

Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

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Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose and Context

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning Kids approach to maintaining and improving quality and high standards.

2. Scope

This policy concerns the quality assurance and continuous improvement of Kids products and services intended for disabled children, young people and their families. It does not cover Kids business processes such as finance, information technology, human resources and fundraising.

This policy is relevant to and should be followed by all colleagues working for or on behalf of Kids. (Please refer to Definitions for further explanation of Colleagues).

3. Definitions

A **Customer** is a person or company who purchases goods and services from an organisation e.g. organisations that fund Kids, service users.

A **Service User** is the direct recipient of products or services provided by the organisation e.g. children, young people, parents carers.

Colleagues: People working for or on behalf of Kids including managers, employees, workers, volunteers, contractors, trustees and students.

A **Stakeholder** is a person, group or organisation that has a direct or indirect stake or interest in the organisation because it can either affect the organisation or be affected by it. Examples of stakeholders are service users, funders, other professionals / services working with children, young people and their families, government departments, community.

4. General Policy

Kids places a strong emphasis on providing the highest quality service possible for all of its service users and funding organisations. It works on the basis that no matter how good its present services and performance, there is always room for improvement.

The continuing aim of the organisation is to provide professional and efficient services that meet or exceed our customers' needs and expectations and that achieve good outcomes and best value. Kids does this by:

- working closely with families, young people and funders to fully understand their needs and meet their requirements;
- complying with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements;
- ensuring our services meet national standards of good practice;
- achieving 'good' or better results in all external assessments;
- conducting our business in a way that reflects our core values;
- ensuring our people have the training and skills to support the delivery of high quality services;
- establishing systems and processes that enable us to measure and evidence what we do;
- promoting continuous improvement and knowledge sharing.

Kids approach to quality is underpinned by a set of guiding principles:

- ensuring a person centred approach to the care and support of each individual;
- ensuring our activities and environments are safe, well maintained and fit for purpose;
- keeping children and adults safe from harm and abuse;
- enabling the people we support to set customer standards and involving them in review and auditing processes;
- adopting outcome focused working and evidence based practices;
- deploying comprehensive policies, procedures and guidance which define standards and detail how these agreed levels of service are to be achieved;
- being open, transparent and trustworthy in all our dealings and communications both within Kids and in our external relationships.

4.1 External quality environment

Kids works within a number of externally imposed quality frameworks and requirements that define the standards and outcomes to be achieved by our products and services. In general these frameworks and requirements all aim to ensure that quality is built into services through the setting and implementation of standards, through processes for review, and through monitoring to ensure that services meet the needs of service users and other stakeholders.

4.1.1 Regulated services

Kids is a registered provider with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It is the independent regulator of services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. Ofsted undertake regular monitoring and inspection of the following Kids service areas:

- Nursery education and childcare
- After school, weekend and holiday clubs
- Adventure Playgrounds
- Overnight short breaks
- Residential holiday schemes

Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and adult social care in England. It makes sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, compassionate and high-quality care. CQC undertake regular monitoring and inspection of Kids domiciliary / home care support services and short breaks services where we provide personal care and support within a child or young person's home.

4.1.2 National standards and codes of practice

The nature of the work performed by Kids requires it to comply with a wide range of statutory laws, standards and codes of practice. The most important of these are:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Childcare Registration Regulations
- Fundamental Standards for Health and Social care
- National Minimum Standards (Care Act)
- Children's Home Regulations and Standards (England)
- Residential Holiday Scheme for Disabled Children Regulations (England)
- SEND Information, Advice and Support Services Standards
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Civil Mediation Council Code of Practice
- National Portage Association Code of Practice
- Quality in Play Standards
- Skills Active Code of Practice
- Other regulatory standards, e.g. Health & Safety Executive, Fire Authority, Environmental Department

4.1.3 Quality marks and accreditations

Kids has pledged its commitment to a number of quality marks and schemes, including:

- **Civil Mediation Council** which promotes the highest standards of skill, conduct and integrity in mediation.
- **Disability Confidence Scheme** which is awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions and supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to their workplace.

