and language therapist, further developing my love for working with children in the early years. I thrive on seeing others develop their skills in nurturing and extending children’s speech, language and communication and believe that this can make all the difference to a child’s outcomes for life.

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As Early Language Consultants, we are responsible for leading on the development and delivery of a universal and preventative speech and language therapy service to all who work with children in the early years. This includes providing training and giving support to Children’s Centre staff, Childminders and practitioners in early years settings to ensure children’s speech, language and communication skills are supported. We provide advice and support to parents/carers to encourage the development of their skills in nurturing their children’s speech, language and communication development from the earliest age possible.

Judith Thomas
Early Years Inclusion Consultant

My role is to support Early Years practitioners with identifying young children with additional needs and then providing the most appropriate and timely intervention. I am also able to advise and facilitate gaining further support through the statutory assessment process. I work closely with parents/carers, the Special Needs Coordinators in Early Years settings, school SENCOs, Reception Class teachers and a range of health professionals throughout Torbay. I am also involved in delivering a variety of training programmes including Makaton workshops.

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Lorraine George
Childminding Development Worker

My role is to assist Childminders in developing their home based business and encourage them to become part of the childminding community within Torbay. I support Childminders through the registration process and then the Childminding course (ACT). I also provide information about local Childminding support groups and other activities that are available, other agencies and services that may be helpful to them, their families/children, training opportunities and further professional development and also keep them up to date with changes, both locally and nationally which may affect their business. I also run the Torbay Childminding Network which is quality assured by the local authority.

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Jeanne Cook
Pre-school Learning Alliance Development Worker

The Pre-school Learning Alliance is a leading educational charity and the largest voluntary sector provider of quality childcare in England. We provide specialist information, advice and support to over 20,000 early years practitioners, professionals and students every year. Nationally the Alliance works hard to influence government policy and affect positive change in the early years sector.

I have worked for the Alliance for the past 12 years. Our organisation contracts with Torbay Early Years as part of the support and advice service to Early Years settings across Torbay.

I first got involved with early years when my children attended their local pre-school, I then served on the pre-school’s committee, was a parent help and then undertook the level 3 Diploma in Pre-school Practice, the qualification then needed to lead the group.
I became Pre-school Development Worker in June 2000, my role has altered and developed over the years and now my day to day role includes support and advice on the following; all aspects of the roles and responsibilities of Committees, Management & Leadership skills including; recruitment of staff, staff induction, supervision and appraisal, Financial Health Checks for the voluntary sector settings, any assistance in the development and expansion of settings.

I feel leadership and management of a setting is paramount to them delivering high quality childcare to children and families, I have completed Level 5 Diploma in Management and Leadership Capability.

I provide formal representation of the PVI sector at strategic and operational service groups in Torbay e.g. the schools forum.

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Emma Bullock  
Early Years Advisory Teacher

I am a Qualified Teacher with EYPS and have worked within a school foundation stage and as a manager of a private day care setting working with children from birth to five years. I passionately believe that all children deserve the best opportunities available to them to help them reach their full potential and feel that through my role as an Early Years Advisory Teacher I am able to use my knowledge and experience to support you in achieving this goal.

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Mark Treadwell  
Early Years Advisory Teacher

I qualified as a primary school teacher with a music specialism in 2005, living and working in Staffordshire. I was employed in a school where I worked with children from three to eleven years with a specific focus on nursery and reception age as well as working with the children in the other primary Key Stages. I moved to Torbay in 2010 and I bring with me a passion and enthusiasm for working with our youngest children, supporting them to learn, develop and thrive in their early years.

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Helen Birks  
Early Years Advisory Teacher

I am a qualified teacher with EYPS and have worked within the Early Years sector as both a teacher and advisor for the last 25 years. I have loved the variety that my career has offered me over the years teaching in schools, a Children Centre and supporting colleagues in Early Years Settings. I have recently been very involved with the thrive programme for Early Years in Torbay and am now accredited as an Early Years thrive Supervisor. I am passionate about supporting children’s emotional needs so they are able to reach their full potential.

