

## Service Inspection Key Lines of Enquiry -

### Judgement 2 (Prospects for Improvement) KLOE and detailed descriptors

#### Key Question 4 - What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

KEY LINE OF ENQUIRY (KLOE)	AN ORGANISATION WITH PROMISING PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT	AN ORGANISATION WITH UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT
4.1 Can the service evidence a record of effectively implementing change that has led to improvements in service delivery?	<p>The service /organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>has implemented changes, derived from inspections, peer reviews, best value reviews or service planning, which have delivered clear benefits for users, focusing on the most disadvantaged and those in priority need.</li></ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>has made changes but delivered improvements of mixed quality. The organisation may have expended energy but there are few better outcomes for users. Achievements are concentrated on processes and internal infrastructure. The improvements and changes it set out to achieve in its service aims and objectives have not been fully completed or have not resulted in the desired outcomes.</li></ul>
4.2 Can the service show that it has delivered significant improvements in outcomes and key performance indicators that would be experienced by users?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>has made improvements and outcomes have contributed to the achievement of the service aims described in key question 1. The outcomes are those intended and have positively impacted on intended recipients. It can demonstrate sustained improvements in many areas over a period of time achieving targets and timescales it set out to achieve.</li></ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>has achieved some improvements to the quality of life for some users, but for others, possibly including the most disadvantaged, the impact has been minimal. The outcomes that have been achieved may not always have been those intended or may not impact on the intended recipients.</li></ul>
4.3 What is the direction of travel of key performance indicators over the last three years of this and comparable services?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>can demonstrate, through national and local indicators that changes delivered have resulted in improved performance that compares well with other service providers. Over the last three years, indicators show that performance is improving for most, user satisfaction is increasing and there are measurable changes on the ground in areas that matter to users.</li></ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>has delivered variable quality of improvement as reflected in national and local indicators which show that, while some elements of the service may be performing above minimum standards, others are performing below this level. It cannot point to a sustained trend of improvement in key performance indicators over the last three years. User satisfaction is</li></ul>

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		mixed and service users and communities may have limited awareness of any improvement in services.
4.4 Does the capacity and track record demonstrate improving value for money over time?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has made effective use of resources and outcomes represent good value for money. It can evidence improvements in value for money over a sustained period (3 years).</li> <li>• can demonstrate investment and procurement decisions where the full short and long-term costs of actions are taken into account as well as the long-term interest of service users.</li> <li>• has a clear focus on VFM evident in strategic decision-making and day-to-day management and review.</li> <li>• has VFM and procurement principles embedded within core service aims and objectives and clearly articulated within the service planning framework.</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can demonstrate steady improvement in value for money over the last three years but this has generally been around the minimum expected.</li> <li>• demonstrates investment and procurement decisions where the service considers the long-term cost implications or long-term interests of service users.</li> <li>• has officers and members who show some awareness of VFM in day to day activities and decision-making.</li> </ul>

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### Key Question 5 - How well does the service manage performance?