4.1.4 Contracts compliance

These are standards, outputs, targets and outcomes set by the organisations funding Kids activities e.g. local authorities, government departments, grant funds.

4.2 Internal quality environment

Kids has established a number of systems and processes for assuring the quality and effectiveness of its services and for driving continuous improvement. This includes customer insight, internal audit and an annual schedule of quality monitoring (virtual and on-site)

4.2.1 Kids values

Kids works to six core values: **Trusted, Caring, Responsive, Collaborative, Passionate, Quality**. Everyone who comes into contact with Kids colleagues can expect to see these values being put into practice. Each value is defined by one or more behaviours and appraised through Kids performance management system.

4.2.2 Kids policy framework

Kids has a large framework of policy documents that govern the internal working and operational delivery of its activities. These set out the standards, codes of conduct, procedures and actions expected of all staff in performing their role and duties.

Policies are reviewed every two years unless otherwise stated by law or in light of changes to legislation or national guidance. This is carried out by the relevant Policy Lead and the Policy Review Group.

The policy review process is managed and co-ordinated by the Assurance, Safeguarding and Safety at Kids Team (ASSK).

4.2.3 Quality Forums and Groups

Kids has a number of management groups responsible for the quality management and continuous improvement of key areas including: Safeguarding, Health and Safety, CQC and Ofsted regulated activities.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Every colleague at Kids from the top to the bottom is expected to demonstrate a total commitment to quality and continuous improvement in every aspect of their working day. In particular:

Leadership Teams

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The Executive Leadership and Operational Leadership Teams are responsible for establishing, maintaining and implementing robust quality management systems that deliver the expected standard and for ensuring these remain fit for purpose.

All colleagues

Every colleague, including volunteers and contractors, is responsible for the quality of their own work in meeting specified standards and for completing the mandatory training and continuing professional development to perform their duties to the required standard.

Registered Managers

Registered Managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of regulated activities and meeting both the registration requirements and national standards defined for the relevant regulation and its enactments e.g. Ofsted and CQC. Registered Managers are also responsible for cancelling their registration when they decide to leave their position.

Assurance, Safeguarding and Safety at Kids (ASSK)

ASSK is responsible for providing independent information, advice and support on safeguarding, health and safety, regulatory compliance and assurance and policy management. It ensures Kids works to recognised standards consistently and effectively and for driving a culture of continuous improvement.

Regulatory Standards Group (RSG)

The Regulatory Standards Group provides regular oversight and management of Kids regulated activities and obligations. It comprises the Head of ASSK and Kids Ofsted and CQC Nominated Responsible Individuals and Health and Safety Lead.

Director of Fundraising and Engagement

The Fundraising Team are responsible for producing an annual Impact Report for Kids.

Kids Policy Review Group

The Policy Review Group (PRG) is responsible for the on-going review of policies and procedures that govern the operational delivery of Kids services. The group is co-ordinated by Kids Policy Officer and comprises a cross section of staff from national and regional teams. The PRG provides an important role in mitigating compliance risk by ensuring policy is clear and easy to follow, is inclusive and achievable in different settings.

Kids Safeguarding Board

Kids has a Safeguarding Board that acts in an advisory capacity to monitor and continuously improve safeguarding practices throughout the organisation. The Safeguarding Board is represented by managers from different parts of the organisation with oversight from the Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team.

Health and Safety Network

The Health and Safety network is made up of regionally based Representatives (Reps) and coordinated by Kids Health and Safety Lead manager. The network provides regular review and consultation on Kids health and safety arrangements and promotes learning and good practice.

Training on this policy and procedure may be given during induction and updated through line manager briefings.

Failure to comply with this policy may lead to disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal or as grounds to terminate your contract with Kids.