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As Early Years Advisory Teachers we offer advice and guidance on the development of high quality EYFS practice for children between the ages of birth and five years. Through getting to know you and your setting and the individual and unique ways in which you work we will draw on our knowledge and strengths to ensure you and your children receive the best possible advice and support. This could include modelling of practice, peer observations, support for action planning, the development of pedagogical understanding, training, both in house and at larger events and networks. This will enable you to develop and enhance how children learn and develop in appropriate ways for their developmental age and stage, ensuring that their foundation years are the best that they can be.
Reza Cassim
Childcare Development Worker

My role is to support settings in establishing and maintaining a consistent approach to quality childcare beyond the foundation stage. As a childcare development worker my duties include: Playwork and Group 3 Child Protection training, childcare start up support, pre-registration guidance on the voluntary childcare register as well as offering advice and support to extended schools, holiday and after school club providers. My formative role in Torbay involved working with communities listening to young people in the shaping of their local parks and play spaces. Although I have worked with children and young people in various guises, it is through tutoring and advocating the ethos of Playwork that I derive greatest pleasure. My background includes working for Westminster Council and Westminster Play Association as a support officer for leisure and play.

As with all good childcare settings, consistency in practice and practitioner awareness can be two of the greatest benchmarks when ensuring stability to any child arriving at a settings door.

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Donna Frost
Early Years Development Worker

The key purpose of my job as an Early Years Development Worker is to provide support, advice and training on the Statutory Safeguarding and Welfare requirements to Early Years Settings and Childminders.

I also support prospective and new providers to ensure that they meet all elements of the safeguarding and welfare requirements, and can offer you pre and post Ofsted support. I am trained to deliver level three multi agency child protection training, and have recently completed my level five in leadership and management; I am currently working towards my foundation degree and I am also a qualified tutor and assessor and thrive on seeing others develop within their roles. Through my 14 years of working in day care settings, I have experienced many roles from a trainee Nursery Assistant to Nursery Manager. These roles have provided me with a variety of opportunities and experiences, and an understanding of the demands and rewards of working in the Early Years sector. I have a passion for supporting all settings to develop and improve practice, which is why I am the lead for the Bristol standards quality improvement journey, I began this process in my own setting and value the opportunities for reflection and celebration.

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Iain Proud – Early Years Business Support Assistant

I am the Business Support Assistant for the Team. My role is broad and apart from being the first point of contact for callers I am also responsible for completing many of the Team’s general administration duties and help my colleagues with all sorts of their everyday tasks. This keeps my job varied and interesting as no two days are ever the same. My main focus however, is assisting with the termly Headcount for funded children, processing invoices and recording visits for my Teaching and Development Colleagues. If you have any questions and don’t know where to start then give me a call and I’ll get you to the right person!

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Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance Framework

Quality Improvement Cycles

The Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service plans systematically for quality improvement. It follows two quality improvement cycles (page 10), ensuring careful consideration of how to create, maintain and improve the provision in order to offer the highest quality experiences for all children.

The service follows the Bristol Standard Quality Improvement Framework. The ten dimensions of quality used in the Bristol Standard have been borrowed from the Effective Early Learning Project led by Chris Pascal and Tony Bertram. These headings have been identified by research as crucial to providing high quality provision while keeping children at the centre of all that you do. The service offers advice within each key dimension ensuring the greatest impact on the quality of provision.
Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance Framework

The Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service has a pivotal role in securing quality improvement. The service understands that it is essential for providers to have ownership of their improvement process to lead to the strengthening of self evaluation and sustained quality improvement.

In order to seek and work towards quality improvement the service considers two cycles:

**The LA Improvement Cycle**
- Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service

Transparent open process for categorisation and decisions on universal, targeted and intensive support involving all members of the early years team and shared with settings to formulate support.

LA Early Years Improvement Cycle

LA review of setting improvement and progress

LA improvement plan

Plan

Action

EYCAS support and challenge to settings.

Refer to setting improvement cycle

**The Setting Improvement Cycle**

Settings are responsible for their own improvement. The diagram shown illustrates the five step cycle that supports settings self evaluation and improvement and links to the allocation of the Early Years and Childcare Advisory Services resources.

