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Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Self-Evaluation Toolkit

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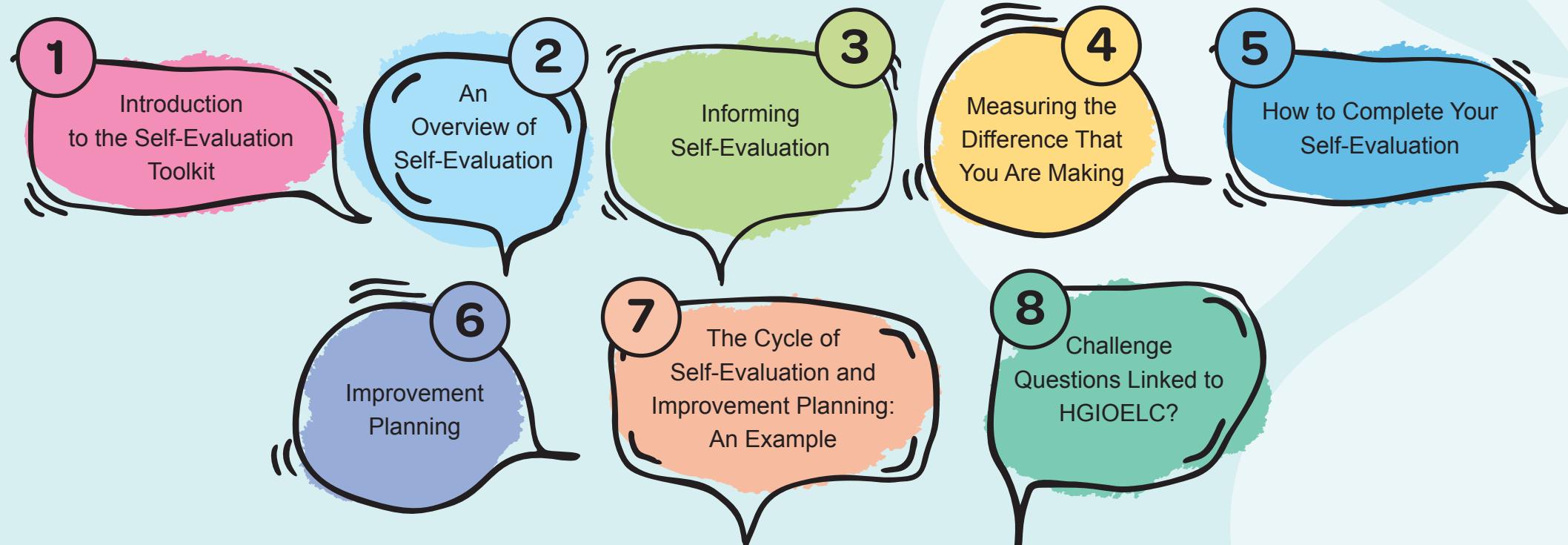
Useful Links

Support Templates

1 Introduction to the Self-Evaluation Toolkit

Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to support settings to embed highly effective methods of self-evaluation to inform improvements that lead to the best possible outcomes for children and families in ELC settings across Perth & Kinross Council (PKC).

> *"The term 'self-evaluation' is used to cover the way in which individuals and settings explore their progress, development and practice to identify what has improved and what still needs to improve. It is a way of using evidence to assess achievements and success and areas that still need action".*
>
> (How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare? 2016)

The Aims

We have worked to develop a user-friendly resource which can be used as a one-stop-shop for all things self-evaluation, which:

- *is easy to access, comprehensive and supports all aspects of self-evaluation;*
- *makes clear links between current best local and national policy and practice guidance and improvement priorities.*

We hope that use of the toolkit will lead to an:

- *increased understating of the self-evaluation process amongst all staff in ELC settings;*
- *increased understanding of the value of the self-evaluation process, and the importance of embedding it in everything we do.*

The Audience

The toolkit is designed for use by everyone working in and across ELC in PKC, including:
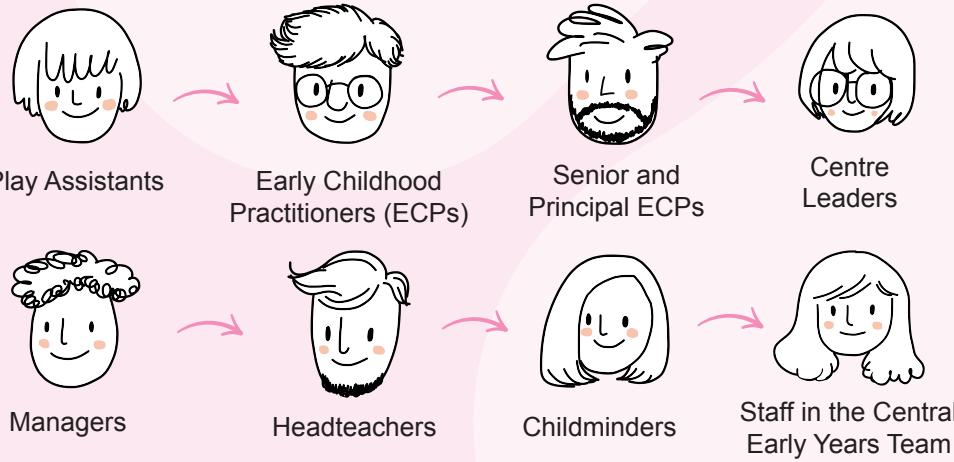
Play Assistants → Early Childhood Practitioners (ECPs) → Senior and Principal ECPs → Centre Leaders

Managers → Headteachers → Childminders → Staff in the Central Early Years Team

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1 Introduction to the Self-Evaluation Toolkit

What is Contained Within the Toolkit?

The toolkit contains 8 different sections. These have been split up to allow settings to access the section(s) that they need to carry out the self-evaluation activity they would like support and guidance on.

Top Tip

When clicking on any links contained within the toolkit, to avoid being taken away from the toolkit, please right click and choose '*open in a new tab*'.

Please note that you will require your **GLOW login** to access many of these links.

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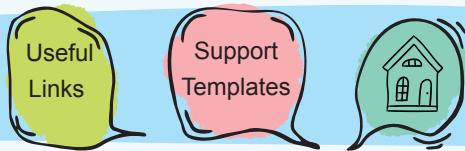
"Self-evaluation should be conducted within a coherent framework and underpinned by a set of structures that support systematic processes to collect a range of data from diverse sources and inform action to improve pupil and professional learning".

School Self-Evaluation for School Improvement by Christopher Chapman and Pamela Sammons

Self-evaluation is a continuous process of ensuring continuous improvement which involves all members of the staff team and should be reviewed and annotated throughout the year. Education Scotland require every setting to evaluate the HGIOELC? four core indicators annually. These are:

1.3 *Leadership of Change*

2.3 *Learning, Teaching and Assessment*

3.1 *Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality, and Inclusion*

3.2 *Securing Children's Progress*

Other indicators should be evaluated on rotational basis over a five-year period. The *QI tracker* will help you to record your self-evaluation progress and would be useful to keep in your self-evaluation folder.

"You can start with any quality indicator and look at them in any order. You do not need to use every quality indicator, but they do relate to each other so looking at more than one or two will give a broader understanding of the impact of your setting's work. For example, you may be wanting to know how well children are progressing in their learning. You may find it helpful to start with **'Securing Children's Progress' (QI 3.2)** *but you equally may want to know so what is the impact of the curriculum we offer and look at and working with both quality indicators, reflecting on the good practice statements and discussing the challenge questions will help you decide on what you need to do to further improve."*

HGIOELC 2016
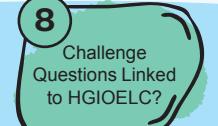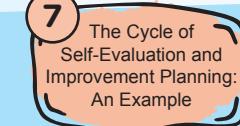
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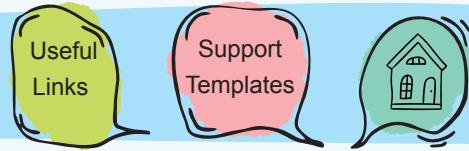
How to Use the Toolkit

When using the toolkit to self-evaluate and plan for improvements, settings must remember the need to look **inwards**, **outwards** and **forwards** to ensure the process is as robust as possible.

