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QIA Publications
PO Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ
Tel: 0845 60 222 60
Email: qia@prolog.uk.com
Fax: 0845 60 333 60
Textphone: 0845 60 555 60

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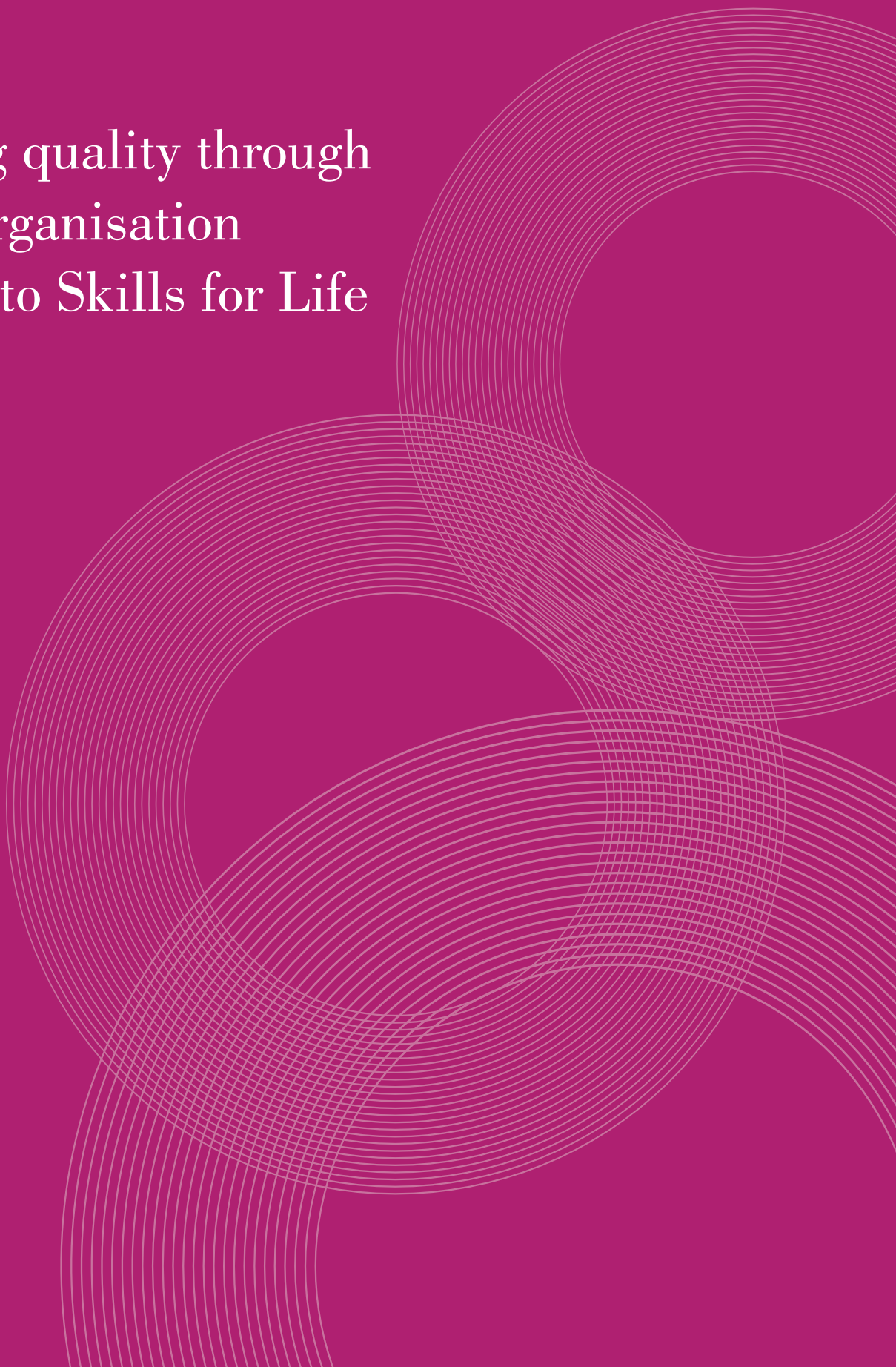
Further information:
For further information about the issues discussed in this publication please contact:

