

Quality Assurance Policy and Procedures

Last Updated: April 2026

Purpose and Context

Kids is committed to delivering safe, effective, inclusive, and high-quality services for disabled children, young people and their families. This policy sets out our **quality values, principles, governance, standards and processes** to ensure our services consistently meet regulatory requirements, funder expectations and the needs of the people we support.

Quality assurance (QA) is essential to our mission and ensures that:

- services are safe, person-centred and outcome-focused
- colleagues understand what high-quality practice looks like
- learning is continuous and evidence-based
- risks to quality are identified early and escalated appropriately
- feedback from service users directly shapes service improvement

This policy applies to all colleagues working for or on behalf of Kids.

Scope

This policy covers:

- Quality assurance of Kids' **products and services** for disabled children, young people and their families.
- Continuous improvement, performance monitoring, compliance, and service governance across regulated and non-regulated services.

This policy does **not** cover corporate business functions such as Finance, IT, HR or Fundraising unless these functions have a direct impact on service quality.

Kids deliver a range of services funded by different commissioners.

Where a service is commissioned or funded by the NHS, Kids will comply with all relevant requirements of the NHS Standard Contract.

Where services are not NHS-funded, Kids will continue to apply equivalent good-practice principles in line with charity regulation and sector standards, but NHS-specific contractual requirements (such as PSIRF, NHS complaints timescales or commissioner reporting) will apply only where contractually required.

Definitions

Customer: Any individual or organisation who commissions or purchases Kids services.

Service User: Children, young people, and parents/carers who directly receive support from Kids.

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

Stakeholder: Individuals, groups or organisations with an interest in or influence over Kids' activities.

Quality Assurance: A systematic process for defining, measuring, monitoring and improving service quality.

Continuous Improvement: Ongoing learning and development activities that improve systems, practice and outcomes.

Key Quality Indicators (KQIs): Measures used to track performance relating to quality, safety, experience and outcomes.

Guiding Principles

Kids' approach to quality is grounded in the following principles:

- **Person-centred practice:** Support is tailored to individual needs, choices and aspirations.
- **Safety first:** Environments and activities are safe, well maintained and promote wellbeing.
- **Protecting children and adults:** Safeguarding is at the centre of all decision-making.
- **Co-production:** Children, young people and families help design, review and evaluate services.
- **Evidence-based practice:** Decisions and interventions are informed by research, data and lived experience.
- **Reliability and consistency:** Services meet clearly defined standards and regulatory expectations.
- **Transparency:** Kids is open, honest and accountable in communication and practice.
- **Equity, diversity and inclusion:** Services are accessible, inclusive and responsive to diverse needs.
- **Continuous improvement:** Quality is everyone's responsibility, every day.

Kids Quality Framework

Kids follows a four-stage Quality Cycle:

1. **Plan:** Define standards, expectations, training and resources
2. **Do:** Deliver services safely and consistently
3. **Review:** Monitor performance, seek feedback, audit practice
4. **Improve:** Implement learning, reduce risk, strengthen quality

This framework applies across all services, teams and colleagues.

External quality environment

Kids operates within several external regulatory and quality frameworks including:

Regulated services

- **Ofsted:** Nursery education, childcare, clubs, adventure playgrounds, overnight short breaks, residential schemes
- **Care Quality Commission (CQC):** Domiciliary/home care support and personal care services
- **Compliance With NHS Standard Contracts** - Where Kids delivers services commissioned or funded by the NHS, the organisation will comply with all relevant requirements of the NHS Standard Contract. This includes, but is not limited to: SC1 (Service Principles), SC6 (Service User Involvement), SC11 (Incident Reporting), SC12 (Safeguarding), SC13 (Information Governance), SC28 (Complaints), SC30 (Duty of Candour), SC32/33 (Workforce)
Kids will submit all required quality, safeguarding, incident, performance and workforce information to commissioners and participate in contract monitoring, quality review meetings and ICB-led assurance processes.

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
- NHS Standard Contract requirements
- NHS frameworks (Duty of Candour Reg 20 wording, NHS Complaints Regulations 2009, NHS Serious Incident Framework replacement – the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework)
- 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

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.

NHS Contracts

For NHS-funded services, Kids will provide quality, performance, safeguarding and incident reporting in line with commissioner and ICB requirements. Kids will participate in commissioner-led Quality Monitoring Visits and contract review meetings

Contracts compliance

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

Internal quality environment

Kids maintains strong internal systems to ensure quality and safety:

- National Quality Framework and policies (Quality framework needs setting up)
- Internal and external audits
- Quality Monitoring Visits
- Data reporting and performance dashboards
- Safeguarding audits and thematic reviews
- Health and Safety audits
- Annual Reach Report (include impact)
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and accessibility monitoring
- Reflective practice and supervision

For NHS-funded services, Kids will ensure that incident management, learning responses and safety reviews are delivered in accordance with the NHS Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF).

Kids values

Our commitment to quality is rooted in the values that guide how we support every child, young person, and family.

Our Quality Assurance framework is underpinned by four core values that guide how we design, deliver, and evaluate services for children, young people, and their families. These values shape our expectations of practice and ensure that every interaction reflects our commitment to safety, inclusion, and excellence.

Celebrate Individuality

Over two million children and young people in the UK live with disabilities and special educational needs. All are brilliantly unique. We tailor our approach to the needs of every individual.

Think Creatively

Creativity is the ability to think up new ideas, combining expertise with imagination. We create life-changing opportunities for families by providing and inventing a wide range of services.