Looking Inwards: knowing ourselves inside out through effective self-evaluation

What difference are we making?

Looking Outwards: learning from what happens elsewhere to challenge our own thinking

Who are we learning from?

Looking Forwards: exploring what the future might hold for today's learners and planning how to get there

21st century learners - ahead of the curve

Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

Looking Inwards: this involves evaluating performance at every level, and should involve gathering the views of children, families, practitioners, and other professionals associated with the setting.

Looking Outwards: this involves looking at what is having the most and least impact at an individual, local, and national level. Looking at best practice from other settings/authorities.

Looking Forwards: once settings have looked both inwards and outwards, and levels of impact are identified, then plans for improvement can be drawn up and underpinned by what has been learned.

Once your setting has been informed of an inspection, you will have the opportunity to highlight a particular QI which you would like to form a particular focus of the inspection to highlight your strengths.

(3) Informing Self-Evaluation

Settings are required to complete and submit a self-evaluation annually; however, it should be an ongoing process. Here are some ideas of how you could conduct self-evaluation and collate robust evidence involving all service users in your setting throughout the year.

(a) Involving Practitioners in Self-Evaluation

Floorbooks are an effective tool and can be used to record professional dialogue at staff meetings to reflect on practice and make links to national guidance.

For example: select challenge questions linked to the QIs for each outcome. You can find these in HGIOELC, Realising the Ambition, The Care Inspectorate Framework and other practice guidance documents. You can use the document *Self-Evaluation Challenge Questions* to help you identify challenge questions or you could make up your own.

Recording answers could be done in any of the following ways:

Post-it notes onto big pieces of paper, everyone contributes their ideas and responses

Table Mats - where a question is written in the middle and everyone writes their ideas down

Involving Practitioners in Self-Evaluation

Rainbow pens for different people's ideas

Graffiti Board
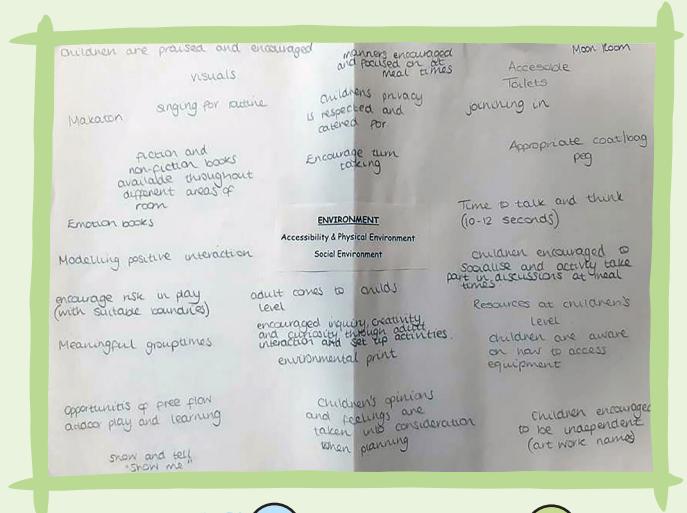
An example of practitioner self-evaluation in the form of a mind-map
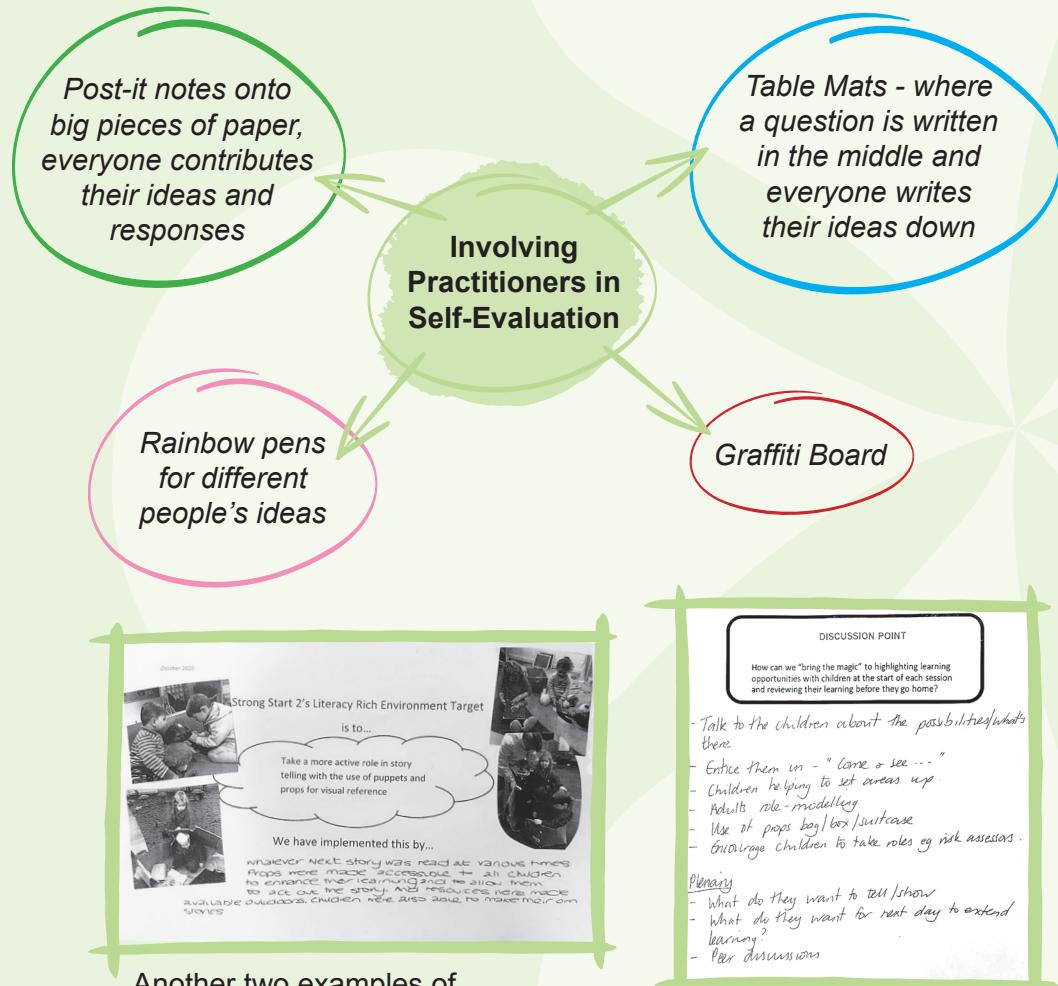
Another two examples of practitioner self-evaluation activities

③ Informing Self-Evaluation

Other methods to involve practitioners in self-evaluation include:

Maintaining up-to-date staff training records, in which staff reflect on their training and how it impacts on their practice.

Peer review is a good way for staff to work together to identify good practice, along with areas for improvement.

Monitoring by SMT should be scheduled regularly throughout the year as part of the Quality Assurance calendar.