Quality Improvement Agency
Friars House
Manor House Drive
Coventry
CV1 2TE
Tel: 0870 1620 632 Fax: 0870 1620 633

Quality Improvement Agency

Skills for Life
A health check for providers of further education and training

Improving quality through a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life



Improving quality through a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life

A health check for providers of further education and training

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Introduction

The quality health check on Skills for Life provision is an output from development work undertaken through a national project, a Whole Organisation Approach to Skills for Life. The project was initially funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) before becoming the responsibility of the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA). Much of the development work that underpins this publication was undertaken through the Quality Networks run as part of the Learning and Skills Council-funded Support for Success Quality Improvement programme, now funded and managed by QIA.

The health check is a simple tool designed to help you assess the quality of your Skills for Life provision. It has a particular focus on the implementation of a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life. The health check has been designed for use by all types of provider delivering Skills for Life teaching and learning, either directly or through sub-contracted provision, including further education, specialist and sixth form colleges, work-based learning and adult learning providers, learndirect, providers in the voluntary sector and the Offender Learning and Skills Service.

A whole organisation approach to Skills for Life is:

Where literacy, language and numeracy provision is central to the whole organisation at all levels, ranging from strategic leadership and management to delivery of practice. This includes embedding Skills for Life in teaching and learning programmes across a range of learning aims and goals and providing all learners with opportunities to progress and achieve qualifications.

Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to progress, gain qualifications, and succeed in life and at work.

Definitions taken from the DfES Skills for Life Strategy Unit

A whole organisation approach to Skills for Life is best achieved by reviewing organisational structures and processes and, where necessary, introducing new approaches. This health check is designed to help you and your colleagues in the review process. It has nine headings that reflect aspects of policy and practice in relation to Skills for Life.

As a user of the health check you may also want to refer to the Raising Standards guides for more detailed guidance on specific aspects of Skills for Life provision. The guides have been produced to help you and other providers interpret the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework and the adult literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages core curricula for provision in communication, reading, writing and numeracy. The guides are available as hard copy from QIA Publications (see the inside of the front cover for details of how to order QIA publications). You may want to use an interactive version of the guides at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/raisingstandards.

The health check can be used:

- as a diagnostic and development tool to help draw up and implement a whole organisation strategy for Skills for Life
- to support a planned review of Skills for Life provision
- to inform self-assessment as you prepare to develop your capacity for self improvement
- to monitor and review progress with Skills for Life developments and actions
- to measure improvement and distance travelled
- as preparation for inspection or an annual assessment visit
- to identify and prioritise development needs
- as part of a staff training programme
- as part of peer referencing activity
- to benchmark against other providers
- to identify and share good practice
- as a discussion framework for meetings or more informal discussions
- to support your submission for a quality kitemark such as Investors in People.

The health check takes account of the part all staff have to play in implementing the whole organisation approach: senior management and governors/executive board members, managers, Skills for Life practitioners, vocational and other teachers, tutors and trainers, and support staff. If your organisation has subject learning coaches who have qualified through the National Teaching and Learning Change programme we recommend that they join you in using this tool.

We suggest that when using the health check you consider the following:

Why are you using the health check?

If you want to develop a whole organisation strategy you will probably want to use all sections of the health check to gain an overview of your organisation's 'health'. Or you may already know where you have areas of good practice and want to focus on specific sections of the health check to help you review aspects of your provision which you judge are most in need of development. You may not want to complete the whole of the health check at the same time. Spreading the activity over a longer planned timescale can make it more focused and more manageable.

Which individuals and teams will you involve in completing part or all of the health check?

You may want to start by considering whether the aspects of your provision that you want to address are strategic, operational or related to delivery. This will help determine who you involve and how. Whatever the focus, a wide range of contributions will provide a better informed and more complete picture of where your organisation is now. Different perspectives will enable you to triangulate and test responses, for example you may want to ask both the Skills for Life team and the Management Information team to complete the section on management information. Bringing the different teams together to consider the outcomes of the review can be enlightening for all parties and build understanding.