1. **Self Evaluation Audit** - collecting the evidence

2. **Identifying and agreeing improvement priorities**

3. **Focused Improvement Plan**
   Devise and agree the FIP, outlining the priorities which are time and resource-bound

4. **Actions**
   For example, PDMs, staff support, operational monitoring and evaluation

5. **Review** - by the setting and the EYC of the FIP. Evaluate progress

Setting Improvement Cycle
‘Leadership can be displayed in many ways, both formally and informally and in different circumstances and situations. What is important is that every early years practitioner is encouraged- and aspires – to take the lead in some aspect of their work. This is how individual early years practitioners contribute to improving the quality of education and care offered to young children and their families.’

Rodd, (circa 2004:2 – 3)

RAISE: Recognising Achievement, Improvement, Support and Evaluation

Local Authority Core Standards

- The process will be transparent
- The process will be undertaken in partnership with the provider through the gathering of evidence
- The RAISE will be attended by all members of the EYCAS service
- The grade will be based on evidence
- Support to settings in either the Amber or Red category will result in an improved grade within six months

The allocation of Early Years and Childcare Advisory Team resources to support quality improvement is determined through a transparent process. The process enables the match of support to providers needs. The process is built on the principle that there are secure partnerships and trusting relationships between the LA and providers.

The grading of providers is guided by the principles identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and the factors identified in the EELP research.

The process of grading providers forms a basis for consolidating a shared understanding of
1. Roles and responsibilities
2. Quality Improvement planning
3. Expectations on outcomes and impact of support
4. Evaluation of impact of support

The evidence used to grade providers needs to be recent and relevant. The range of evidence used is extensive and collated with the provider.

Below is an indication of the range of evidence considered:

- The setting’s own self evaluation
- Reports: local authority, Ofsted, external
- EYFSP results data (where appropriate)
- Progress in a quality assurance scheme or programme
- Notes of visits from all the professionals involved
- Compliance visits
- Continuous professional development
- Management of transition/effectiveness of partnership
- Stability of management and staff teams
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Observation of practice
- Dialogue with all roles within settings
- Other agencies and professionals feedback

In addition the evidence may include requests for additional support due to individual circumstances or as part of an improvement identified by an OFSTED report.
The RAISE process takes place twice a year (March and October). The process is a cycle of improvement.

### Evidence gathering
The provider and representative of the EYCAS meet to discuss current practice in relation to the criteria. Evidence is provided by the setting for consideration.

### RAISE Meeting (March and October)
All members of the EYCAS discuss each provision against the criteria. Evidence is shared and reviewed. Grading are awarded against each criteria. An overall grade is allocated. Moderation of judgement is controlled through the challenge and scrutiny of evidence and examples shared.

### Sharing of RAISE grade
All providers are contacted via a letter with the overall RAISE grade. A copy of the criteria and judgement is attached to the letter.

### Action planning
Allocated EYCAS members contact provider to arrange the focus of support and action plan the time allocation.

### Improvement process
The provider and the EYCAS work in partnership implementing the agreed action plan.

### Evaluation and evidence gathering
Prior to the next RAISE meeting the provider and member of the EYCAS meet to evaluate the impact of the improvement plan and gather evidence of success.

### Local Authority Core Standards
Standards to ensure a transparent and open process
- All providers will receive their RAISE judgment in a timely manner (no longer than ten working days after the RAISE meeting)
- RAISE feedback will be provided in a letter to the management and committee (where appropriate)
- The criteria and judgements of each aspect will be sent to the provider with the letter.
- The provider will receive a written summary of the support that will result from the RAISE judgement.
- The EYCAS service will implement the appeal process if a provider disagrees about the nature of how the RAISE was conducted
- Information may be shared with other teams working with the provider to support the “facilitation of a team around the setting approach”.
- The provider will be given general feedback about the quality of early years and childcare settings within the local authority.
- The provider has the right to appeal (see appendix 1)

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*Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.*

William A. Foster
The RAISE Visit

Each RAISE visit will last for approximately four hours and will take place between 9.00am and 1.00pm or 1.00pm and 5.00pm, alternating on each visit. Alongside the RAISE process you will also receive either a Early Years Inclusion audit or a ‘Lets talk about us’ audit carried out by a specialist member of the EYCAS team at the same time as the RAISE visit:

An example of the yearly process:

October
RAISE Visit (9.00am to 1.00pm)
Early Years Inclusion audit OR ‘Let’s talk about us’ audit

March
RAISE Visit (1.00pm to 5.00pm)
‘Let’s talk about us’ audit OR Early Years Inclusion audit