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Learn more
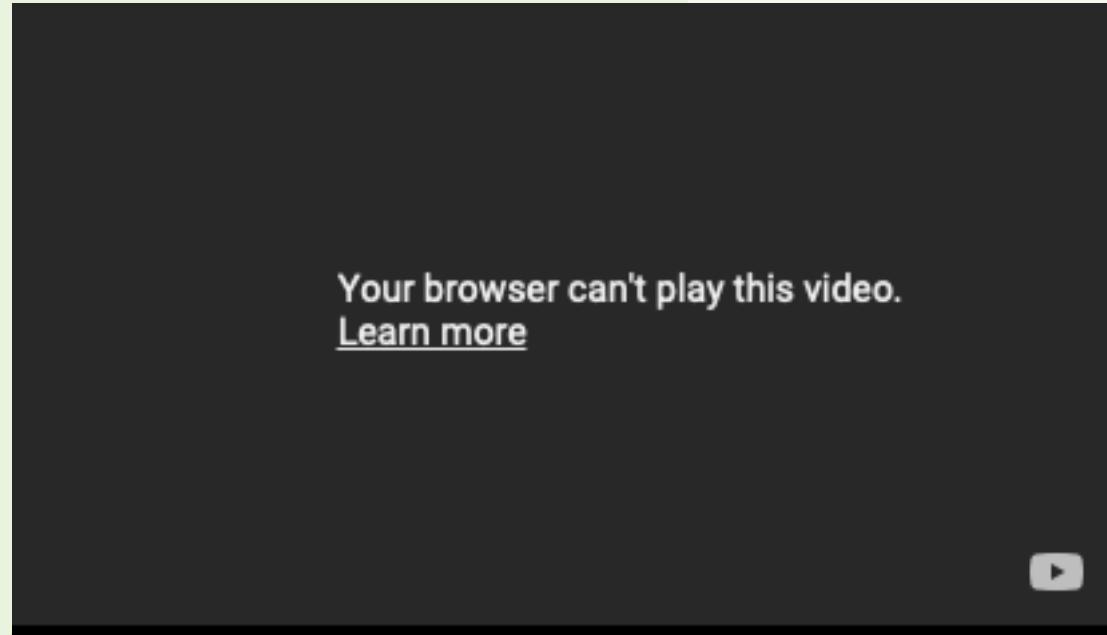
Click above to find out more about how the process of 'looking inwards' can support self-evaluation activities.
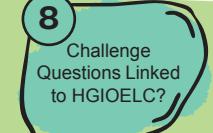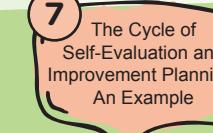
3 Informing Self-Evaluation

(b) Involving Children in Self-Evaluation

There are many methods that settings can use to gather the views of children in a meaningful way.

Involving Children in Self-Evaluation

Personal Learning Plans provide information about each child, and enable staff to cater to individual needs, and develop positive relationships with parents and carers through an understanding of social and cultural background.

Discussing changes that have been made - this could be recorded on a mind map or floorbook.

Learning journals also evidence children's progress, through *high-quality observations*, and can also include the child's voice and opinion on their learning.

It is important to ensure that children's involvement in self-evaluation is not tokenistic. It should be carried out in a meaningful way, and children's views should not only be listened to and heard, but their ideas should be put into practice and embedded within the setting, and where this isn't possible, children should be consulted about the reasons why.

Floorbooks and Planning can provide evidence of high-quality experiences offered to children, alongside individual learning journals.

Create an Ideas Tree - add hearts to the tree to represent the things you love about the setting and stars to represent the things you would like to see.

Views could be posted on Seesaw and facilitated by parents/carers/practitioners.

Voting if you like an activity or lunch or snack provided, eg bottle tops in a bowl green = good blue = not so good/happy or sad faces.

3 Informing Self-Evaluation

(c) Involving Parents and Carers in Self-Evaluation

It is important to gather meaningful feedback from parents/carers to help inform changes and improvements in the setting.

Feedback from parents/carers can be formal or informal. Some examples of how to do this include:

Views can be sought on Facebook through polls (could incorporate question of the month)

Collated in floorbooks at share the learning events

Nursery Natters on Teams

Periodic surveys using a tool such as Forms *(You will find a guide to using Forms here)*

Parent contact meetings

Daily catch-ups during drop off and pick up

Involving Parents and Carers in Self-Evaluation

Feedback from parents/carers should be acknowledged and ideas, where possible, should be taken forward. You might feedback by creating a *'You Said We did Wall'*, or by updating your Facebook page/ website or through the use of a newsletter.

Question of the month could be on the wall or parents/carer noticeboard and feedback provided there and then (eg use of Post-it notes)

Question of the month - could be in the newsletter and email responses requested

Online learning journals

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(3) Informing Self-Evaluation

(d) Involving Others in Self-Evaluation

As part of the self-evaluation process, it is important that the views of the wider ELC setting community are gathered to inform changes and improvements.

Involving Others in Self-Evaluation

Feedback from the wider ELC community can be gathered in various ways, for example:

Inspection comments and recommendations

PKC feedback comments and next steps

Two stars and a wish sheet

Surveys

This process might involve the following people:

Visitors to the setting

Community Partners

PKC and NHS support services

Parent Council

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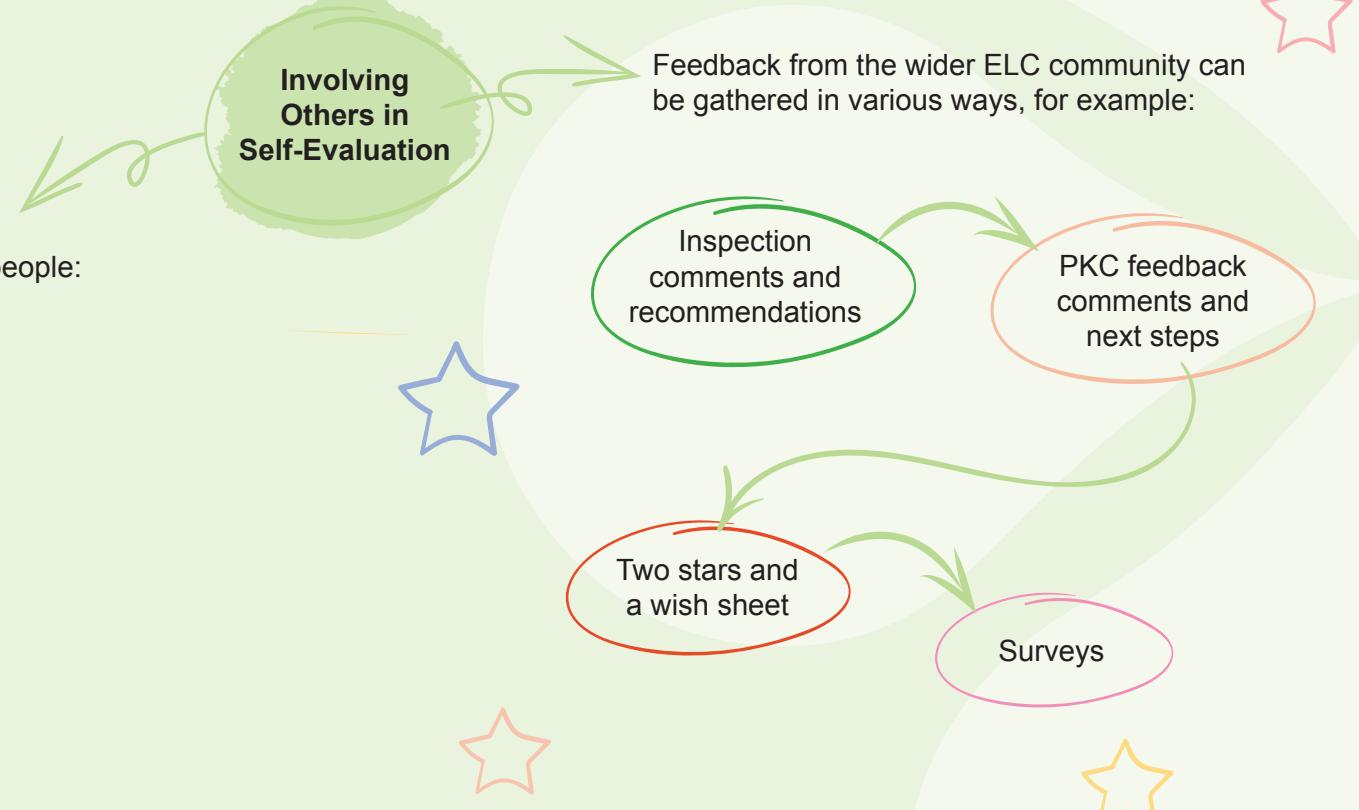
3 **Informing Self-Evaluation**
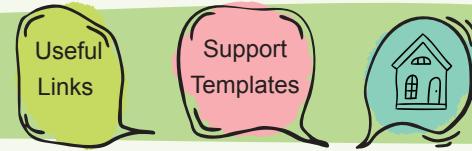
(e) The Use of Quantitative Data

