

Benchmarking guidance: information for providers

Benchmarking guidance on making social care inspection judgements is revised guidance for all inspectors on making inspection judgements. It replaces the KLORA (key lines of regulatory assessment) that were used by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and adopted by us as part of the transfer of work in April 2007.

The rationale for the changes in the benchmarking guidance is to provide greater clarity for inspectors, services and users of the services, and to bring it more in line with the benchmarking used elsewhere in Ofsted.

We published a draft guidance on our website in March 2008 for comment: we would like to thank all those who took the time to do so. We have reviewed and revised the guidance as a result of the comments. You can find the revised guidance and the results of the comments on our website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/080042.

Any further comments can be sent to childrensdirectorateenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Please put 'Comments on social care benchmarking' in the subject box.

Inspectors began using *Benchmarking guidance on making social care inspection judgements* in April 2008 when making judgements for all inspections. It has more details and information on the changes. Its intention is to provide clarity and transparency about how we make judgements and determine the different grades of outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate. The guidance gives specific criteria and evaluative description associated with the particular grade.

The main difference from the KLORA is for an 'outstanding' judgement. To achieve this, services now need to demonstrate they are 'exceptional'. This fits with Ofsted-wide benchmarking for this grade and is intended to help services strive to provide improved outcomes for children, young people, students and boarders. The guidance also includes more detail about the number of actions and recommendations inspectors may set for individual outcome judgements and the overall judgement.

We are currently developing examples of practice for each judgement and each type of service. These will be similar to the KLORA practice examples. When this information is complete, we will put the guidance, examples of practice and a list of key standards together in a single document, with one for each type of service. They will be available via our website.

All inspectors have received training in the benchmarking guidance in preparation for the 2008-2009 inspection year. We will review it again when we change our inspection frameworks following the Government's review of the national minimum standards.