Asking teams rather than individuals to complete aspects of the health check can encourage collaboration and ownership, as well as making the task less onerous. They may want to do this at a team meeting or as part of a staff development or training day.

When is the best time to complete the health check?

If you want to use the health check as part of your self-assessment process it will need to fit in with your organisation's self-assessment cycle. Or you may need the outcomes of the health check to feed into the appropriate point in the business planning cycle. It may be useful to have outcomes from particular sections ready in time to report to strategic groups or committees.

What will you do once you have completed the health check?

As with any self-assessment activity the act of undertaking the health check will not in itself bring about improvements. The findings from the review process should inform your strategy and lead to actions for improvement. These actions may be focused on a very specific issue or be part of a broader strategy. You may want to integrate actions into existing plans or use them as the basis of a new plan. At the end of the health check there is a pro forma 'Overall analysis: preparation for action' which you can use to help you review and synthesise your findings before formulating specific actions.

How often will you complete all or part of the health check?

You may not want to repeat the exercise for all aspects of the health check. Once you have prioritised developments you may want to re-visit the relevant parts of the health check after you have carried out your actions for improvement. You will then be able to judge how much overall progress you feel you have made in relation to the quality statements and record the evidence you have to support your judgements. This could provide you with evidence of your organisation's capacity to improve which you could use to support your self-assessment.

And finally…

Providers who were involved in trialling all or part of the health check emphasised the value of the process of completing the assessment as much as the outcomes. The process was found to provide those involved in the management, organisation, delivery and support of Skills for Life provision with valuable insights into the relationship between different aspects of the provision. It encouraged a shared understanding and ownership – essential elements of a whole organisation approach.

Policy context

Skills for Life is the government's strategy, launched in 2001 and updated in 2003, for improving the nation's skills in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (DfES, 2001, 2003). The strategy is committed to raising the quality of teaching and learning.

The DfES Skills for Life Strategy Unit funded a range of national projects designed to embed Skills for Life across post-compulsory education. The Whole Organisation Approach to Skills for Life project was one example of this. It later became the responsibility of QIA and as a Pathfinder project it played an important role in developing a vision and understanding of a way forward. The project developed and used this health check with 35 Pathfinder sites and promoted its wider use through the Skills for Life Improvement Programme from October 2006.

To meet the challenge of implementing a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life in a planned, coordinated and sustainable way, the following elements within the organisation should make explicit reference to Skills for Life:

- the organisational strategy (which has clear objectives, targets and values)
- business and operational plans (which reflect the objectives of the strategy)
- policies and procedures (which provide a clear direction for delivery)
- the quality assurance framework (which makes it clear what is to be monitored, when and by whom)
- management information systems (which disseminate accurate, timely and relevant data)
- clear information, advice and guidance processes (including skills check, initial and diagnostic assessment)
- information from the guidance processes (which is effectively disseminated and utilised to plan learning)
- the human resource strategy and continuing professional development programme (which delivers the objectives of the organisation)
- curriculum offers (which reflect the needs and interests of stakeholders and individuals)
- resources and facilities (which support high quality teaching and learning)
- promotion and recruitment procedures (to increase learner take-up).

The health check asks you to assess your organisation against a series of quality statements relating to each of the areas identified above. From this self-assessment process your organisation can agree actions it needs to take to build a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life.

In the course of the development of the health check the sector has seen a number of national developments that emphasise the centrality of Skills for Life to the learning and skills agenda. The government is on track to meet its Public Service Agreement improvement targets for 2007 and is working to improve the literacy and numeracy of a further 750,000 people to meet its 2010 target of 2.25 million. Lord Leitch, in his Review of Skills, reinforces the importance of raising standards of literacy and numeracy if the nation is to compete in the global economy and continue to enjoy its current levels of prosperity (Leitch, 2006). He proposes a new set of targets to be achieved by 2020: 95% of adults to have functional literacy and numeracy skills (level 1 literacy and entry level 3 numeracy).

