



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION
PLAN 2017-21**

Glossary

ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority, the national authority established as part of the National Quality Framework
Authorised officer	An individual authorised by a state and territory regulatory authority to fulfil functions under the National Law. Job titles can vary by state and territory, but authorised officers typically monitor and enforce compliance, assess applications for approval, rate services for quality, investigate incidents and complaints, and provide advice and guidance
National Law	Education and Care Services National Law Act
National Regulations	Education and Care Services National Regulations
NQA ITS	National Quality Agenda Information Technology System
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQF RPC	National Quality Framework Regulatory Practice Committee, comprising senior representatives from all state and territory regulatory authorities, the Australian Government and ACECQA
NQS	National Quality Standard, comprising standards against which education and care services are assessed and rated
OPM	Operational Policy Manual, produced by ACECQA primarily for state and territory regulatory authority authorised officers
Regulatory authorities	The administrative unit or body in each state and territory responsible for the administration of the National Law and National Regulations.

Introduction

1. Purpose

This five year strategy and implementation plan sets out the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's (ACECQA's) approach to research and evaluation under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

It provides a summary of progress to date, and current and future priorities, as part of a longer term strategy to evaluate the extent to which the intended outcomes of the NQF are being realised.

2. Our role in relation to research and evaluation

ACECQA was established on 1 January 2012 as the national authority responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of the NQF.

Section 225 of the *Education and Care Services National Law* (the National Law) lists our key functions. One of these functions explicitly mentions evaluation in the context of helping governments' decision-making and policy development:

- Report to governments in relation to the *evaluation* of the NQF.

Several of our other functions relate to research and evaluation:

- Monitor and promote consistency in the implementation and administration of the NQF
- Undertake national audits
- Promote and foster continuous quality improvement by education and care services
- Publish, monitor and review ratings of education and care services
- Educate and inform education and care services and the community about the NQF
- Publish information about the implementation and administration of the NQF and its effect on developmental and educational outcomes for children.

Our research and evaluation work also aligns with the functional responsibilities outlined in the National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda (NP NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care, as well as the strategic directions outlined in the Education Council's Letter of Expectation for 2016-18, specifically to 'evaluate the NQF within an evaluation framework agreed by the Council, in collaboration with all parties to the National Partnership'.

3. Our strategic priorities

Our *Strategic Plan 2017-21* sets out our six priorities. One of these priorities is to:

- provide advice and information to governments, the sector and the community about the performance of the NQF, based on research, data analysis and evaluation.

4. The importance of research and evaluation under the NQF

The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in early childhood education and care, and school age care. It operates under an applied law system, comprising the Education and Care Services National Law, and the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

In the context of the NQF, research and evaluation is about the systematic collection and analysis of information to allow us to make judgments about effectiveness and efficiency, and inform current and future operational and policy decisions.

Research and evaluation findings can help identify effective and efficient practice, issues and challenges, unintended consequences and unanticipated results, as well as demonstrate value for money.

5. NQF evaluation framework

In collaboration with all governments, we have developed an evaluation framework for the NQF, which has been agreed by Education Ministers and published on our website. The shared framework provides all governments and NQF stakeholders with a common way of understanding whether and how the NQF is meeting its objectives.

The objectives of the NQF can be summarised as:

- ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services
- improving the educational and developmental outcomes of children attending education and care services
- promoting continuous improvement in the quality of education and care services
- improving the efficiency of regulating education and care services
- improving public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services.

The guiding principles of the NQF provide valuable context to its objectives. For example, that the rights and best interests of the child are paramount, and that best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services.

The NQF evaluation framework lays the foundation and parameters for ongoing evaluation projects and exercises that link to the objectives of the NQF. The framework:

- builds a shared understanding of what needs to be evaluated and why
- provides governments and ACECQA with a common reference point when considering existing and future research and evaluation activities
- better positions governments and ACECQA to contribute to future policy reviews and public debates about the benefits of regulating education and care services
- provides a logical method for measuring progress against the desired short, medium and long term outcomes of the NQF.