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5.1 How good is the service's improvement planning?		
5.1.1 Does it have aims and priorities for the future that are clear, challenging and robust? Is the service aiming to improve the 'right' things – the things that matter most to users and communities – and to address service weaknesses?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a clear vision for the service which sets out what the organisation wants to achieve over the long term. It has translated its vision into tangible ambitions, aims and objectives for the future of the service. These make clear what the organisation wants to achieve to improve the overall service quality for users both now and in the future.</li> <li>• has aims that are stretching and which aspire to make a real and measurable difference for service users, particularly the most vulnerable. They make clear the longer term (next 5-10 years) sustainable outcomes that can realistically be achieved. There is a clear indication of the challenging outcomes and targets that it is seeking to achieve and the timescales it is working to.</li> <li>• has developed its aims based on a sound knowledge of the challenges and opportunities faced within the service including the views and needs of users now and in the future.</li> </ul>	<p>The service /organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has a vision of what it wants to achieve for the service. It has translated its vision into a set of aims and objectives which aspire to improve the service for users.</li> <li>• has aims which tend to focus on the short and medium term with a lack of clarity about the sustainable outcomes for the longer term. The aims address many of the weaknesses in the service, although they tend to focus on process changes. The aims do not make clear all the outcomes or targets to be achieved and therefore may prove to be unrealistic given current context and performance.</li> <li>• has aims based on a basic understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced. Its research into anticipated needs and forecasts may be incomplete and therefore aims may not fully reflect user aspirations now and in the future.</li> </ul>
5.1.2 Are aims and future plans co-ordinated, robust and deliverable?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has plans which address national and corporate priorities as well as key weaknesses in the service. They also reflect the need to prepare for forthcoming legislation and other initiatives.</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has included within its aims, service and national priorities and preparation for forthcoming legislation and other initiatives. It has not looked more broadly at the contribution the service can make corporately or</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has engaged with most services users (and where necessary their advocates), partners, councillors and/or board members, staff and where appropriate, contractors and agents, so that its aims closely link to their expressed needs, priorities, concerns, and aspirations. This engagement has helped to achieve consensus and commitment from stakeholders.</li> <li>• has plans against which performance can be measured, containing clear milestones so that delivery can be assessed. Timescales and responsibilities for completion are clear, and the resources needed to deliver the plans are identified.</li> <li>• has integrated corporate, financial and service-delivery plans to ensure it makes the best use of resources. Delivery against these plans would represent improving use of resources and will help the organisation demonstrate better value for money in its planning and delivery of the service.</li> <li>• has translated its vision and aims into specific priorities for the short, medium and long-term. The basis for the priorities is clear and determined, utilising a wide range of research and information to understand local needs. There is clarity about what is, and what is not, a priority.</li> <li>• can show the links between corporate aims through to community (if applicable), service and individual plans, objectives, standards, priorities and targets (including those related to value for money) so that individuals know what is expected of them and how their work contributes to overall aims.</li> </ul>	<p>how related national and regional priorities and legislation may impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has engaged with mainstream service users, partners, councillors and/or board members and staff in deciding the aims but may not have achieved a consensus or shared understanding about its aims.</li> <li>• has plans which include tasks for the short to medium term. They may also have some indicative milestones, targets and timescales although these could be more challenging and more outward focused to help the organisation assess performance and progress.</li> <li>• has not fully integrated its service plans and they may tend to run in parallel with each other. This could mean that resources are not always used to best effect and the relative priority of tasks between different service areas is unclear.</li> <li>• does not have clear priorities and therefore may be unable to target resources effectively. The service does have some information and research data to understand priorities but has not used this comprehensively to shape its aims or the timing and scale of its actions. It has not allocated resources to all services and growth areas and/or not explicitly identified lower priority areas.</li> <li>• can show the links between corporate aims through to community (if applicable), service and individual plans and priorities but these could be strengthened so that individuals are more clear about what is expected of them and how their work contributes to overall aims.</li> </ul>