High quality teaching and learning will be needed to support the achievement of these targets; this will require highly skilled teachers. As part of the national reforms to initial teacher training, Skills for Life teachers will be required to gain new specialist qualifications, emphasising the government's commitment to ensuring a skilled workforce to deliver its strategy (DfES, 2004).

Alongside these developments is the move within the sector towards greater self-regulation, with providers taking more responsibility for their own quality improvement, and demonstrating they can do this effectively. The health check is designed to support providers in undertaking a rigorous and comprehensive self-assessment of the development and delivery of their Skills for Life provision. Peer referencing, benchmarking and sharing of good practice are some of the approaches that are being developed to support providers in making the shift towards self-regulation and demonstrating their capacity to improve. The health check can also be used as part of peer referencing activity, for benchmarking purposes or to identify and share good practice.

Using the health check as a quality improvement tool

Aspects of organisation policy and practice

The health check has nine sections, reflecting particular aspects of policy and practice in relation to Skills for Life.

- Organisational strategy
- Business and operational plans
- Policies and procedures
- Quality improvement framework
- Management information systems
- Information, advice and guidance, marketing and learner recruitment
- Human resource strategy and continuing professional development planning
- Curriculum design and delivery
- Resources and facilities

Quality statements

Each section includes a series of quality statements designed to elicit judgements on specific aspects of provision, essential to a whole organisation approach. To help you consider responses to the statements some further prompts are given in the sections headed 'Things to think about'.

For each quality statement, you are asked to record:

- an assessment of the current state of development using a five-point grading scale
- good practice (with evidence to support this)
- development needs.

The grading scale

The health check uses a five-point scale for assessing each aspect of current provision.

1 This aspect is fully developed

2 This aspect is partially developed

3 We have just begun to develop this aspect

4 Development activity has been identified but not begun

5 No development has been identified for this aspect

Overview

On the basis of judgements derived from the nine sections of the health check, you are invited to make overall judgements on the strengths of current provision, areas and opportunities for development and barriers to improvement. You are also invited to record your main strategies for developing Skills for Life provision.

Health check for a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life

A.	Organisational strategy
B.	Business and operational plans
C.	Policies and procedures
D.	Quality improvement framework
E.	Management information systems
F.	Information, advice and guidance, marketing and learner recruitment
G.	Human resource strategy and continuing professional development planning
H.	Curriculum design and delivery
I.	Resources and facilities

A. Organisational strategy

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. A strategy is in place for developing a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life.	
2. This strategy is communicated to and understood by staff.	
3. The Skills for Life strategy is based on a thorough analysis of the internal needs of learners and staff, and of local needs identified through consultation with community and employer organisations.	
4. There are clear and coherent links to other organisational strategies and there is reference to Skills for Life in these where appropriate.	
5. Commitment to developing a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life is part of the organisational ethos and managers reinforce this constantly.	
6. There are clear roles and responsibilities at all levels for the management, development, coordination and implementation of Skills for Life provision, including a senior member of staff with the necessary vision and understanding who has responsibility for Skills for Life throughout the organisation.	
7. There are clear mechanisms and responsibilities for monitoring the implementation of the strategy and clear reporting lines within the organisation's committee or reporting structure.	
8. The governing body/executive board (or equivalent) has a clear understanding of a whole organisation approach to Skills for Life and actively supports the strategy for planning and implementation.	

Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

1. You may want to consider the rationale for your strategy:

   - Is there recognition of the impact that poor literacy, language and numeracy skills will have on learner retention, achievement and progression and the need to address this as a whole organisation?
   - Does your strategy take account of all parties involved in Skills for Life planning and delivery, for example where there are subcontracting or brokering arrangements?
   - Does your strategy reflect not only learners' needs but also the language, literacy and numeracy needs of your staff in their different roles?

   (These issues are also addressed in section G).

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
1.		
2.		
3.		
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3. The range of organisations you might consult will depend on the nature of your organisation.

6. These might also involve specific roles or arrangements put in place to support developments in Skills for Life, for example: Skills for Life 'champions' or equivalent; a buddying system between Skills for Life practitioners and vocational teachers.

7. For example you might have a steering group for Skills for Life with representation from all areas of the organisation.

8. Has there been training and awareness raising for governors/executive board members? Do you have a lead governor/board member for Skills for Life within the organisation?

B. Business and operational plans

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. An operational plan, or set of action plans, is in place to ensure the delivery of the whole organisation approach to Skills for Life strategy and policy.	
2. The plan, or set of plans, includes actions to embed Skills for Life in vocational and other programmes.	
3. There are links to the organisation's three year development plan or longer term plans, and there is reference to Skills for Life in the plan(s).	
4. All plans make reference to Skills for Life, reflect the whole organisation approach to Skills for Life and present a coherent and consistent approach to delivering the strategy.	
5. Plans take account of external funding and opportunities available to support aspects of Skills for Life provision, including embedded programmes.	
6. Skills for Life provision is adequately resourced and there are designated budgets to deliver Skills for Life programmes.	
7. Plans include actions to identify local Skills for Life need and target recruitment.	
8. Headline targets are in place for recruitment, retention, achievement and success rates for all aspects of Skills for Life provision and are communicated to relevant staff.	
9. For each vocational/curriculum area Skills for Life targets are in place for recruitment, retention, achievement, success rates and progression.	
10. Performance against targets is monitored, reviewed and reported on regularly to the appropriate management forum.	

Grading scale:

1 This aspect is fully developed 2 This aspect is partially developed 3 We have just begun to develop this aspect
4 Development activity has been identified but not begun 5 No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

1and 2. You may have a single operational plan for Skills for Life or a series of action plans covering different aspects. Actions relating to Skills for Life may also be included in related plans, for example: human resources; continuing professional development; accommodation; marketing; employer engagement; community liaison; family literacy; community Skills for Life; Key Skills; additional support; embedding Skills for Life.

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
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6. Funding and resourcing need to take account of all aspects of Skills for Life provision in your organisation: embedded delivery; discrete programmes; and additional language, literacy and numeracy support. Resourcing may include allocating adequate time for collaborative working between Skills for Life and vocational staff.

9. Retention and achievement targets may relate to: national tests; other literacy or numeracy qualifications; English for Speakers of Other Languages qualifications; Key Skills qualifications; provision monitored through the Recognition and Recording Progress and Achievement approach.

C. Policies and procedures

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. There is a policy or set of policies in place for all aspects of Skills for Life provision which clearly states all learners' and staff entitlement to Skills for Life development and accreditation and takes into consideration their needs and interests.	
2. There are links to other organisational policies and there is reference to Skills for Life in these where appropriate.	
3. There are clear procedures for implementing and monitoring all aspects of the Skills for Life policy or set of policies.	
4. Policies and procedures use standard terminology and plain English, and are accessible to staff.	
5. Key elements of the Skills for Life entitlement and how to access it are written and communicated clearly to learners and staff.	

Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

1. Your organisation may have a single policy, or a set of policies with sub-policies where appropriate.

2. Examples of related policies: human resources; continuing professional development; accommodation; employer engagement; community liaison; family literacy; community Skills for Life; Key Skills; additional support; embedding Skills for Life; initial assessment; admissions; curriculum; teaching and learning.

4. Are the terms 'embedded' and 'embedding' clearly explained in policies and procedures where needed?

5. For example, information on entitlement is communicated to learners using a range of methods and opportunities: orally; in writing using accessible language; via noticeboards; at interviews; during inductions, tutorials or learner reviews.