During the visit the EYCAS team member will carry out the following activities:

- A meeting with the setting Manager, this can also include the setting owner or committee member if appropriate, to discuss the process and a timetable for the visit.
- A paired observation with the manager or nominated person (see appendix 2)
- Discussions with key staff members, for example the SENCo, SLC Lead, a new member to the team.
- A meeting with a parent (this is at the setting’s discretion)
- Observations of practice within the setting, to include discussions with staff and children
- The tracking of children’s development, to include discussions with their Key Person on how they are supporting their learning and development and narrowing the gap.
- A feedback meeting with the setting manager with the opportunity for the setting to provide additional evidence.

An example of a visit timetable:

RAISE Process
9.00 – 9.30 OR 1.00 – 1.30
Observation of practice
9.30 – 10.00 OR 1.30 – 2.00
Meeting with Manager - Evidence gathering
10.00 – 10.30 OR 2.00 – 2.30
Paired observation
10.30 – 11.00 OR 2.30 – 3.00
Feedback on paired observation
11.00 – 12.00 OR 3.00 – 4.00
Observation of practice, discussion with staff members
12.00 – 1.00 OR 4.00 – 5.00
Meeting with Manager - Feedback

Early Years Inclusion audit OR ‘Let’s talk about us’ audit
9.00 – 11.00 OR 1.00 – 3.00
Observation of practice, interactions and discussions with staff members
10.00 – 11.00 OR 2.00 – 3.00 (Early Years Inclusion audit only)
Review of child’s records, case records and policies
11.00 – 11.30 OR 3.00 – 3.30
Meeting with Manager
11.30 - 12.00 OR 3.30 – 4.00
Meeting with SLC Lead/SENCo
12.00 – 1.00 OR 4.00 – 5.00
Meeting with Manager - Feedback
Torbay has high expectations for all providers, minimum standards are not accepted for children and families. To embed high expectations the team offer and target a variety of services in line with the resource allocation from RAISE (see diagram below).

Central to all of the services above is the advisory services success in forming trusting relationships, building capacity, empowering, asking the difficult questions and placing the practitioner in a position to consider whether all options have been explored. When working on identified priorities, the most important factor in sustaining the impact from contact is the continued involvement and support of the leader, manager and owner.

**Local Authority Core Standards**

**Behaviours to build trustful relationships**

- Maintains an open, approachable manner, and treats others fairly and respectfully.
- Preserves others’ self confidence and shows regard for their opinions.
- Seeks and considers ideas from those who are reluctant to express their points of view.
- Anticipates and recognises the concerns of others, even if those concerns are not openly expressed.
- Builds rapport by listening to, discussing and negotiating with, and rewarding, encouraging and motivating others.
- Inspires and persuades others to pursue and achieve goals and adopt new positions or opinions.
- Addresses issues in an open, constructive, professional manner and encourages others to approach issues in the same manner.
- Strives to understand the data, the people and their views before making decisions and taking action within the provision of the law.
- Seeks to resolve confrontations and disagreements constructively. Focuses on the situation, issues, or behaviours, rather than the people.
- Celebrates workplace success and achievements. Supporting the good ideas of others.
- Demonstrates a good balance between building rapport and getting the work done.

The Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service will adopt the following model of consultancy when working in partnership with providers over long periods of time.

**Stage 1: Engaging**
The team member will make initial contact and establish a working relationship with the provider and key staff in the setting. The team member will make contact with those they will work with directly and those that can offer useful information and insights into the developments and those whose positions enable them to ensure that the work is carried out.

Prior to the visit the EYCAS team member will
- Ensure they have any relevant information held e.g. previous visit notes, OFSTED inspection reports, current action plans, overview of appropriate policies, staffing information, numbers and ages of children.
- Ensure that they know of the involvement of any other professionals, past or present.

**Stage 2: Contracting**
During this stage the team member will explain their role, what they are prepared to do and what those involved will be expected to contribute. The time will be used to ensure there is agreement and commitment from all parties.

The EYCAS team member and setting will need to establish
- What are the expectations – both of the EYCAS member and provider?
- What level of commitment there is from the provider?
- What are the timescales for the work?
- What protocols need to be followed or established?
- Who needs to be involved and what are their roles?
- Protocols regarding confidentiality
- What factors are likely to promote or inhibit the work?