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5.1.3 Does it have clear and robust proposals for meeting efficiency targets and improving value for money?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has set ambitious targets to improve efficiency and value for money. These are robust and SMART. Targets reflect potential for improvement and are normally met.</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sets targets which are applied to improve value for money.</li> </ul>
5.2 Are there arrangements and a culture in place to support continuous improvement?		
5.2.1 How effective is the leadership of the service?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has active, visible and effective management and leadership, recognised by staff, partners and other stakeholders. The leadership, from senior managers and councillors and/or board members, sets the tone of the organisation by creating a climate of openness, transparency and mutual respect. People in the organisation are supported to perform to the best of their abilities.</li> <li>leaders, having set the vision, aims and priorities for the service, have communicated these so that staff and partners have a good understanding and are clear about the culture and values of the organisation necessary for delivery.</li> <li>further demonstrates its leadership through ensuring fair access to services, actively working to eliminate discrimination and promote sustainable communities. It has councillors and/or board members, a management team, staff and contractors who are representative of the gender, race and age profile of their users and the broader community they serve.</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has a mixed quality and calibre of leadership and management from officers, councillors and/or board members, and this is confirmed by staff, partners and/or stakeholders. Staff and managers are supported but they may express frustration about the lack of leadership and that they are not enabled or empowered to perform to the best of their abilities. Political or board leadership and senior managers may at times get too involved in operational detail at the expense of providing clear strategic direction.</li> <li>has a leadership style, internally and externally, which may be traditional, rigid and/or silo-based. It understands the environment in which it operates and the needs of its clients although this may not fully reflect wider needs and local and national priorities.</li> <li>has not maximised opportunities to set an example within the community to ensure fair access to services, to work towards eliminating discrimination and to promote sustainable communities. It has only taken minimum action so far to ensure it can recruit and</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can show that its managers, councillors and/or board members are willing to tackle difficult problems and to take (and stick to) tough decisions to resolve these. Decision-making arrangements are effective and, where appropriate, inclusive of users.</li> </ul>	<p>retain councillors and/or board members, a management team, staff or contractors who are representative of the gender, race and age profile of their users and the broader community they serve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has taken difficult decisions, but may have avoided other problem areas and in some cases may have not stuck to tough decisions taken previously. It may not have open and clear decision making arrangements supported by councillors and/or board members and managers.</li> </ul>
<p>5.2.2 Are effective performance management arrangements in place to drive and monitor progress, and review impact?</p>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has managers, councillors and/or board members and staff at all levels who are clear about their roles in performance management.</li> <li>has a strategic focus on delivery against established plans, standards, targets and deadlines, especially where these are not being met, taking corrective action in response to variations in performance, and reviewing progress systematically.</li> <li>has an integrated approach to setting priorities and allocating resources against them. It moves resources away from areas that are not priorities or from services where development is not needed.</li> <li>has a good track record of sound financial management and can demonstrate that resources are used flexibly in line with priorities. Performance and financial management processes are well integrated.</li> <li>has integrated its priorities into service/business/improvement plans and performance targets. The plans set out the practical tasks necessary to achieve the aims and objectives for the service. These plans set a framework for the delivery of user-focused achievements in the longer term.</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has managers, councillors and/or board members who are involved in managing performance but they may not always be active and/or clearly understand their roles. While corrective action is taken in response to variations in performance, this may not always be consistent with driving improvement.</li> <li>does not have a good track record of sustaining its focus on priority areas and/or has few mechanisms in place to help it sustain focus.</li> <li>has not fully integrated its service plans and they may tend to run in parallel with each other. This could mean that resources are not always used to best effect and the relative priority of tasks between different service areas is unclear.</li> <li>has an adequate track record of financial management and can show that resources are often directed towards priority areas. Performance and financial management processes may not be well integrated.</li> <li>may have been unable to develop service/business/improvement plans and performance targets which fully reflect service priorities as these may be unclear. Its plans set out some of the practical</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has plans that are realistic about what can be achieved in the short, medium and longer term, given the constraints faced by the organisation. The timing of actions reflects the priorities determined for the service and the plans make clear the relative priority of tasks scheduled simultaneously.</li> <li>• produces regular, robust and balanced information and intelligence through a wide range of performance monitoring mechanisms covering most relevant aspects of performance, focusing on improving outcomes for service users.</li> <li>• has a range of complementary mechanisms to help it to sustain its focus on these priority areas through means such as agendas, forward planning, project and review groups, scrutiny mechanisms, internal and external audit, and user involvement.</li> <li>• ensures that information is simple to access and understand, enabling the organisation to understand how well the service is delivering against corporate and service objectives, the national agenda and local priorities, and national and local performance, finance, satisfaction and quality of life indicators.</li> <li>• reviews the frequency, level and presentation of monitoring which is tailored to risk and enables officers, councillors and/or board members to understand reasons for variations against targets and how performance compares to other service providers.</li> <li>• has performance management well embedded across the whole organisation, with a track record of the active involvement of its managers, councillors and/or board members in managing performance and solving problems at an early stage.</li> </ul>	<p>tasks necessary to deliver its aims and objectives for the service. For other tasks, it is unclear how these relate to its aims and priorities and the plans may not set out a comprehensive framework for the delivery of user focused achievements in the longer term.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has plans which include tasks for the short to medium term. They may have some indicative milestones, targets and timescales although these could be more challenging and more outward focused to help the organisation assess performance and progress.</li> <li>• produces regular information and intelligence which, while robust, could be improved in quality and consistency. The information does cover local, and national performance indicators and user satisfaction but coverage is not comprehensive.</li> <li>• has a range of performance monitoring mechanisms in place but not all of these focus on outcomes for service users.</li> <li>• has performance monitoring which does not give the organisation a full picture of how well the service is delivering against corporate and service objectives, improvement plans, the national agenda and local needs.</li> <li>• coverage of service monitoring remains fairly static and/or limited information is available for managers, councillors and/or board members to understand reasons for variation in performance, or how well performance compares to others.</li> <li>• is starting to embed performance management but has some way to go. It focuses on performance at all levels and performance management is starting to be considered as part of the day job by most staff. Senior managers use performance information but their approach may be inconsistent and/or unsystematic.</li> </ul>