Work Together

Working together is about our willpower to make a positive difference. It is about putting kindness into action. Our determination to do our best for every family.

Speak Up

Speaking up isn't about being negative. Far from it. It's all about amplifying the voices of children and young people to achieve positive social change.

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 colleagues in performing their role and duties.

Policies are reviewed every year unless otherwise stated by law or in light of changes to legislation or national guidance.

Governance and Accountability

Board of Trustees

- Holds ultimate accountability for service quality, safety and regulatory compliance.

Executive Leadership Team

- Ensures organisational quality strategy, resources and oversight.

Head of Risk Management and Compliance

- Monitors regulated activity, risk, compliance and inspection readiness.

Head of Services

- Monitor performance of their services, seek feedback and audit practice

Registered Managers

- Accountable for regulatory compliance, day-to-day quality, incident management and improvement plans.

All Colleagues

- Responsible for delivering safe, high-quality practice and completing mandatory training.

Health and Safety Leads

- Provides expert advice, monitoring and escalation of H&S concerns.

Services and Safeguarding Board

- Advises and monitors Key Quality Indicators across Kids.

Procedures

Colleague 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).

Training, Competence and Workforce Development

- All colleagues must complete mandatory induction and refresher training.
- Training quality is monitored, evaluated and updated annually.
- Personal Development Plans ensure colleagues maintain professional competence.
- Kids invests in developing a skilled, confident, reflective workforce.

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.

Management review cycle

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

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

Where there is interaction between a Kids colleague 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 by the Heads of Service

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

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.

For services funded by the NHS, Kids will maintain a Service User Voice and Co-production Plan, ensuring meaningful involvement of children, young people and their families in line with SC6 of the NHS Standard Contract.

Quality Standards and Monitoring

Kids uses **Key Quality Indicators (KQIs)** across all services, including:

- Health and Safety incidents
- Safeguarding activity
- Service-user experience and satisfaction
- Timeliness and reliability of service delivery
- Compliance with regulatory requirements
- Workforce capability and training completion
- Equality and accessibility metrics

Each service must maintain a **local Quality Assurance Calendar** covering:

- Observations
- File audits
- Supervision checks
- Incident reviews
- Environment and safety audits
- Service-user feedback activities

All NHS-funded services will report Key Quality Indicators and required contract metrics to commissioners at the frequency specified in the contract, including quarterly quality dashboards and annual reports.

Quality Monitoring Visits

Internal audit and assurance is provided by Kids. The Heads of Service 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. They support continuous improvement through their recommendations to local management and the Executive Leadership Team.

The Health and Safety Manager carries out an annual schedule of visits to verify local health and safety arrangements and management checks coupled with Kids competent person who conducts annual site audits.

The Head of Safeguarding undertakes quarterly audits of safeguarding records and decisions. Learning and areas for improvement are promoted through Safeguarding Supervisions and Reflective Practice activities. Feedback from these audits is presented to the Services and Safeguarding Board and the Executive Leadership Team.

Escalation of Quality Concerns

Kids uses a formal escalation system:

Level 1 – Local Action Required

Minor quality concerns; managed through supervision and local improvement plans.

Level 2 – Enhanced Monitoring

Repeated issues, emerging risks or unmet standards; Head of Risk Management and Compliance and ELT notified.

Level 3 – Critical Quality Concern

Significant risk to safety, compliance or reputation; immediate ELT oversight and mandatory improvement plan.

Level 4 – Serious Incident or Regulatory Failure

Immediate notification to ELT, Board, and relevant regulator, commissioners for example Local Authority, NHS or ICB.

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.

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.

Feedback, Complaints and Co-Production

Kids actively seeks feedback from:

- Service users
- Parent carers

- Funders
- Partners and professionals
- Colleagues

Feedback informs service improvement and is shared through:

- “You Said – We Did” reports (is this still correct)
- Annual national customer survey
- Local service-user voice groups
- Co-production panels

Complaints are analysed for trends and linked to improvement planning.

Digital and Data Quality Standards

Kids maintains high standards of data accuracy, security and governance. Services must ensure:

- Records are accurate, complete and timely
- Case management systems are used consistently
- Data is validated before reporting
- Digital accessibility standards are met

For NHS-funded services, all complaints, incidents, safeguarding concerns and quality data will be handled in accordance with NHS Information Governance requirements, including confidentiality, data minimisation, secure storage and lawful sharing with commissioners.

Audit, Review and External Inspection

Kids undertakes:

- Annual internal quality monitoring visits
- Quarterly safeguarding audits
- Annual H&S audits
- Regulation 44 external audits (as applicable)
- Regular case file audits
- Thematic reviews and learning sessions

Inspection outcomes must be displayed and shared with service users within 20 days.

Continuous Improvement

Learning from audits, incidents, complaints, inspections and training is:

- Shared through internal forums
- Reviewed at service/team meetings
- Built into local and national improvement plans – see appendix Ben’s example?
- Monitored for impact

Non-Compliance

- Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action or termination of contract.
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References

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).
- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty

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

NHS-Funded Services – Contractual Compliance

When delivering services commissioned or funded by the NHS, Kids will ensure full compliance with the NHS Standard Contract. This includes meeting all reporting, monitoring and assurance requirements; submitting quality, incident, safeguarding and complaints data to commissioners; participating in Quality Review Meetings; and ensuring service delivery reflects the principles of service user involvement, safety, transparency, accessibility and continuous improvement. Kids will follow NHS-specific timeframes for complaints, Duty of Candour and incident reporting and will align incident management processes with the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF)