

Darlington Early Years Service

Sustainability Health Check

This checklist is designed to support Darlington childcare providers in analysing the health of their childcare settings.

You may like to complete it with the help of a member of Darlington Early Years Team or the Business & Finance Manager on a one-to-one basis.

Alternatively you can use it to provide an honest self-assessment of your setting and prioritise any actions you may feel necessary using the A-B-C columns. (A for top priorities and so on.) When you identify an action is required allocate a lead person and set dates to achieve goals.

It is hoped that the checklist will highlight areas of development that you may need to consider over a period of time in order to achieve continuing success.

Sections

1. Business Planning
2. Financial Planning & Management
3. Funding
4. Management & Organisation
5. Staffing & Recruitment
6. Registration
7. Premises & Equipment
8. Marketing & Market Research
9. Quality Assurance

Section 1 - Business Planning

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Do you have a business plan for the current financial year?							
Do you revisit your business plan on a regular basis?							
Do you have a member of your management team who takes responsibility for business planning?							
Has the organisation recently undertaken a SWOT analysis?							
Can you identify variations between what you predicted would happen and what has actually happened and understand why?							
Have you recently analysed your annual income & expenditure?							
Are fee incomes forecast on market research?							
Are fee incomes forecast on operational experience?							
Have you established a break-even point for occupancy?							
Do you consult with parents, children & staff to evaluate your service & develop your business plan?							

Section 2 – Financial Planning & Management

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Do you produce an annual budget for the provision?							
Does the management team know what it costs to operate the provision on a weekly/monthly basis?							
Are costs split between fixed (rent, rates etc) and variable costs (gas, electricity, food etc)?							
Are you able to assess accurate staffing costs of the provision?							
Are all other costs accurately recorded?							
Have you had a shortfall in income over the last year and identified why?							
Do you predict a shortfall in income over the next year?							
Has the break-even point (income v's expenditure) been identified in terms of occupancy levels required?							

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Does the management team receive monthly financial reports and understand them?							
Are you able to make accurate monthly cash flow forecasts?							
Are bank and cashbooks reconciled at least monthly?							
Do you have an over-draft facility with your bank?							
Do you use a payroll service to calculate staff wage payments?							
Do you pay your staff wages by cheque / cash / BACS?							
When was the last time you shopped around for quotes for products / services you buy?							
Do you set profit / surplus targets for the provision?							
Does the provision have written policies & procedures relating to financial management?							

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Has the provision taken into account potential tax liabilities?							
Is the provision adequately insured and is the insurance reviewed annually?							
When was the last time you shopped around for quotes for products / services you buy?							
Do you set profit / surplus targets for the provision?							
Does the provision have written policies & procedures relating to financial management?							
Has the provision taken into account potential tax liabilities?							
Is the provision adequately insured and is the insurance reviewed annually?							

Section 3 - Funding

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Does your income from fees cover all of your running costs?							
Does the provision make a profit / surplus?							
Does the provision make enough profit / surplus to build up reserves for future plans?							
Is your occupancy above 75%?							
Are you happy that your fee structure is making your childcare affordable to as many							
Are you able to collect fees regularly from parents?							
Do you offer a direct payment option for parents paying fees into your bank account?							
Have you been able to predict future numbers of children using your provision?							
Do you promote Childcare Tax Credit to parents?							
Are you promoting other childcare support costs to your parents (e.g. Childcare Support Fund for							

Section 4 - Management & Organisation

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Does the provision have a mission statement that clearly expresses its aims?							
Does your management team meet regularly (at least once a month) to consider current issues and react							
Do management team members visit the setting regularly?							
Does your current management structure still meet the needs of your provision?							
Do management team members have clearly defined roles?							
Do members of your management team access any management training?							
Do you need to rethink the legal / management structure as your assets / responsibilities increase?							
Is the management team coping with the workload?							
Are policies and procedures current and appropriate to the business and do they meet Ofsted requirements?							

Section 5 - Staffing & Recruitment

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
What level is staff turnover in your business?							
Do you have a strategy for retaining staff?							
Do you have high quality, qualified & motivated staff?							
Is recruitment an issue for your business?							
Are your rates of pay in line with other childcare employers in your area?							
Are conditions of service good?							
Does each member of staff have an up to date job description?							
Do all members of staff have legally correct contracts of employment?							
Are you aware of the rights of your employees and the responsibility you have as employers?							
Do you undertake your responsibilities in relation to minimum wage, tax and NI							

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Are you aware of responsibilities regarding Sick Pay, Maternity Pay etc - and do you have contingencies							
Do you provide staff with information about pension provision (if appropriate)?							
Are clear capability / disciplinary procedures laid down?							
Is there a grievance procedure laid down?							
Do you have a procedure for managing sickness absence?							
Do staff feel valued and part of a team, have you asked them recently?							
Do staff receive appraisals and support with the outcome of those appraisals?							
Are staff able to network with colleagues from other provisions?							
Do you use students/volunteers?							
Do you have contingency arrangements in place to cover staff absences?							

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Are you aware of up to date training and development opportunities for staff?							
Are staff able to access appropriate training?							
Do you have a clear set of procedures when recruiting new staff?							
Do you have a standard application form that can be used for all positions?							

Section 6 - Registration

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Does one member of your management team take the lead responsibility for registration and							
Does everyone involved in the provision have an appropriate understanding of the National							
Does the provision have to hand, the appropriate guidance documents on registration and inspection?							
Do you review all your policies and procedures on a rolling and regular basis?							
Are risk assessments carried out on all areas of the building, outdoor play area and on all activities							
Does the provision fulfil all of its other statutory requirements?							
Do you know where to access advice and support in preparing for OFSTED registration and							

Section 7 - Premises & Equipment

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Do your premises still provide a high quality environment for your provision?							
Do you have a formal rental agreement?							
What period is left on your lease?							
Do your premises still provide a high quality environment for your provision?							
Do you have a formal rental agreement?							
What period is left on your lease?							
What type of insurance cover do you have? e.g. contents / building cover / public liability etc.							
Do you plan regular maintenance of the premises / equipment?							
Do you have someone responsible for maintenance?							

Section 8 - Marketing & Market Research

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Are you clear about the profile you want to present?							
Do you have a clear idea of your unique selling points?							
Can you clearly identify your target market?							
Have you thought about the full range of marketing and publicity opportunities available to you?							

Section 9 - Quality Assurance

Question	Yes/ No	Comments / Action	By Who	By When	A	B	C
Are you aware of the benefits of working towards a recognised quality assurance scheme?							
Are you working towards a quality assurance accreditation?							
Are you already accredited?							