**Stage 3: Collecting Further Information**
At this stage the team member will collect further information to identify the key priorities in more detail. The provider will need to share emerging strengths and areas for development and be willing to discuss these and underlying causes. The team member will expect the provider to take a lead in collecting the information, as this ensures it has greater credibility and builds confidence that emerging priorities are the right ones to focus on.
Stage 4: Making sense of the information and further identifying priorities
The team member will help staff to make sense of the information and clarify their understanding of the issues. At this point the team member will start making decisions about what might improve the situation. If issues are outside your expertise or spheres of influence the team member may think about whether there are other professionals who need to be involved. At this point underlying issues associated with expectations, leadership and provider organisation might emerge. It is important that these are recognised and discussed before moving to the next stage.

Stage 5: Generating options, making decisions and planning actions
Once the priorities have been accurately identified, the EYCAS member will be in a position to support the provider in generating options or solutions to tackle them. The role of the EYCAS member is to simplify, clarify and restructure the information so that options emerge. Often this involves discussion of the emerging issues, the full range of causes, ways forward, options and possibilities, leading to the development of an action plan. The more the provider is involved in identifying ways of moving forward, the more likely it is to have ownership of the actions. Any programme of action will need to identify outcomes, actions, timescales, resources, responsibilities and evaluation strategies. The EYCAS member and the provider will need to agree how you will evaluate the impact of identified actions at this stage (see appendix 3).

At this point the team member will establish

- What part they will play in implementing the plan
- What part the provider will play in implementing the plan
- Who has ownership of the plan
- Who is leading on each aspect of the plan and how will this be demonstrated
- Who will monitor, challenge, support and resource the plan and how will this be carried out
- Who will monitor, evaluate and move forward the change after the EYCAS member leaves

Stage 6: Implementing the plan and taking action
The success of the action plan depends on four factors

1. Ownership – Do all the people responsible for implementing the plan own it and are they committed to it?
2. Leadership – Is the provider and team committed to the change?
3. Capability – Does everybody in the plan have the necessary skills to carry out the actions?
4. Organisation – How will the plan be implemented?

During any period of work the EYCAS team member will work to support all four factors. The team member will work to ensure that practitioners are encouraged to understand the nature of the changes that are necessary and how to make them. The team will be mindful to the disadvantages of both non-involvement and being too directly involved. The team member will endeavour to ensure a balanced approach that enables practitioners a valuable learning experience, which results in shared ownership and less practitioner dependency to make improvements in the future. It is inevitable that this stage will lead to challenges. The team member will not see challenges as the end of the process but instead return to stage 3 to collect additional information and create new solutions.

Stage 7: Exiting and Evaluation
The EYCAS member time is a limited resource which should result in significant and sustainable improvement as a result of intervention. At this stage the process will be completed by an official review and evaluation of the work that was initially identified, paying particular attention to how well the success criteria has been met and any further areas for development. Based on each intervention the EYCAS member may use a variety of strategies to exit the support package

- Coaching and developing staff to adopt a similar role offered during the process
- Gradually reducing their influence over a period of time and agreeing a planned follow up
- Planning a formal celebration of the work undertaken
Visits

The Early Years and Childcare Service recognises the value of face to face contact with individual providers. Each contact will be arranged in advance, targeted to an agreed focus and between 1 and 2 hours long. The outcomes and any resulting actions will be shared with the providers most senior member of staff during the visit.

All work the EYCAS undertakes will be recorded in a visit note. As a result there will be a report on strengths, areas of development and actions to be carried out that can be used by the provider to support self evaluation, celebrate strengths and inform improvement planning.

The EYCAS use the following key principles for writing visit notes:

- The visit note should be accurate, factual and evaluate the focus of the visit against known and shared criteria.
- It should be an evaluation of the visit, not a description of it.
- The visit note should be written in accessible language for a range of audiences.
- Key sources of evidence are cited and acknowledged within the visit note.
- Data (where appropriate) is used effectively.
- Recommendations for actions arise out of the evaluation and are clearly noted, achievable and time limited.
- Progress is reviewed and work towards completing previous agreed actions is noted in relation to the benefit of any change on children.

