



# Checking Every Child Matters outcomes with the Quality Network

Pilot project report  
June 2007



**bild**

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## Short Summary



The Quality Network is a way of checking services for adults with a learning disability



It looks at ten outcomes – outcomes are things that are happening for the person



This report is about an exciting project that used these outcomes to find out what life was like for children and young people in three schools



We found that the Quality Network was a really good way to involve children and young people with a learning disability in checking the services they use



We will make some changes and then want to see how the Quality Network can be used to check other services for children and young people



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# 1. Introduction



A Quality Network review is a way of checking the quality of life of people with learning disabilities. The ten outcomes we use in reviews were agreed after consulting with people with a learning disability and family carers. They have been used very successfully to involve people with a learning disability and family carers in person-centred reviews of adult services.

The aim of this project was to find out whether the Quality Network process could be used to measure the outcomes for children and young in the green paper *Every Child Matters*.

The schools involved were:

Sunfield Residential Special School  
Shepherd Community Day School  
Hillside Day School

Stourbridge  
Nottingham  
Preston

The pilot set out to answer 6 questions:

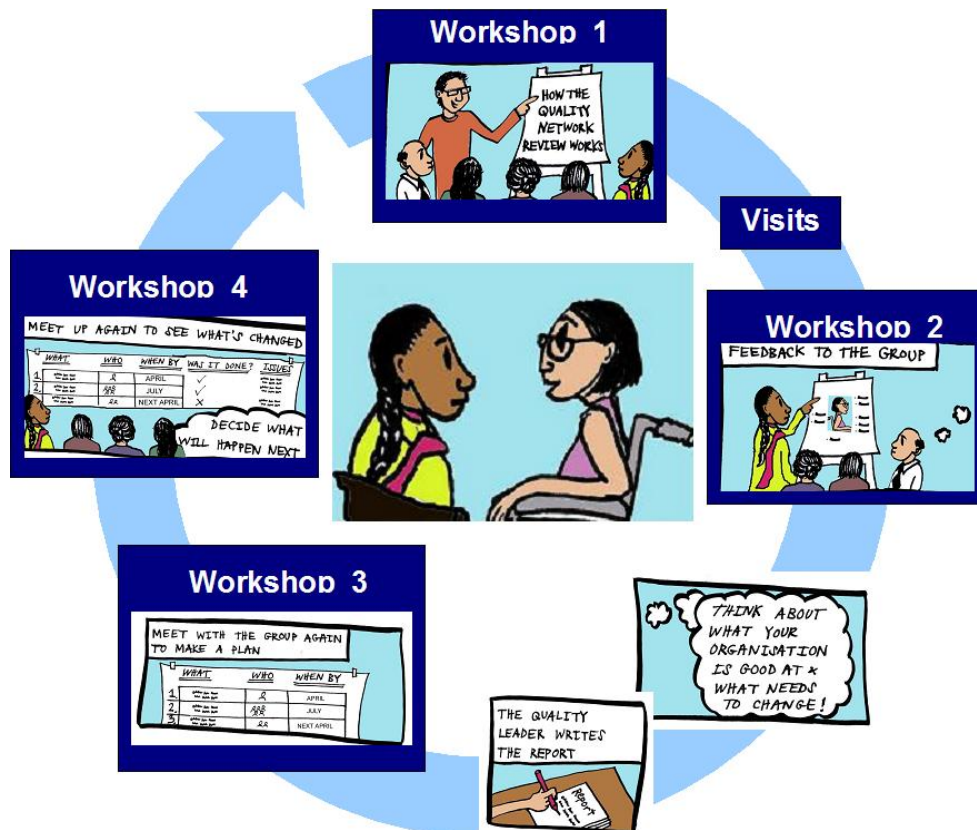
- Do the Quality Network Outcomes link with Every Child Matters?
- Would the Quality Network process and materials transfer to services for children and young people?
- Can a Quality Network review show CSCI and other inspectors that the 'pupil voice' has been listened to and used to shape development plans?
- Would the Quality Network challenge schools to find ways of including children and young people with complex needs and raise expectations for these pupils?
- Would a Quality Network review provide evidence for the SEF and show how schools know what is happening for pupils?
- Could we train and mentor coaches from the schools to facilitate peer reviews in the future?

## 2. About Quality Network Reviews

In a Quality Network review, a team of 'stakeholders' from the service being reviewed visits a sample of people who use that service. By stakeholders we mean people who use the service, family carers, support staff, managers, advocates and anyone else who has an interest in what life is like for people using the service. The team is made up of at least 6 and no more than 12 people and each team member visits one person at least four times, trying to make these visits at different times and in different places. Team members use 'My Life' workbooks to help them decide whether each of the ten Quality Network outcomes is or is not happening for the person they visit. This information is fed back to the rest of the team and used to agree priorities for an action plan that is drawn up by the team and reviewed within six months.