To ensure you have evidence that your improvements are making a difference, it is vital that settings collect and analyse quantitative data, this means data involving figures and numbers. Examples of how to collect quantitative data include:
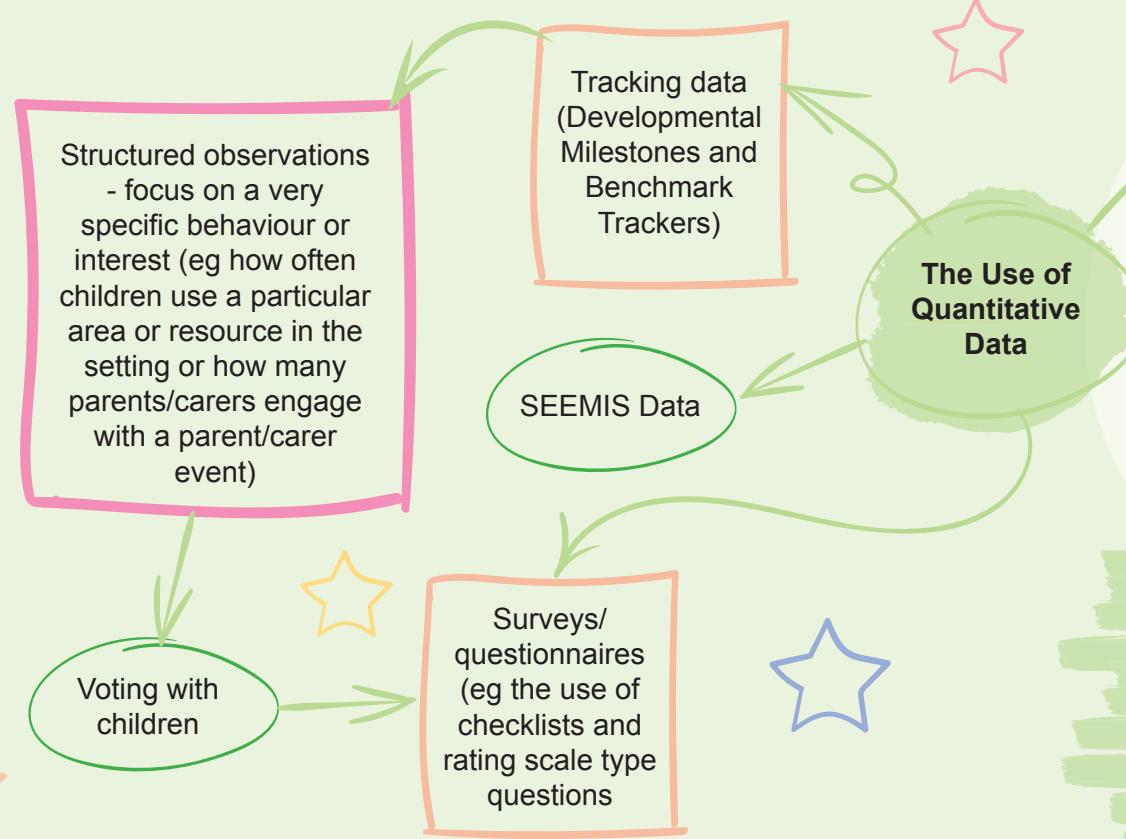
When analysing quantitative data, the following terminology, taken from HGIOELC, should be used (where possible):

Structured observations - focus on a very specific behaviour or interest (eg how often children use a particular area or resource in the setting or how many parents/carers engage with a parent/carer event)

Tracking data (Developmental Milestones and Benchmark Trackers)

SEEMIS Data

The Use of Quantitative Data

Voting with children

Surveys/ questionnaires (eg the use of checklists and rating scale type questions

All 100%

Almost All 91% - 99%

Most 76% - 90%

Majority 51% - 75%

Less than half 16% - 50%

Few up to 15%

Example: You invite 34 parents/carers to a Stay and Play session, but only 10 attend, this equates to approximately 29%.

In your analysis, you would describe this as follows: *'less than half of parents/carers attended the Stay and Play session'*. *(Then you would go on to describe why this was the case - based on feedback from parents/carers in, for example, a survey).*

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4 Measuring the Difference That You Are Making

Measuring the success and impact of your improvements and the small actions you have implemented is important. It helps you to to see if you are making a difference to outcomes for children and families.

It is good practice to:

measure even the small actions which support your aim

reflect with the team to see if these small changes are making the difference

review and reflect on these and measure the difference as you go along

Example: How could this look in practice?

Aim - To encourage children to explore books.

Small action - Setting up a more interesting book corner with an adult available to read stories.

Measured by - Tally marking the number of children who come to story corner, using observations, and recording what the children say about books.

Other ideas for measuring are:

Tally Marks

What partners say

Children's voice

Surveys

Polls

What inspection reports say

Team observations and reflections

Feedback from PKC

Developmental milestone trackers

Graphs, eg parent responses

Before and after videos or photographs

Speaking to P1 teachers

What the parents/ carers say
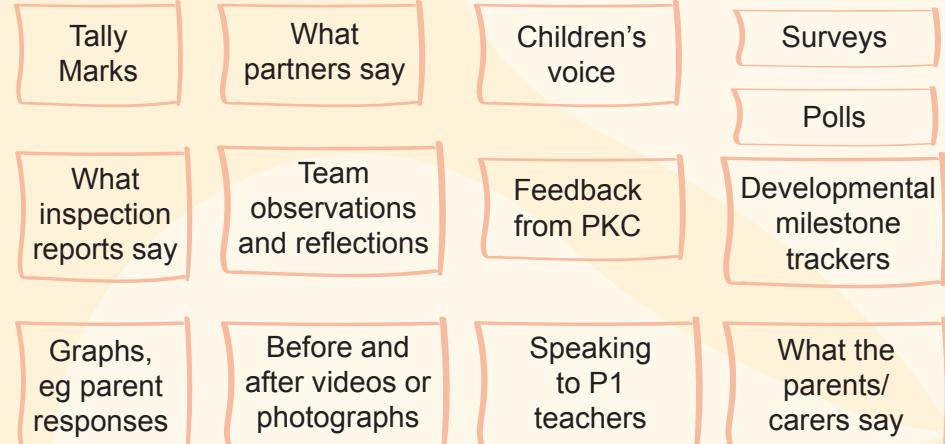
It is also important to store the evidence of the measurement activities you have undertaken. Some ideas for where to store your evidence include:

Put responses up on Improvement Planning Wall.

Create a comments book that sits in the entrance area of your setting.

In a Talking and Thinking book about the improvement plan.