6. Procedures

6.1 Staff management processes

All colleagues receive regular support and supervision from a line manager / supervisor to ensure organisational, professional and personal goals are achieved within a context of support and accountability. This provides an opportunity to review the quality and effectiveness of colleague's performance, identify and promote good practice and plan actions to improve the quality and safety of what they do. (See Kids Supervision Policy and Employee and Worker Handbooks).

6.2 Training and development

Kids undertakes to ensure through induction, instruction, practical example and on-going training and development that all staff are trained to perform the duties of their role and that they fully understand the importance of Kids quality system and its direct relevance to the success of the charity. (See Kids Training and Development policy).

Each member of staff has a personal development plan in which their training needs are identified and a plan made as to how such needs will be met.

Any new training initiatives will be planned as a result of training needs analysis activities, which in turn are part of Kids performance review process. In addition, Kids is committed to reviewing training initiatives so that relevant training and development is provided for skills in specific job areas, where work procedures have changed, or where new standards are introduced.

6.3 Data monitoring and reporting

All services and projects are required to define and report on a set of key performance indicators and outcomes as defined by contractual, regulatory and internal business requirements. A suite of weekly, monthly and quarterly data and management information reports are produced to monitor all aspects of the service.

The reports are used by managers (at all levels) to monitor and report on performance against the key performance indicators and targets and to identify and act on areas of under-performance.

Where improvements are identified action plans are put in place to deliver them. Plans are reviewed in line with local and national management arrangements.

6.4 Management review cycle

Managers are required to establish and maintain quality assurance controls within the activities their staff perform to ensure service/project requirements are achieved.

Local assurance plans (e.g. Quality Calendars) are in place setting out a schedule of audits of service procedures, files and records (e.g. staff files, children files) and analysis of incidents, errors and complaints.

Where there is interaction between Kids staff and service users there is formal observation (e.g. spot checks) of direct delivery and / or telephone support. These are carried out against quality criteria relevant to the aims of the service and operating standards.

Corrective and preventative action taken in response to management review is documented to enable and evidence the continual improvement of systems and practice.

6.5 Service user and stakeholder feedback

Feedback is encouraged and collected from service users, relevant partners and stakeholders (e.g. social workers, schools, health practitioners) using a range of procedures and media to maximise involvement of people from different backgrounds, ages, language and communication needs.

Individual services are responsible for establishing its own service user voice arrangements in order to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to continue to improve the service user experience. The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) are responsible for implementing a national annual customer survey to measure the performance of Kids in meeting its strategic goals and values.

Feedback gained through customer insight activity is analysed to ensure delivery continues to anticipate and meet the needs and expectations of service users and stakeholders alike.

National and local feedback findings and improvement actions are summarised and communicated to service users and relevant stakeholders either through formal reports or **You Said – We Did** formats (example available in quality assurance policy folder on Viva Engage).

6.6 Quality Monitoring Visits

Independent internal audit and assurance is provided by ASSK. The team carry out an annual schedule of quality monitoring visits (virtual and/or on-site) to verify the effectiveness of regulated activities and local assurance arrangements. It supports continuous improvement through its recommendations to local management and the Operational Leadership Team. The number and service areas to be monitored by ASSK is decided by the Regulatory Standards Group and informed by a set of risk based metrics monitored by the Head of ASSK.

The Health and Safety Lead carries out an annual schedule of visits to verify local health and safety arrangements and management checks.

The National Safeguarding Lead undertakes quarterly audits of safeguarding records and decisions. Learning and areas for improvement are promoted through Safeguarding Supervisions and Reflective Practice activities.

6.7 Self-assessment and improvement planning

Kids produces a national Impact Report at the end of each financial year. This is managed by the Fundraising and Engagement Team and provides a summative evaluation of Kids financial and operational performance. All services and projects are required to complete the Impact Review Data Return at year end to support this process.

In addition to the national impact report, all services are expected to produce an end of year evaluation for funders and to communicate key findings and improvement actions to its services users.

Regulated services (e.g. Ofsted and/or CQC) are required to carry out an annual self-assessment against the relevant national standards and common inspection framework. Registered Managers are responsible for preparing and uploading self – assessment information and/or evaluation reports in line with the procedures and guidance set out by the relevant regulatory body.

