

smalltalk

Early Years Wales members' magazine

Summer 2021 | Issue 142 | £7

Childcare on the front line...a year on

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- **Case studies:** How Covid-19 has changed the way you deliver
- **Talking Point:** Engaging and involving children and the important adults in their lives

Spotlight on the Early Years Wales Setting of the Year 2020 winner

Online safety advice from the NSPCC



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Quality for All: Introducing the Childcare Quality Awareness Toolkit

In the spring issue, we told you that we have been developing a Quality Awareness Toolkit as an alternative model to our traditional Quality for All (QfA) accreditation, to provide an interim means of recognising the excellent work that continues to be carried out by childcare providers in these challenging times and to aid setting's recovery from difficulties posed by Covid-19.

We knew that while QfA assessments remained suspended we needed to explore a different type of quality assessment as an interim measure and at Early Years Wales, we are thoroughly in awe of the way our members and the wider childcare and play sector have responded to changing circumstances and adapted to variations in guidance over the past year and we wanted to capture this.

The result of this work is the Childcare Quality Awareness Toolkit.

The Toolkit:

- involves an easy to complete Toolkit, accompanied by,
- a virtual, Professional Discussion with an experienced assessor,
- the whole process allows for reflection and recognition of the scope of work carried out by competent staff.
- after completion you will receive a written summary and Certificate, both recognising your work.

How it works:

The Toolkit comprises of a checklist that will be completed by the provider, allowing time to reflect on the actions that have been taken to comply with legislation and guidance. The provider is asked to submit relevant and succinct evidence (things that are already in place).

'evidence was easy to gather as it was information that we use on a daily basis'

'I like that it helped you identify any ways forward for the setting.'

Finally, an experienced Assessor will hold a short, professional discussion with the provider, via video call.

'The assessor was very good, provided excellent knowledge, was supportive and clearly understood our type of setting.'

The checklist and subsequent discussion heavily concentrate on the situation we are faced with today and offers confirmation and recognition of provider's hard work during these unprecedented times. Our Assessors look for childcare settings to show an awareness of required measures, that are taken to support infection and prevention control and to keep staff, children, and families safe.

'It made you reflect on the changes and practice over the last year. Made you realise how much we have achieved as a team during the pandemic.'


By completing the Toolkit, providers tell us they did not find the process overly burdensome and that instead, it was supportive of the challenges faced in current times and it provided a means of recognising the excellent work that continues to be carried out.

'I found the whole experience very informative and easy. I would recommend people use this toolkit to support provision alongside their self evaluation document and setting improvement plan.'

'I particularly liked the lack of jargon – the questions were clear and it was easy to understand what evidence etc would be required to back up our answers.'

'It felt like it had been compiled by someone who actually understood the issues and the way that settings realistically run and are coping with the crisis.'

We have now completed the pilot stage and reviewed the Toolkit before initially being rolled out for delivery to existing QfA participants, thanks to being able to secure funding to cover costs. Costs for future delivery will be kept as low as possible and we invite any providers who are interested in completing the Toolkit, to contact Claire Thomas clairet@earlyyears.wales or visit earlyyears.wales to find out more.



“The whole experience with the childcare quality awareness toolkit was positive. I felt the checklist was very clear about the desired outcome, the questions at the end of each section were beneficial in helping me to prepare for the video call. During the discussion with the assessor I felt uplifted and reassured that although these times are uncertain and constantly changing we are doing a great job. After finishing the video call I contacted my team to tell them how well the assessment went and how pleased she was with our practice.”

You may also be interested in:

Quality for All Sharing Quality Practice Part 3: Play and Development, *smalltalk*, (spring 2021), pg 18 - 20

Quality for All Sharing Quality Practice Part 2: Childcare Environment, *smalltalk*, (winter 2020), pg 12 - 16

Quality for All Sharing Quality Practice Part 1: Leadership and Management, *smalltalk*, (autumn 2020), pg 18 - 21

See also:

Early Years Wales members can download a variety of Covid-19 resources including Risk Assessments and Guidance on Managing Bubbles, Hand Hygiene and Social Distancing by logging into your online account and visiting: earlyyears.wales/covid-19-resources