Create file on the computer with the data from responses, eg a simple graph.
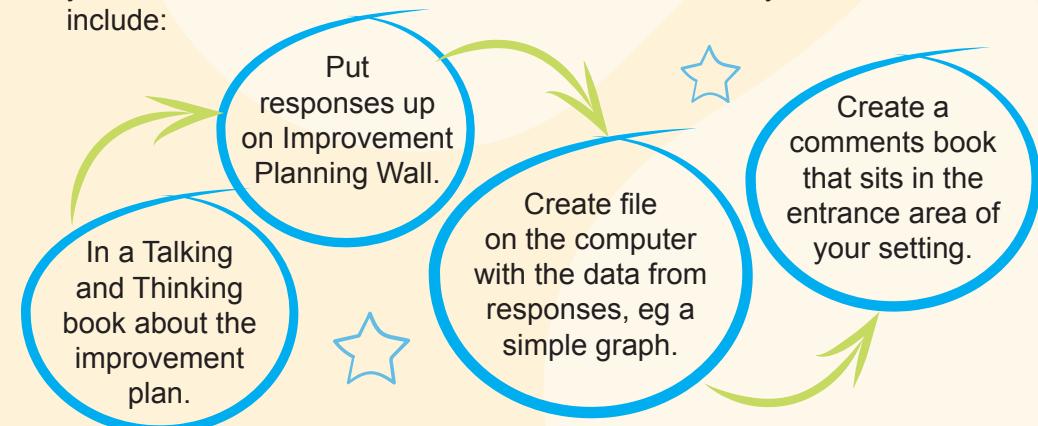
(5) How to Complete Your Self-Evaluation

The diagram below has been designed to provide you with a visual guide to the cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Create an action plan: small actions to support your aim. Action plan should state who, when and what is to be done. Measure the small changes to see if they are making the improvements that you had hoped for. Discuss and reflect on these changes frequently deciding to either adapt the changes, abandon them or adopt and embed them into practice.

Self-Evaluation
Looking inwards and outwards

Previous improvement plan.

How are we doing?
What is working well?
What difference has it made?

Write an improvement plan. Outline aims, actions and measurements.

Improvment Planning
Looking forwards

What are we going to do now?
What are our priorities?
What will make the biggest impact?
Discuss aims with team and service users.

How do we know? What evidence do we have? eg views of service users, data, observations.

5 How to Complete Your Self-Evaluation

When completing self-evaluation, there are three key questions settings should use to help frame their thinking, these are:

1 **What is working well?**

This should be a statement of positive impact. Look at your statement and ask so what? This will ensure the impact is clear and you have demonstrated the difference you are making.

2 **How do we know?**

This is where you provide evidence to back up your initial statement. You should not just make assumptions about how you are doing but use robust evidence which is already available. You should not need to create evidence for the purpose of self-evaluation. Ensure evidence is specific.

3 **What are we going to do now?**

What areas have been identified as requiring improvement as a result of this self-evaluation? This will feed into your improvement plan. Prioritise and plan improvements based on the evidence you have found. Ensure it is something you can control or influence within your setting.

Once you have completed your self-evaluation, you might like to use the following six-point scale from HGIOELC? to assess and understand your performance in relation to each quality indicator.

- **Level 6 -** *excellent; outstanding or sector-leading*
- **Level 5 -** *very good; major strengths*
- **Level 4 -** *good; important strengths with areas for improvement*
- **Level 3 -** *satisfactory; strengths just outweigh weaknesses*
- **Level 2 -** *weak; important weaknesses*
- **Level 1 -** *unsatisfactory; major weaknesses*

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(6) Improvement Planning
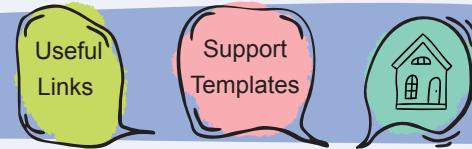
By the time you reach this stage in the process, you will have completed your self-evaluation document. You now need to prioritise, and plan improvements based on the evidence you have found. In order to support this prioritisation, you should consider the following actions:

- *Look outwards - research and explore examples of very good and excellent practice for improvement ideas (see useful links page for ideas of where to find these).*

- *Make use of current best practice policy and guidance, such as Funding Follows the Child: The 10 National Standards, Realising the Ambition, HGIOELC?, Out to Play, My World Outdoors, Setting the Table etc.*

- *Identify which challenge questions you have not yet addressed in your self-evaluation to see if there is a gap, and consider new frameworks, resources and documentation which may be important to embed in your setting.*

Other drivers for improvement might include the National Improvement Framework Drivers, previous inspection reports, and local priorities featured in the Improvement Plan of your local authority.

Example: How to write your improvement statement

You may choose to brainstorm ideas and then prioritise improvements. Ensure the ideas are things you can control or influence within your setting.

Things to consider: Which area of improvement will have the biggest impact on outcomes for children and families? Which is your priority?

Once you have decided on your improvement priority, set a clear aim, using the questions:

- *What?*

- *Who?*

- *By when?*

Carrying out the activities above will enable you to write your improvement statement. You then add detail about what the impact will be and how you will measure it. You will find the *Improvement Plan template here*.

It is good practice to now create an action plan which details the steps you will take and the time frame for achieving each step, along with who will take responsibility for this. You will find a *template for your action plan here.*
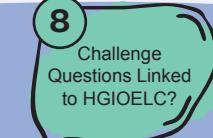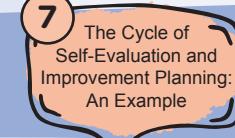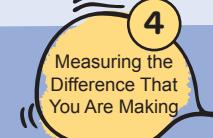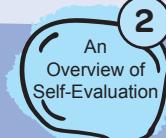
(7) The Cycle of Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning: An Example
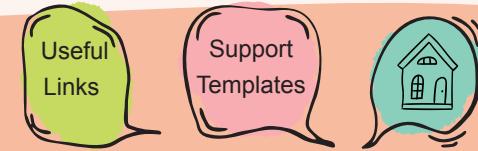
This is an example of the self-evaluation and improvement planning process. It begins with looking at the improvement priorities from the previous year. We hope that by reading the approach taken by this example setting, your understanding of how to approach self-evaluation and improvement planning activities will be strengthened.

This example setting had previously identified the following improvement priorities and planned actions against which they will now need to self-evaluate.

Improvement Priority 1: Children will have improved experiences and attainment in Literacy delivered by confident and knowledgeable staff.

QIs: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2

Health & Social Care Standards: 1.27, 2.8 *(Standards for Early Years Document)*

Key Developments:

- *Use of Closing the Communication Gap training and resources.*
- *Pupil portfolios will highlight progress made in literacy through use of developmental milestones and tracking.*
- *Floorbook and observations to document children's experiences.*
- *Reflection and professional dialogue, planning meetings, SMT quality assurance visits.*

Improvement Priority 2: We will have improved systems in place for documenting successes and achievements of children.

QIs: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2

Health & Social Care Standards: 1.6, 1.13, 1.14

Key Developments:

- *Quality Observations.*
- *New electronic learning journals via introduction of Seesaw.*
- *Develop robust Tracking system using PKC Toolkit.*
- *Increased Parental engagement.*

Below is an example of how **evaluative language** could be used by the example setting being used for the four core Quality indicators.

These first two improvement priorities relate to QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

What is working well?

The impact of Closing the Communication gap training **has been** increased confidence of staff to introduce new approaches to learning such as Pathways to Stories, **resulting in** high-quality experiences. Staff are confident in the use of the developmental milestones to plan and track the children's development and have introduced the additional milestones tracker **which ensures** that there is appropriate challenge for children who meet milestones earlier.
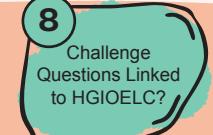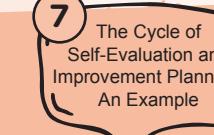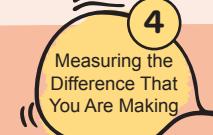
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How do we know?