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5.2.3 Are effective performance management arrangements in place to drive and deliver improved value for money?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is routinely generating surpluses through improving efficiency - and reinvesting these to improve services in areas of need.</li> <li>• proactively works with a wide range of both existing and potential partners and other providers to compare and evaluate processes, cost and outcomes and to develop further opportunities for VFM improvements. It uses the results to inform how it plans, delivers and recognises improvement.</li> <li>• councillors/board members and managers use clear information on costs and the quality of services to challenge how these compare to others currently and over time and actively manage costs and quality. This includes information on equity across the community.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>The service /organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collects information on costs and the quality of services which is regularly reported to appropriate councillors and/or board members and managers and is taken into account when reviewing performance.</li> <li>• understands the benefits of working with others to compare and evaluate processes, costs and outcomes, but its approach is at times piecemeal and/or results may not be always fully considered and/or used to inform improvement planning.</li> <li>• has councillors and/or board members and senior managers who identify and pursue opportunities to reduce costs or improve quality within existing costs.</li> </ul>
5.2.4 Does the service learn from high performing and other providers, user feedback and its own experience?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands its strengths and weaknesses in the context of the challenges it faces. It is self-critical and self-aware, and this is reflected in the quality of its self-assessment.</li> <li>• has a well publicised, user-friendly and supportive system for service-users, staff and relevant others to submit compliments, complaints, grievances, representations and suggestions. Its response to these is positive and timely and the results are used to help improve services.</li> <li>• provides opportunities for people who use the organisation's services, staff, partners, contractors and other stakeholders, to influence how performance is measured, monitored and reported, and what standards and targets are set.</li> <li>• learns from its own experiences and from that of others, as a result of:</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understands its strengths and weaknesses but has not related this to future challenges. The self assessment reflects a service (or organisation) that is not open about its weaknesses and lacks awareness of how others perceive it.</li> <li>• has an adequate system in place to receive complaints, grievances or representations. While procedures for dealing with these are followed, practice is inconsistent and the results are not systematically used to improve services.</li> <li>• provides limited opportunity for stakeholders to influence which targets are set, and how performance is measured and monitored. Service standards are incomplete and not all are readily available.</li> <li>• uses its knowledge about performance to solve problems but not always consistently or systematically. It learns from its experiences but learning is not</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ systematic analysis of its own success and failures</li> <li>▪ user feedback, including complaints, compliments, comments and suggestions</li> <li>▪ staff feedback, including suggestions</li> <li>▪ assembling and sharing best practice of other service providers in the public, private or voluntary sectors</li> <li>▪ outcomes of Best Value and other review mechanisms</li> <li>▪ external inspections</li> </ul>	<p>systematic and the service could do more to learn from other organisations. Examples of learning are isolated and/or may reflect a short-term reaction to very specific problems encountered, rather than a systematic scan for opportunities to deliver improvements.</p>

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### Key Question 6 - Does the service have the capacity to improve?

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6.1 Does the service have access to the appropriate skills, tools and finances to deliver improvement?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has the people, skills and capability it needs to deliver its service priorities as a result of its systematic forward planning.</li> <li>• has councillors and/or board members and officers who are clear about their strategic and operational roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, and the boundaries between them. These are clearly set out in protocols, standing orders and the constitution making for effective and productive relationships.</li> <li>• uses ICT effectively to deliver service objectives and improvements. It is used to achieve efficiencies in operations as well as to provide management information about service and non-service users, and about how they perceive those services. It is also part of an integrated approach to improving access to the service for users and potential users.</li> </ul>	<p>The service /organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• may generally have the people, skills and capability to deliver its service priorities but this may be fortuitous rather than a result of conscious and systematic forward planning. There may be unpredictable fluctuations in staff capacity, such as due to sickness absence, and such problems may be addressed in an ad-hoc or minimalist way.</li> <li>• is clear about the strategic and operational roles of councillors and/or board members and this is set out in protocols, standing orders and/or constitutions. There may not be a shared understanding of these roles and consequently responsibilities and accountabilities may sometimes blur and overlap.</li> <li>• uses ICT, but not as effectively as it could to deliver service objectives and improvements, or to achieve efficiencies in operations, or to provide management information about service users and non-users. ICT may not be part of an integrated approach to improving access to the service for users and potential users.</li> </ul>