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

D. Quality improvement framework

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. The organisation's quality improvement framework, including the self-assessment process, makes explicit references to Skills for Life and ensures Skills for Life is an integral part of the framework and process.	
2. All curriculum/vocational areas and relevant support services have systems in place, and associated quality criteria, for assessing and monitoring the quality and effectiveness of Skills for Life provision.	
3. Staff in all areas understand the quality improvement procedures for Skills for Life and their responsibility for implementing and monitoring these.	
4. A system is in place for ensuring that all quality data generated for Skills for Life is collated, and key messages fed back to relevant teams or individuals so that action can be taken as appropriate.	
5. All curriculum and relevant support service self-assessment reports, including contributory sub-reports and course reviews, address Skills for Life and identify actions for improvement in their quality improvement plans where appropriate.	
6. The whole organisation self-assessment report and quality improvement plan include reference to Skills for Life, taking account of the judgements in curriculum and support services self-assessment reports if these are separate documents.	
7. The validation process for self-assessment includes representation from an expert in all aspects of Skills for Life.	
8. Where peer referencing arrangements are being developed these include Skills for Life provision.	

Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

2. Examples of areas where you could expect quality criteria for Skills for Life: teaching and learning observations; course reviews and self-assessment; initial assessment process; individual learning plans.

2 and 3. If you have sub-contracted provision or use intermediaries or brokers you will need to take account of this.

4. Examples of quality data you might collate: lesson observations; learner satisfaction surveys and complaints; attendance, retention, achievement, success rate and progression data; information from self-assessment reports.

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
1.		
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8. The QIA defines peer referencing as:

a process whereby professionals of similar status or standing exercise collective judgements about the quality and standards of provision, as well as shared responsibilities for their improvement.

This process can help organisations to review and improve their provision, and demonstrate their capacity to self-regulate and improve.

D. Quality improvement framework (continued)

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
9. In all observations of teaching and learning judgements are made about the effective embedding of Skills for Life.	
10. Observers are trained in making judgements about embedded Skills for Life.	
11. Information generated through the observation of embedded Skills for Life is fed back to the relevant teams and individuals so that key issues and good practice can be identified and action taken as appropriate.	
12. Internal procedures for programme approval and re-approval include a requirement that submissions set out plans for embedding Skills for Life.	
13. All satisfaction surveys and complaints procedures include reference to Skills for Life and are fully accessible to learners with Skills for Life needs.	
14. The principles of the Recognising and Reporting Progress and Achievement approach are applied to Skills for Life provision.	
15. There is a process for measuring the effectiveness of literacy, language and numeracy support.	

Grading scale:
❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

9 and 10. You may want to devise explicit guidelines to support observers in observing and making judgements about embedded Skills for Life.

13. Do you have customised versions of learner surveys and complaints procedures? Are there alternative ways of collecting learner feedback, for example methods that don't rely on writing, such as focus groups or arrangements to scribe verbal comments for learners?

14. The principles of the Recognising and Reporting Progress and Achievement approach are increasingly applied not just to non-accredited provision but also to the quality assurance of individual learning plans.

15. Examples of measures of effectiveness: comparisons between learners identified as needing support and other learners, in terms of their attendance, retention, achievement and success rates.

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
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13.		
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15.		

E. Management information systems

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. Management information systems capture data on all aspects of accredited and non-accredited Skills for Life provision, from pre-enrolment to achievement and progression.	
2. Management information systems provide staff with accurate, relevant and timely information on all aspects of Skills for Life provision.	
3. Management information systems staff consult regularly with Skills for Life staff to ensure the management information provided addresses the complexity of this provision and meets the current and changing needs of Skills for Life.	
4. Skills for Life teachers use management information systematically to monitor the quality, development and impact of all aspects of Skills for Life provision and to inform the design and delivery of provision.	
5. The organisation analyses internal data on Skills for Life learners to make whole organisation judgements on learner profiles, and inform curriculum design and delivery and staffing levels.	

Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

1. Examples of learner data you might collect: GCSE results; initial and diagnostic assessment outcomes; additional support being provided; Key Skills results by vocational area; results in national tests by vocational area; attendance, retention, achievement, success rates and progression on accredited and non-accredited programmes; national benchmark data where this exists; numbers of learners on accredited and non-accredited programmes, analysed by gender, age and ethnicity. Where possible you may want to gather pre-enrolment information from feeder schools or referral organisations.

3. For example, can management information systems report meaningfully on a range of course models, including roll-on roll-off?

4. This may include using available data to help monitor and assess the organisation's progress with implementing its whole organisation strategy.