Children and staff collect evidence (including photographs and transcripts of discussions with children) of learning experiences and opportunities in personal development profiles and in Talking and Thinking Books. These are regularly revisited to recall learning and discuss processes and experiences. Our Planning File contains weekly evaluations and notes from planning meetings which record professional dialogue around planning.

Records of tracking meetings and SMT monitoring.

Developmental milestone tracking shows an increase of 5% in the number of children achieving their Speech and Language Milestones compared to the previous year.

As a result of self-evaluation against this QI, the setting then identifies an area for improvement to answer the question.

What are we going to do now?

Continue to develop practitioner understanding of Early Years pedagogy through participation in year 2 of Adventures with Alice and familiarisation with guidance documents including Realising the Ambition.

Improvement Priority 3: Our setting will provide an enabling environment which promotes curiosity, enquiry, and creativity in line with current best practice guidance.

QIs: 1.3, 1.5, 2.2, 3.1

Health & Social Care Standards: 5.11, 5.21, 2.27

Key Developments:

- *Adventures with Alice.*
- *Leadership at all levels.*
- *Staff knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy of play.*

This priority can be used to evaluate against QI 1.3 Leadership of Change

What is working well?

Leadership is evident at all levels with practitioners having responsibility for different areas of the curriculum. **As a result**, they can share their knowledge and skills with colleagues, **which means** all staff are upskilled. Opportunities for practitioners to attend regular networking meetings, for example, at Adventures with Alice training **means that** practitioners are encouraged to look outwards as well as inwards at their practice. Regular staff meetings **facilitate** collegiate learning and reflection on our practice.

How do we know?

Staff training files provide evidence of staff training evaluations, what training has been undertaken and how this can impact the setting
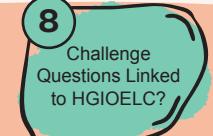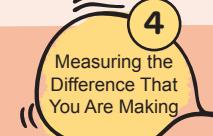
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and the learning and development of the children. All staff are aware of their area of responsibility within the setting and can engage in professional dialogue around this.

Noticeboards in the welcome area share the focus of professional learning with families. A survey of parents/carers in May 2020, confirmed that 85% of families were aware of our work to develop connections because of Adventures with Alice Training.

Positive feedback received from parents which was received and can be viewed via online learning journals.

What are we going to do now?

We will continue to positively use HGIOELC? and other documentation to self-evaluate the setting, involving all staff and service users in the process, to ensure that we are continually improving and developing as a setting and as a strong and motivated team.

Staff will also be developing their understanding of how to use Realising the Ambition as a tool to evaluate the setting and practice.

The setting also needs to complete a self-evaluation against QI 3.1 and 3.2 (see overleaf). For this example, in addition to the four core QIs and based on their previous improvement priorities, it might be appropriate to select this year to evaluate against QI 2.2 and 2.4 as well.

You will find the *self-evaluation template here*.

QI 3.1 Securing Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

What is working well?

The setting uses inclusive practice and work closely with professionals to **ensure** children who require support can access it. A Child's Plan is in place for any child with possible or diagnosed additional support needs. **This means** that the full wellbeing of the child is met. Practitioners welcome and support children from a wide range of backgrounds respecting their different beliefs and cultures.

Child Protection training is completed each August through our partnership with PKC. The **impact** of this is that staff feel confident in their ability to fulfil their statutory duties.

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is used within our nursery practice and is evident within our weekly plans and talking and thinking books. The wellbeing indicators are embedded in all aspects of the setting, staff and children are confident in the use of the language and can be heard using this in daily practice. **This has resulted in** the children having an increased awareness of their own needs.

How do we know?

Observations demonstrate that children are confident and happy within the setting, and children's voices are recorded in their personal learning journals.

Good attendance at parent information events and almost all parents/carers attend our biannual parent consultation evenings.

Displays in the nursery reflect the cultural backgrounds of children who attend our setting.
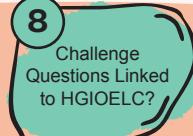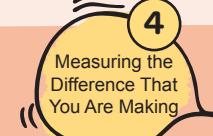
7 The Cycle of Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning: An Example

Planning - References to the wellbeing indicators can be seen throughout our planning.

Staff Training files - National Induction Resource records and Staff monitoring/Peer review notes.

What are we going to do now?

Develop work on UN Rights of the Child to ensure it is embedded in practice.

Develop staff understanding of Attachment Theory through continuation with Adventures with Alice sessions and Solihull Approach Training.

QI 3.2 Securing Children's Progress

What is working well?

We track progress using the PKC Developmental milestones tracker, and where appropriate we also use the benchmarks tracker. Tracking is reviewed at regular staff meetings and whilst each key worker is responsible for their own group, staff work closely and communicate well **to ensure** they build a full picture of all children. This knowledge informs our planning, to meet the needs of all of the children and plan for progress.

The introduction of electronic learning journals **enables** parents/carers to view the success and achievements within the learning and development of their child and allows them to comment on their learning, progress and next steps of development.

How do we know?

A questionnaire was sent to parents in October 2020 to find out their views on the online journals. 95% of parents said these had increased their understanding of their child's learning.

During term 1, 100% of parents had at least 3 interactions with the learning journals.

Tracking information is recorded in key workers' group folders. Tracking meeting minutes with SMT show that all staff are now confident to work with children and families to decide on appropriate next steps.

What are we going to do now?

Use CIRCLE resource to self-evaluate your environment for all children, and the other is to identify strategies to support children with specific developmental needs.
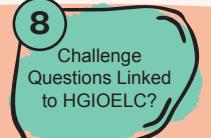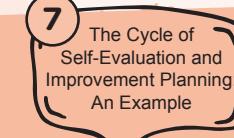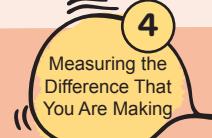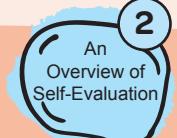
(7) The Cycle of Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning: An Example

Improvement Planning

By answering the question, What are we going to do now?, the setting has generated ideas for new improvement priorities. For the example above, the improvement statements might be:

1   By June 20XX staff will be familiar with using the CIRCLE resource to ensure an inclusive environment for all children in the setting.

QIs 2.3, 2.4, 3.1

Health & Social Care Standards 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 5.21

What impact will you measure?

- *Ability to meet the needs of all children including those with ASN.*
- *Increased staff knowledge of Inclusive practice.*

How will you measure it?

- *Review of Child's plans.*
- *Identification of intervention strategies.*
- *Staff training records.*

2   By June 20XX children and families using our service will be fully embedded into our self-evaluation processes, providing them with the opportunity to contribute to the development and improvement of our setting.

QIs 1.1, 1.3, 2.7

Health & Social Care Standards 3.11, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.11, 4.19

What impact will you measure?

- *Self-evaluation processes will be further developed to allow for the input of children and families.*
- *Staff will work collaboratively to reflect on their practice.*
- *Robust evidence to support self-evaluation process.*

How will you measure it?

- *Staff talking and thinking books.*
- *Peer review sheets.*
- *Quality Assurance calendar to identify focus of self-evaluation throughout the year.*

3   By June 20XX practitioners will further embed their understanding of Early Years Pedagogy to promote continuous development of high-quality experiences, environment, and interactions.

QIs 1.2, 1.3, 2.3

Health & Social Care Standards 2.22, 2.27, 3.6, 3.7, 3.10, 3.14

What impact will you measure?