The Head of ASSK will provide operational and executive leadership teams with a quarterly analysis of internal and external assessments findings. Areas for improvement identified through the quarterly and annual evaluation process inform business planning and local development plans. Local plans are reviewed quarterly and progress with actions discussed at management and team meetings. Progress to actions is reported to the senior management team.

6.8 External inspection and audit

External assessments such as those completed by funding organisations and regulators are used to validate the quality and safety of Kids services.

Kids employs external specialists where required to carry out independent reviews of key areas including health and safety audits of Kids premises and equipment and the management and quality of Kids overnight short breaks settings (Regulation 44 audit visits).

Registered Managers are required to prepare and upload pre-inspection information as set out by the relevant regulatory body and maintain an up-to-date record of such information.

All external inspection results are displayed on Kids website and in Kids centres within 20 days of the published report. Inspection results and reports are shared with the relevant group of service users and stakeholders together with planned actions to address recommendation areas for improvement.

6.9 Knowledge sharing and learning

Lessons learnt from process, audit and quality reviews / assessments are communicated within the organisation at management and operational levels to improve working practise.

Colleagues are encouraged to share learnings from training, networking and general reading and propose solutions to improve the quality and effectiveness of services through team meetings and the internal communications forum (Viva Engage).

ASSK is responsible for providing quality and regulatory up-dates and for producing annual analysis of internal and external audits and inspections to identify cross company themes and areas for improvement. Examples of outstanding and poor practice are identified and shared with operations to enable benchmarking and stimulate ideas and new ways of working.

7. References

7.1 Legislation, Regulations and National Guidance

- Fundamental Standards of Care. Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- CQC Single Assessment Framework, October 2022
- Early Years inspection handbook, Ofsted 2022
- Early Years and Childcare Registration Handbook 2016.
- Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): children's homes, including secure children's homes, Ofsted March 2019.

- Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): residential holiday schemes for disabled children, Ofsted March 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

7.2 Associated documents and guidance

- Kids Personal Conduct Policy
- Kids Professional Boundaries and Conduct Policy
- Kids Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy and Procedures
- Kids Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy
- Kids Health & Safety Toolkit
- Kids Supervision Policy and Procedures
- Kids Training and Development Policy and Procedures

8. Document Control Information

8.1 Impact assessment

In the design or review of this policy, consideration has been given to any negative impact upon practice relating to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding. This policy has not been found to cause a negative impact in these areas. A copy of the impact assessment is retained for this review cycle.

8.2 Review cycle

This policy will be reviewed every two years in accordance with relevant legislation, regulations, national guidance, good practice and stakeholder feedback. Material changes in legislation, regulations or national guidance will lead to an earlier review and update.

8.3 Document History

| Version | Date | Amendments | Page |
|---------|--------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 3.1 | March 2024 | Rebrand only. Review due October 24. | |
| 3 | October 2022 | Review. Uploaded 01.11.22 4 guiding principles – new content at bullet 3 4.1.2 addition of Working Together to Safeguard Children 4.2.2 amended to ASSK from Quality Team 4.2.3 subheading ‘Quality Forums and Groups’ added with new content 5 ASSK replaces Head of Quality and Performance. Addition of Regulatory Standards – new content to reflect both roles. Health and Safety Network contains updated role for Reps, removing advice and guidance 6.6 subheading changed from Quality and Compliance Visits. ASSK replaces Quality Team. ‘virtual and/or on site’ added. | 3 5 6 6 6 10 |

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| | | Decision on which services to be assessed – rationale changed from SMT during annual business planning. Addition of role of NSL. 6.7 provision of quarterly analysis by Head of ASSK added 6.9 Quality and Performance amended to ASSK 7.1 and 7.2 updated in line with regulations, guidance and internal documents | 11 11 12 |
| 2 | June 2020 | New template introduced Reference to B.I.G removed Review cycle changed from 2 to 3 years | Throughout Throughout 8.2 |