The review cycle takes up to a year and consists of:

- Workshop 1 – Team building and training
- Workshop 2 – Feedback from visits and agreeing priorities for change
- Workshop 3 – Action Planning
- Workshop 4 – Reviewing the Action Plan



The review is planned and organised by a Quality Leader who is usually a senior person within the organisation. They take responsibility for managing each stage of the review, supporting team members and producing written materials:

- A report on the findings
- An action plan
- A public statement including a summary of the findings and action plan

Workshops are facilitated by a Bild Quality Coach who supports the team to:

- Understand how to use the process and materials
- Challenge constructively and agree priorities
- Produce a creative and effective action plan
- Learn from good practice within the service and elsewhere
- Ensure that the review has an impact both for the organisation and for the people it supports

### **3. About the Pilot Projects**

Pilot reviews started in September 2006, Action Plans and Public Statements were produced in February 2007 and plans were reviewed in May 2007.

Each school chose a Quality Leader who would oversee their review and a member of staff who would be trained as a Quality Coach and mentored by an experienced Bild Coach. This mentoring involved co-coaching a review in one of the other schools. The plan was to build capacity so that the three schools could support each other in any future reviews by peer coaching. The co-coaches would also bring their knowledge and experience of services for children and young people to this role and support Bild Quality Coaches to understand the different issues for children's services.

The pilot allowed us to look at how the process worked in different contexts and each school decided on a specific focus for their review.

## **Sunfield School**

Sunfield is a residential special school offering 52 week care and 38 week education facilities for pupils with severe and complex learning disabilities aged 7–19 years. 11 residential houses each cater for 6-8 pupils of varied ages and abilities and there is a school on site. Sunfield wanted to use the review to check out the experiences of children with higher support needs who might not be able to influence the development of services in other ways.

## **Shepherd School**

The Shepherd School is a community day school for pupils with severe or profound learning disabilities aged 3–19 in the City of Nottingham. At the time of the review there were 106 pupils on the roll, 40% of whom were identified as having profound and multiple learning disabilities. The Shepherd School review focussed on pupils with the most complex needs.

## **Hillside School**

Hillside is a day school for pupils who have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) identified as their predominant learning difficulty. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds. All pupils have statements of special educational need. There is an Outreach Team working to support pupils with ASD in the community and mainstream schools.