- *Practitioner knowledge and understanding of approaches to learning following participation in year 2 of Adventures with Alice.*
- *An enabling environment which ensures high-quality learning for all learners.*
- *Quality of adult-child interactions.*

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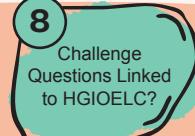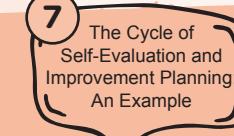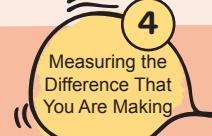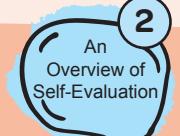
7 The Cycle of Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning: An Example

How will you measure it?

- *Monitoring of children's learning journals.*

- *Feedback from parents/carers.*

- *Use of ECERS resource to audit learning environment, with a focus on literacy, numeracy and Heath & Wellbeing.*

An Action Plan breaks down the steps required to be taken to achieve the outcomes and can include specific dates and identify who will be responsible for each action. In the example above, for Outcome.

By June 2021 staff will be familiar with using the CIRCLE resource to ensure an inclusive environment for all children in the setting.

The steps in the action plan might be:

- *complete Training relating to CIRCLE resource available on Glow Sharepoint;*

- *select one area and carry out environment audit;*

- *each member of staff to create an action plan for one SMART target;*

- *introduce peer review sheet from TLC. Schedule one review session for each member of staff during term 2;*

- *use Forms to survey parents about how they feel the environment meets the needs of their child.*

Please note this resource is intended as a guide only and not a completed example.

(8) Challenge Questions Linked to HGIOELC?

This section of the self-evaluation for self-improvement resource is designed to support settings to focus their thinking when it comes to carrying out self-evaluation and improvement planning activities.

How is this document organised?

This document contains challenge questions that have been pulled together and organised under the headings of the following four quality indicators from the improvement framework *'How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?'* (2016):

- *1.3 Leadership of Change*
- *2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment*
- *3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion*
- *3.2 Securing Children's Progress*

This document will support settings to use the challenge questions from the following key best practice documents, to self-evaluate the quality indicators:

- *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare? (HGIOELC?) (2016)*
- *Realising the Ambition (2020)*
- *A Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare (QFFELC) (2019) - Draft*
- *Out to Play (2020)*
- *My World Outdoors (2016)*

How to use this section of the self-evaluation for self-improvement resource

Before you use this section of the resource, please ensure you are familiar with the other sections that form part of it.

Some examples of how you might use this section of the resource include to:

- *facilitate discussion during staff meetings/1:1 meetings/supervision, with a focus on self-evaluation;*
- *inform observations of practice or specific areas, within the setting;*
- *create involve parents/carers and children in self-evaluation activities (eg using wording from challenge questions in parental/child consultations);*
- *inform the writing the setting's self-evaluation document;*
- *inform the writing of the setting's centre improvement plan.*

It is hoped that over time, everyone involved in the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning will become familiar with the process and how they can be meaningfully involved. Self-evaluation and improvement planning activities will be robust, and evidence informed, with clear links to how planned improvements will lead to improvements and positive outcomes for children and families.

The lists of challenge questions within this document are not exhaustive. Settings may also wish to write their own challenge questions based on the features of highly effective practice as described within HGIOELC? or based on the best practice as described in other local and national policy and practice guidance or legislation or codes of practice. The simplest way to do this is to ask yourself *'are we doing what is described here?'*.

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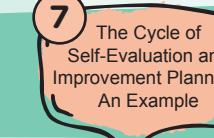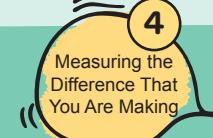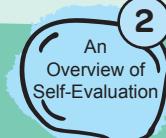
8 Challenge Questions Linked to HGIOELC?

1.3 Leadership of Change

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within in its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children.

HGIOELC? Challenge Questions

1 *How effectively do we engage others in developing a shared vision and purpose for our setting and work?*

2 *To what extent is our vision ambitious and challenging? How do we know?*

3 *How well does our vision, values and aims inform our daily practice? What impact do they have on improving the quality of the early learning and childcare we provide?*

4 *How effectively do we communicate our vision with children, families and partners? How successful are the approaches used to ensure that everyone has a say in shaping our future direction?*

5 *What examples do we have of successfully nurturing creativity and promoting innovation?*

6 *What examples do we have of practitioners successfully collaborating with one another through critical enquiry?*

7 *In what ways are we maximising opportunities for practitioners to work and learn together?*

8 *How do we know that our professional learning is making a difference for children and families? How effective are our approaches to planning for continuous improvement?*

9 *What positive impact has our planning for continuous improvement had on outcomes for children and families?*

Realising the Ambition Challenge Questions

1 *How does the current policy landscape impact on:*

- *the policy and practice in your own setting?*

- *your own thinking and practice?*

- *how your setting develops the confidence and knowledge of those working to deliver the service?*

- *your ability to speak confidently about the changes happening across the sector and how that will make a difference to children and families?*

2 *Describe what quality practice should look like. Which areas are you happy with and then decide what changes you need to make?*

3 *Discuss the opportunities you have to improve your knowledge and skills with a colleague. What would you really see as a priority for you?*

A Quality Framework for ELC Challenge Questions

1 *How do we ensure that everyone in our service has a shared understanding of service improvements?*

2 *How effectively do we promote partnership working to ensure the best outcomes for our children and families?*

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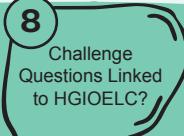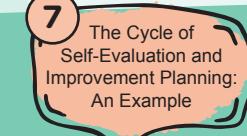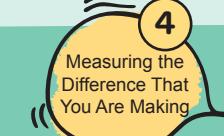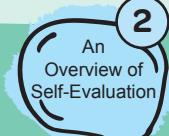
8 Challenge Questions Linked to HGIOELC?

2.3 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Descriptor

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised.

HGIOELC? Challenge Questions

1 *How well do we motivate and engage all children? How can this be consistent for children every day?*

2 *How do we know that all children are making very good progress in their learning?*

3 *What information do we already have and what do we still need to find out?*

4 *How well are we enabling children to become independent learners and develop the four capacities?*

5 *To what extent do our learning environments support different types of play?*

6 *How do we ensure that processes for planning, assessment and reporting are manageable and effective in improving learning and teaching?*

7 *How do we ensure that processes for tracking and monitoring are manageable and effective in improving learning and teaching?*

8 *How well do we support practitioners in undertaking their role in evaluating children's progress?*

9 *How well does the information we gather about children's progress inform our planning and improvement?*

10 *How well are children enabled to select and make use of high-quality resources and equipment including digital technologies?*

11 *How do you ensure you have high aspirations and expectations for all children and families?*

Realising the Ambition Challenge Questions

1 *What is the balance of child initiated, adult initiated and adult directed play in your setting?*

2 *How can this be adapted to ensure better experiences for children?*

3 *Critically reflect on your outdoor learning provision? Is it well used? What can you do to enhance this? What are the values of outdoor learning you can use in your play rationale?*

4 *Do the same for promoting curiosity, creativity and inquiry. What can you do to improve what you already have?*

5 *How do you know and understand where children are in the process of learning?*

6 *How do you provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings and needs?*

7 *What changes to practice in your situation do you need to make to ensure that children are well supported?*

8 *Reflect on your observations of children and what you do with the information you gather to plan future provocations/activities.*

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Useful Links

Support Templates
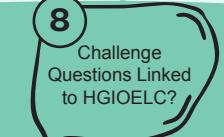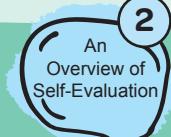
9   Reflect on the suitability of your outdoor spaces to support children's sensory play. Does the environment help children to use all their senses?

10 Are there opportunities to develop children's hearing and listening?

11 List the features of the environment that promote each of the five senses. Are there gaps in provision? If there are, how will you improve children's sensory experiences?

12 Reflect on the opportunities the environment affords children for risky play. What changes might you make to the environment to develop children's resilience and skills in managing risk?