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6.2 Is there evidence of effective financial and human resource planning?	<p>The service /organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>operates within a strategic HR framework which seeks to maximise internal capacity and to ensure that future service developments are provided for. It works with partners, where appropriate to address issues around recruitment, retention, training and development over the medium to long-term.</li> <li>has HR practices which fully support the needs of the service through training and development and by addressing important limitations on staff resources such as sickness absence.</li> <li>has training and other development activity well planned and valued at all levels. The success of training is demonstrated in the effectiveness of councillors and /or board members and staff (and contractors) in carrying out their roles and through robust evaluation.</li> <li>has evidence (for example from staff surveys) that shows that staff believe that they are valued and able to learn and develop their skills. Absenteeism and turnover are low and/or within target ranges.</li> <li>has a robust medium-term financial plan (MFTP) which demonstrates that it has the financial capacity to deliver its service aims, priorities and the work programme set out in service plans. It has maximised income and has been successful in securing other forms of inward investment, such as lottery funds, to meet service priorities. Assets are well managed and are used effectively, efficiently and responsibly towards achieving service aims.</li> <li>can demonstrate consideration of equalities and human rights issues in its policies, employment practices and service delivery. The service monitors its performance in relation to key equalities and other</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lacks a fully effective strategic HR framework and maximises internal capacity in only an ad-hoc way.</li> <li>has HR practices which only partially support the needs of the service. For example, training and development may be sufficient to cover only basic requirements.</li> <li>provides training to cover basic requirements, it may not plan its staff, councillor and/or board member training well and/or be fully able to demonstrate the success of training in increased effectiveness.</li> <li>has evidence (for example from staff surveys) that shows that only some staff feel valued and/or significant proportions of staff are unable to fully develop their skills. Training may not be routinely evaluated to help improve future performance.</li> <li>has a medium term financial plan or budget forecast for the future. This demonstrates the organisation has adequate financial capacity to provide the service but does not fully take account of the service aims, priorities or work programmes. It has not maximised income or been successful in attracting external resources to meet service priorities. Assets are managed, although not in line with best practice and effective use of them is not made to assist in meeting service aims.</li> <li>demonstrates minimum/limited consideration of equalities and human rights issues in its policies, employment practices and service delivery. The service does not adequately monitor performance in relation to key equalities and other legislation or make itself accountable for progress on these issues.</li> <li>has capacity may be not fully utilised through mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues such as</li> </ul>

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	<p>relevant legislation and makes itself accountable for progress on these issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has capacity fully utilised by ensuring that important priorities are mainstreamed. These include, for example, social inclusion, community safety and the needs of young people.</li> </ul>	<p>community safety.</p>
6.3 Is there a robust, modern procurement strategy to apply best practice to achieve improved value for money in priority areas, including working with partners?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not base procurement decisions solely on lowest cost options but on achieving greatest benefit to the public purse, for example securing additional health or environmental benefits and opportunities for joint procurement with partners are actively pursued.</li> <li>has engaged effectively in strategic partnering, with evidence of improvements in services or facilities</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pursues joint procurement with appropriate partners and improvements in value for money are being secured.</li> <li>does not base procurement decisions solely on lowest cost but reflect the best combination of cost and quality.</li> </ul>
6.4 Is the service/organisation investing, and attracting inward investment, appropriately to deliver improvement?	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>secures and maximises internal/external funding opportunities to support delivery of government and/or local service related priorities and improve value for money.</li> </ul>	<p>The service/organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seeks external funding where appropriate to support local service priorities.</li> </ul>