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
1.		
2.		
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4.		
5.		

F. Information, advice and guidance, marketing and learner recruitment

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. Staff delivering initial advice and guidance understand the organisation's policy and practice relating to the embedding of Skills for Life, are aware of the full range of Skills for Life qualifications and support available to learners and are trained to identify and discuss Skills for Life issues.	
2. Staff providing specialist support services are appropriately trained, qualified and sensitive to the specific requirements of learners with Skills for Life needs.	
3. Staff who have contact with learners are aware of the Skills for Life opportunities for learners and can refer them for further information and support.	
4. There is a range of Skills for Life promotional material targeted effectively at parents or carers, employers, young people and adults.	
5. Promotional material, advice and guidance for all courses and qualifications includes clear and accessible information on the Skills for Life requirements of the programme and the Skills for Life on-programme support available to learners.	
6. There is information and guidance available on progression opportunities for learners on discrete Skills for Life programmes.	
7. There is clear and accessible information targeted at enrolled and potential part-time learners about discrete Skills for Life programmes.	
8. The organisation is pro-active in ensuring that external agencies, schools and local employers are aware of all aspects of its Skills for Life provision.	
9. The organisation analyses national and local data to target recruitment of Skills for Life learners.	

Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

1 and 2. Have you provided awareness raising training for staff? Do staff have access to the level 2 learner support qualification?

4–7. Are promotional material and course information available in different formats, media and languages? Does your information present a positive image of Skills for Life provision rather than suggesting a deficit model?

5. Have you also considered courses and qualifications that include a Key Skills component?

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
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G. Human resource strategy and continuing professional development planning

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. The organisation's human resource strategy includes measures for assuring adequate levels of appropriately qualified staff to sustain the support, delivery, management and development of all aspects of Skills for Life provision.	
2. Management information systems capture data on staff qualifications, skills and training in relation to Skills for Life which is then used to inform human resources planning for Skills for Life.	
3. There is a clear training plan and programme to ensure that all staff delivering or supporting the delivery of Skills for Life are appropriately qualified to national standards within a specified timescale.	
4. The organisation's annual training and development plan and induction programme include training and awareness raising for all staff to ensure they are aware of the organisation's strategy for Skills for Life and have the necessary skills to contribute to its delivery.	
5. The organisation offers or enables access to a range of continuing professional development opportunities for staff in relation to their Skills for Life role, including coaching and mentoring.	
6. Strategies are in place for identifying and sharing good practice in the delivery and embedding of Skills for Life.	
7. The appraisal and review process ensures there are opportunities to identify whether staff have the literacy and numeracy skills appropriate to their job role.	
8. Person specifications relating to all posts include minimum standards of literacy and numeracy competence.	
9. Skills audits relating to job roles, where they are undertaken, identify Skills for Life key competences by level of skill or specific skills required for those roles.	
10. At job interviews all candidates undertake an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy as part of the selection process or are required to provide recent evidence of appropriate prior achievement.	
11. Staff in the organisation have access to specialist advice and guidance relating to their literacy and numeracy professional development needs, or know where they can go for this.	
12. Staff have access to a confidential initial assessment for literacy and/or numeracy to identify their personal development needs.	
13. There are opportunities, provided in a sensitive and supportive way, for staff to acquire a minimum level of literacy or numeracy qualification.	

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
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Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

1 Your human resource strategy may make reference to: Skills for Life succession planning; opportunities for internal retraining and re-deployment; entitlements for staff to acquire necessary Skills for Life qualifications; incentives for staff to develop their Skills for Life competence.

Does your human resource strategy take account of all types of Skills for Life provision: discrete and embedded programmes, and literacy, language and numeracy support?

5. Teachers could log their involvement in the health check process as evidence of CPD they have undertaken, and use this to address the forthcoming requirement for teachers to demonstrate that they engage in regular CPD.

You may want to build on coaching and mentoring initiatives already in place in your organisation, for example through the Skills for Life Improvement programme or the National Teaching and Learning Change programme.