13 How often do you provide opportunities which specifically promote children's curiosity and problem-solving skills?

A Quality Framework for ELC Challenge Questions

1   How are you using national and current best practice to plan children's play and learning experiences?

2   How well do you support and encourage children's natural curiosity in your setting?

3   What approaches are you using to promote children's language, numeracy and literacy skills?

4   How effective are your processes to track children's development, progress and achievements?

5   How well do we involve children in identifying and assessing their learning and progress?

6   How do you ensure children are involved and influence their day to day experiences?

7   Does your setting provide a range or rich, challenging outdoor play and learning experiences for children?

8   How do you ensure you are confident in promoting play experiences that extend children's interests, develop their creativity, resilience and independence?

9   What approaches do you have to ensure you effectively use community and outdoor spaces to maximise children's play and learning opportunities?

10 Out to Play (2018) Challenge Questions

11 What use do you make of local woodland or natural green spaces?

12 How does your outdoor space encourage energetic activities?

13 When in the outdoor area, do children have access to calm spaces where they can spend time on their own if they choose?

14 Is there adequate storage in your outdoor space?

15 How do you balance benefits and risk?

16 How do you involve children in risk assessment, while retaining responsibility?

17 How do you ensure that your outdoor space is a motivating and challenging environment?

My World Outdoors - What the Care Inspectorate Expects – Challenge Questions

1   How do you ensure children have freedom of choice to move between the indoor and outdoor environments, whenever practicable?
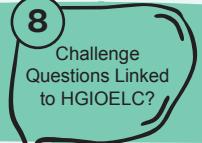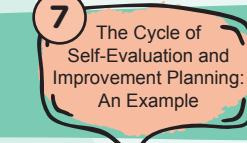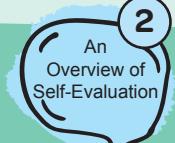
2 *How do you ensure children have opportunities to explore and make choices in the outdoor environment?*

3 *How do you ensure that the opportunities on offer in the outdoor space meet the preferences and needs of each individual child?*

3.1 Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion

Descriptor

This indicator reflects on the setting's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements.

HGIOELC? Challenge Questions

1 *To what extent are the GIRFEC principles reflected in the work of our setting? What actions do we need to make to bring about further improvements? How well do we use information about children's wellbeing to support their care, learning and development?*

2 *How explicitly is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child understood and embedded within our practice?*

3 *How well do practitioners understand attachment theory and its impact on future development and learning?*

4 *What methods do we employ to ensure information is shared effectively about children's wellbeing between parents/carers and practitioners?*

5 *How do we ensure important principles including consistency, dignity and privacy when supporting children with their personal care? What other important principles should we be considering?*

6 *How well do practitioners take account of national documents and guidance that impact on early learning and childcare? For example: Realising the Ambition.*

7 *How do we ensure that all practitioners undertake regular professional learning around legislation, statutory requirements, national and local guidance and codes of practice?*

8 *Have we successfully established an inclusive learning environment and setting? How welcome and included do all children, parents/carers and partners feel? How do we know?*

9 *To what extent has creating an ethos and culture of inclusion and participation been successful in supporting children to make very good progress? How can this be strengthened?*

Realising the Ambition Challenge Questions

1 *How do you provide opportunities for children to talk about their feelings and needs?*

2 *What changes to practice in your situation do you need to make to ensure that children are well supported?*

3 *What are the areas of GIRFEC you feel that you make a positive contribution, and which are the ones where you and others need a bit more support?*

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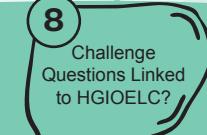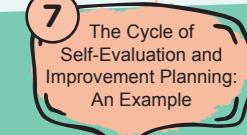
8 Challenge Questions Linked to HGIOELC?

A Quality Framework for ELC Challenge Questions

1 *How do you ensure children's individual needs are considered, responded to and planned for with families and other agencies when required?*

2 *How do you ensure children's personal plans are maintained in line with legislation and that they fully support children's needs?*

3 *How do you know personal plans are having a positive impact on children's wellbeing?*

4 *What best practice and current approaches do you use to influence and support children to reach their full potential?*

5 *In what ways do you build empowering and respectful relationships with children and families?*

6 *How do you ensure you are providing an inclusive service for children and families?*

7 *How do you ensure that you and any of your staff as aware of the social impacts that might affect your children?*

8 *How well do you respond to children and families differing needs and circumstances?*

9 *How well do you ensure that children and families voices are included in your decision-making?*

10 *How effective are your partnership approaches (parents, health, education, social service, third sector, other care services) when ensuring children's wellbeing needs are being met?*

3.2 Securing Children's Progress

Descriptor

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High-quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success.

HGIOELC? Challenge Questions

1 *In what ways do we ensure children are making progress across all aspects of their learning and development?*

2 *How do we ensure children understand their own progress in a meaningful way?*

3 *Reflect on the current balance of adult and child-initiated learning experiences. Are both leading to progress? What could be improved?*

4 *How effective are our approaches to tracking progress and achievement? What needs to improve?*

5 *How effective are we at sharing children's progress with parents/carers?*

8 Challenge Questions Linked to HGIOELC?

6 *Do we truly value contributions and children's achievements from beyond the setting? Would parents/carers recognise their role in this?*

7 *How well do we use and analyse information to improve outcomes for children and families? For example, data about 27/30-month reviews, developmental milestones and the levels of multiple deprivation in the areas in which our children and families live.*

Realising the Ambition Challenge Questions

1 *How do you know and understand where children are in the process of learning?*

A Quality Framework for ELC Challenge Questions

1 *What approaches are you using to promote children's language, numeracy and literacy skills?*

2 *How effective are your processes to track children's development, progress and achievements?*

3 *How well do we involve children in identifying and assessing their learning and progress?*

4 *How do you ensure you consistently enable and empower all of our children to achieve their potential?*

5 *How do you encourage and celebrate children's achievements and successes?*

6 *How effectively do you track children's progress across their learning and development to ensure your provision is relevant and responsive?*

7 *How effectively to you share progress with your families and involve them in considering next steps in children's learning and development?*
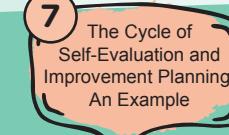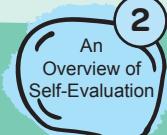
Useful Links

This section of the toolkit provides you with links to useful websites and resources to support your self-evaluation and improvement planning activities.

As we keep the toolkit under review, this section will be added to to ensure the content is as up to date as possible.

Care Inspectorate Hub

Creativity Toolbox - Creative Approaches to Improvement

Education Scotland, National Improvement Hub

How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?

Learner Participation in Educational Settings - Guidance

My World Outdoors

All Support Templates (Glow)

Out to Play
creating outdoor play experiences for children

PKC ELC GLOW Pages to support Improvement Planning

Quality Framework for Early Learning and Childcare Services (Draft)

Realising the Ambition

Sketchnotes from Education Scotland
Sharing highly effective practice examples from Inspections

SSSC Codes of Practice

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Support Templates

Record of Reflections and Evaluation Discussions

Review Reflection and Next Steps Example

How to use Microsoft Office 365 Forms

HGIOELC? QI Tracker

Setting Self-Evaluation: 2 Stars and a Wish

The Health and Social Care Standards; my support, my life (2018)

Action Plan

Quality Assurance Calendar

1 Introduction to the Self-Evaluation Toolkit

2 An Overview of Self-Evaluation

3 Informing Self-Evaluation

4 Measuring the Difference That You Are Making

5 How to Complete Your Self-Evaluation

6 Improvement Planning

7 The Cycle of Self-Evaluation and Improvement Planning: An Example

8 Challenge Questions Linked to HGIOELC?