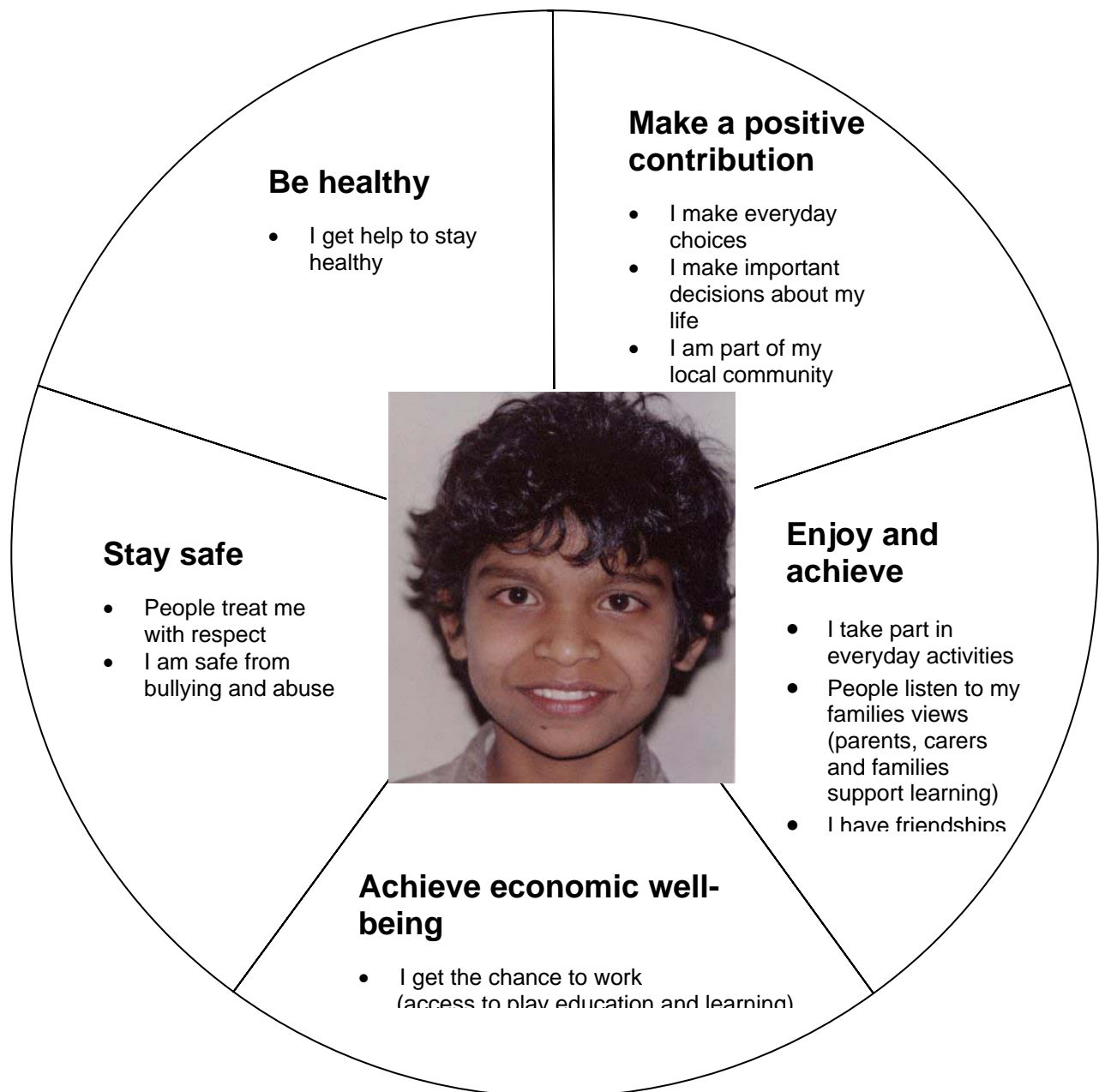


Bild co-ordinated the pilots and provided administration and other support. The pilot was evaluated at a meeting in June 2007 where we recorded information from people who were there, looked at feedback from each workshop and comments and suggestions collected from team members throughout the reviews.

These discussions are summarised in Section 5 and you can get more detailed information in the form of an appendix to this report from Valerie Wilkinson at Bild.

## 4. Every Child Matters and Quality Network outcomes

For the purposes of the pilot we grouped the 10 Quality Network outcomes under the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes. We agreed that it was important to retain them as they have clear links to CSCI, Reach and other quality measures for adult services and it could be important to make these connections when reviewing or planning for young people at transition.



## 5. Findings from the pilots

### 1. The process

In general the process transferred well to the school setting but the residential and extended community schools had more opportunities to look at areas of children and young people's lives beyond constraints of the school day.



Everyone felt teams needed more time for planning and preparation and to make all the visits. They found it useful to get the perspective of co-coaches or team members with a learning disability and found the posters a powerful way to record what life was like for the person they visited. Families found it refreshing and empowering to be involved and felt valued. There were some practical suggestions about writing the report as soon as possible and asking for volunteers from the team to help with this. Team members said that the process was actually very simple and it was important for the Quality Coach to keep reminding them of this and not allowing them to over-complicate things.

When it came to action planning, people valued that fact that Coaches and Quality Leaders challenged attitudes or opinions and ensured priorities were based on facts rather than opinions. Everyone felt the action planning day was really positive but suggested personal action plans for people visited needed to be done early in the day and the organisational plan could draw on these as well as the other information. Teams felt it was important to share the action plans with as many people as possible to move things forwards. A really committed person or team is needed to co-ordinate actions and take the plan forward beyond Workshop 4, review it regularly and set new targets.



## 2. Quality Network Materials

Suggestions for changes included a greater focus on the expectations of *all* children and young people and more links to transition planning. Information about the implications of the Mental Capacity Act for young people over 16 to challenge assumptions that children are too young to make decisions or cannot make choices because of the severity of their disability

People felt 'My Life' books should be in loose-leaf format, need more appropriate prompts and examples and the ten Quality Network outcomes should be grouped under the five Every Child Matters areas.

## 6. What Next?

- This report will be circulated and information put onto the Bild Website
- Bild will offer training for coaches, work with schools on their first review and support to capacity-build by mentoring coaches through this
- Bild to offer an external view and be a 'critical eye' on self review
- More work and decisions needed about 'kitemark' or validation to show that the review process has followed good practice set out by Bild (this will indicate the quality of the review process NOT the quality of a service)
- Explore possibilities to pilot commissioner-led review which would look at Every Child Matters outcomes across all children's services in a particular area to give a better overview

## 7. Conclusions

The pilot showed that the Quality Network network outcomes linked well with Every Child Matters and that the process was a really effective way of involving staff and families in thinking about what life is like for children and young people. The Quality Network encouraged people to think beyond the child's disability and plan creative ways to open up opportunities for them to do the sort of things that other children take for granted:

- Team members realised that conversations about what the child might be when they grew up just did not happen when the child has profound and multiple disabilities. They decided to start looking at the skills each pupil has and thinking of these in terms of work and future aspirations and to record these as part of the child's review
- Many children and young people had very limited social lives and one school set up a photography club which has expanded to include staff, students, family members and others from the community. This exciting project gives pupils the opportunity to meet a wide range of other people through a shared interest in photography

- Children and young people with profound and multiple disabilities rarely experience things like visits to friends' houses, birthday parties or sleep-overs. Teams felt this was due to practical problems around care, transport and support and also the fact that parents did not meet at the school gate and make arrangements in the way that they did for their non-disabled children. The action plans included opportunities for parents to meet , sharing information about possible friendships and the opportunity to book a room at one school for birthday parties after school

The Quality Network could be a exciting tool for services for children and young people to show how they involved people they support in evaluation and planning. In particular, it shows what life is like for children or young people with complex needs and encourages us to plan services that focus on supporting them into adult life - not just dealing with all the issues involved in supporting them from day to day.

*If you would like to know more about this pilot or about the Quality Network, please contact Valerie Wilkinsion*

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