H. Curriculum design and delivery

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. Learners have the opportunity to learn and develop Skills for Life as an integral part of academic, recreational and vocational programmes, in addition to discrete programmes and to prepare for qualifications where appropriate.	
2. A range of appropriate initial and diagnostic assessment procedures are in place to identify the Skills for Life needs of learners on discrete Skills for Life and other programmes.	
3. Initial and diagnostic assessments provide an accurate assessment of learners' Skills for Life needs and strengths mapped against the core curricula, and inform their individual learning plans.	
4. Induction programmes introduce the Skills for Life requirements of the main programme and provide information and guidance for learners on Skills for Life support available.	
5. Learners have opportunities to develop Skills for Life through embedded delivery and contextualised materials relevant to vocational programmes. 6. All teachers have a responsibility to be aware of learners' Skills for Life needs and adapt their teaching to take account of these.	
7. Skills for Life teachers and vocational or other teachers, tutors and trainers work together to plan and deliver embedded programmes.	
8. There are designated 'expert' staff with responsibility for supporting the embedding of Skills for Life into vocational and other programmes.	
9. Programmes are mapped to the Skills for Life core curricula at a range of levels irrespective of the level of the main programme.	

Grading scale:

❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

9. Teachers and other staff need to be aware of the learners' range of levels of language, literacy and numeracy and take account of these irrespective of the level of the main programme.

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		

H. Curriculum design and delivery (continued)

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
10. Schemes of work and session plans signpost opportunities to develop and/or assess Skills for Life.	
11. Activities, learning resources and assignments are differentiated to take account of the range of literacy, language and numeracy levels of learners.	
12. Tutorial provision and/or learner reviews on all programmes include opportunities to discuss and review Skills for Life achievements and needs.	
13. Where learners have an identified Skills for Life need, support is provided quickly and in an appropriate way, and is reviewed regularly and amended in response to learners' changing needs and development.	
14. The Skills for Life support provided is at a level that matches the learner's needs identified through initial and diagnostic assessment, irrespective of the level of the learner's main programme.	
15. There is effective communication and exchange of information between vocational tutors and specialist tutors who provide additional learning support and additional GCSE maths and English, to inform individual learning plans and monitor learner progress.	
16. The organisation provides transitional programmes to enable learners to progress from discrete to vocational or academic programmes.	

Grading scale:
❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

12. What range of diagnostic methods does your organisation have to meet the different needs of learners, for example enrolment interview; initial and diagnostic testing; extended induction activities; learning styles inventories; vocational aptitude assessments; tasters?

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		

I. Resources and facilities

Give each statement a grade from 1 to 5 using the scale below	
1. Skills for Life teaching rooms and staff rooms or work stations at least conform to the organisation's standard for accommodation, equipment and facilities.	
2. All programmes have vocationally relevant Skills for Life teaching and learning resources referenced to Skills for Life core curricula.	
3. Teachers make use of a full range of teaching and learning resources for Skills for Life including the use of information and communications technology and multi-media resources where available.	
4. There are guidelines for staff on the production of teaching and learning materials to ensure they conform to good practice in Skills for Life teaching and embedding.	
5. Learners have flexible access to the Skills for Life resources and the support they need for independent study.	
6. Learners have flexible access to initial and diagnostic assessment, including IT-based assessment where appropriate.	
7. Learners have access to online testing facilities for the national tests in literacy, numeracy and Key Skills.	

Grading scale:
❶ This aspect is fully developed ❷ This aspect is partially developed ❸ We have just begun to develop this aspect
❹ Development activity has been identified but not begun ❺ No development has been identified for this aspect

Things to think about

2 and 5. Is there a dedicated resource area for Skills for Life in the organisation? Is there a designated support area for individual interviews and one-to-one support?

3 and 5. Is there access to IT for Skills for Life learners?

	Good practice (with evidence)	Development needs
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

Overall analysis: preparation for action

In devising and implementing a Whole Organisation Approach to Skills for Life:

What are the main strengths of your organisation's provision?

What are the main areas for development?

What are the main opportunities for development?

What are the main barriers to improvement?

What are the main strategies you will use for developing your Skills for Life provision?

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