In preparing for a visit the EYCAS member will:

- schedule time to review previous visit note
- reflect on previous recommendations and prepare thoughts regarding future next steps.

In preparation for a visit the provider is expected to:

- Ensure agreed staff are available to engage with the support
- Provide an appropriate space for the meeting to take place
- Engage with the team member in sharing information and creating solutions
- Read the previous visit note
- Gather any evidence to demonstrate the progress made towards agreed actions.
- Think through possible next steps and support requirements

It is inevitable that on occasions visit will need to be postponed or altered. It is expected that both the EYCAS members and providers inform each other of this need at the earliest opportunity, but always prior to the visit taking place.

Local Authority Core Standards:

- The visit will be arranged with the provider in advance (except if unannounced for audit or safeguarding purposes).
- The visit note will be an accurate record of the activity that took place.
- The actions stated will be agreed with the provider before the end of the contact. No additional actions will be recorded.
- The visit note will reflect both the good practice, the journey of improvement and development needs.
- The visit note will be based on evidence and factual information.
- The visit note will be formal, impersonal and will not mention practitioners by name within the narrative.
- The visit note will be jargon free.
- The visit note will be sent electronically (within ten working days) unless requested in a paper copy by an individual provider.

Quality Assurance:

- The EYCAS Manager will randomly select six visit notes from all EYCAS members to review and critique through the year.
- A random sample of practitioners will be contacted to provide feedback on the visit notes against the criteria outlined above.
- The good practice and learning from the quality assurance process will be a focus of a team meeting and individual supervision.
True professionalism, as all those involved in Early Years will recognise, relies increasingly on an ability to respond quickly and effectively to new information, research, government policies and changing requirements. A key aspect of lifelong learning is continuing professional development (CPD).

This can be defined as:

**The systematic maintenance and improvement of knowledge, skills and competence, and the enhancement of learning, undertaken throughout an individual’s working life.**

The basis of CPD is new learning, which of course comes about in different ways. As an organisation you have the ability to affect change through your daily activities, conversations, supervision and training.

The EYCAS team commits to provide opportunities to enable new learning to take place that can build upon those experiences you are able to offer. The team will deliver opportunities using three approaches:

1. **Training** – Development of knowledge, skills and competencies to improve one’s capability and capacity
2. **Forums** – An event to cascade information and facilitate discussion
3. **Networks** – A self-generating group, sharing and debating practice to enhance existing knowledge

All CPD we provide will be advertised through [www.torbay.cpd.co.uk](http://www.torbay.cpd.co.uk).

As a service we commit to:

- Provide worthwhile and valuable learning opportunities that are transferable to practice
- Topical, relevant and timely information
- A CPD pathway that is respondent to areas of need, requests and priorities
- Share dates, times and venues at the earliest opportunity
- Respond to the particular needs of individual learners when these are shared in advance

As a provider we expect you to:

- Book a place prior to attending training
- Commit to attend the whole event
- Attend with an open mind and a willingness to learn and engage
- Select staff that have an interest or responsibility to effect change
- Read any pre-course materials
- Bring a pen and notebook
- Complete the evaluation and impact assessment
- Share any individual needs/requests at the time of booking
- Bring your own refreshments including lunch where appropriate!

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*Every child has a right to be heard in the development of policy and practice that affects them.*

*United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child*
Quality Assurance Process

The Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service want a rigorous system for quality assurance, which supports a culture of continuous improvement. Just like our providers we aim to:

■ secure consistency in quality standards across our team and range of services
■ demonstrate our commitment to continuously improving services
■ provide clear expectations for staff in delivering quality services.

Our approach to quality assurance means that we:

■ regularly monitor our performance against a specific set of standards and outcomes
■ use customer feedback to improve and develop services
■ have a defined and transparent process for addressing any problems or issues with providers.

As part of our evaluation process, the Early Years Childcare Advisory Service wants to evaluate the support we offer and the manner in which we do this to inform future planning. To enable us to do this, we would like settings to complete a ‘Feedback Form’ (see appendix 4).

Every February and September we will hold an ‘evaluation week.’

During this week, we will electronically send out the form and we ask that as a setting, you answer the questions and return the form to us.

We will then analyse the results and feedback to you at the Early Years and Childcare Forums.
Early Years and Childcare Advisory Service

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Castle Circus, Torquay,
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