6. Challenges and opportunities

Based on the experiences of the first five years of the NQF and knowledge of currently available information, we estimate that the five objectives of the NQF rank as follows in terms of relative challenge and complexity (from most challenging to least challenging):

- i. *To improve the education and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services*
 - one of the key challenges associated with this objective is the need to link disparate data sets to track the educational and developmental journey of individual children
 - another challenge is the length of time required before a meaningful and in-depth assessment of educational and developmental outcomes can be made. For example, around 90% of education and care services have now been quality assessed and rated, meaning that educational and developmental outcomes data relating to children who attended these services will increasingly become available in 2019 and 2022 through school performance information. However, long term outcomes data will only become available once these cohorts of children have finished their formal schooling
 - an opportunity exists to build upon existing overseas studies and apply these to the Australian context. The Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) provides a nationwide data collection every three years of early childhood development at the time children commence their first year of full-time school. This information can be combined with National Quality Standard ratings and other data sources to provide a well rounded view of the impact of high quality early childhood education and care services.
- ii. *To improve efficiency in the regulation of education and care services, including the reduction of regulatory burden*
 - one of the key challenges associated with this objective is attempting to provide an overall assessment of the benefits of the NQF against its costs, including to what extent the benefits outweigh the costs

- another challenge is establishing an ‘efficient cost of regulation’ for governments that can be applied nationally and used to assess efficiency gains over time
 - an opportunity exists to build further evidence to inform future policy review recommendations on refinements to the NQF that reduce the cost of compliance, while retaining or improving quality outcomes for children.
- iii. To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services*
- one of the key challenges associated with this objective is the need to establish robust and meaningful baselines and benchmarks for analysing trends and differences in serious incidents and complaints data as proxies for children’s safety, health and wellbeing
 - in common with other sectors, there is an ongoing challenge to mediate ‘over’ and ‘under’ reporting of serious incidents and complaints by service providers. For example, a provider might report a relatively high number of serious incidents because of robust and comprehensive reporting mechanisms, overly cautious reporting procedures, unique child cohorts and service circumstances, or because of poor health and safety standards. Similarly, a provider might report a relatively low number of serious incidents because of exceptional health and safety standards, lax reporting procedures, or because of restrictive learning and development opportunities
 - an opportunity exists to continue the improvements and enhancements to the National Quality Agenda IT System, the national system used by all state and territory regulatory authorities and by an increasing proportion of education and care service providers, to report and record serious incidents and complaints. Such improvements and enhancements will allow for increasingly granular analysis of trends and differences.
- iv. To improve public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services*
- one of the key challenges associated with this objective is achieving a sufficient and ongoing sample size to measure and track the level of public knowledge
 - another challenge is the need to identify and promote the most efficient and effective mechanisms for improving public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services. Particularly given the diverse and often transient usage of education and care service providers by families and carers
 - an opportunity exists to influence how service providers communicate about their education and care services to families to focus more on the main benefits to children of quality education and care.

- v. *To promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services*
- one of the key challenges associated with this objective will come with the introduction of the revised National Quality Standard on 1 February 2018 and the extent to which it will be possible to compare quality ratings, particularly for individual standards and elements, over the lifetime of the NQF
 - an opportunity exists to interrogate the increasing pool of quality rating reassessments and analyse the available data by characteristics such as service type, provider management type and socio-geographic status.

7. Collaborative approach to research and evaluation under the NQF

Recognising that the NQF evaluation framework is a jointly agreed and shared framework, we will strive to find new and innovative ways to collaborate with our Australian, state and territory government partners, and key stakeholders.

Universities, research institutions, government organisations and departments, and other stakeholders can contribute to the NQF evidence base by commissioning and undertaking research in line with the NQF evaluation framework. We will promote a collaborative approach and encourage complementary research by publicising the framework and engaging with the range of interested parties.

We are aware of several research and evaluation projects being undertaken across Australia that will contribute to the NQF evidence base. Examples of these projects include:

- a New South Wales randomised control trial taking place during 2017 that will examine how specific early childhood teaching practices can have a measurable impact on improving children's outcomes
- a Queensland study between 2015-2017 examining optimum sleep practices for children in early childhood education and care settings, including assessing the longer term impact of sleep patterns on children's learning, behaviour and health
- a Tasmania study between 2016-2019 aiming to provide a system wide view of how early childhood policies and services impact children's health and education outcomes.

Working with all governments, we will continue to compile and stay abreast of current and proposed research to help identify gaps and synergies. Having a collaborative approach to prioritising and commissioning future research will enable all governments and ACECQA to progressively answer the key evaluation questions and sub questions that underpin the NQF evaluation framework.

8. ACECQA's research and evaluation implementation plan

We will ensure that our research and evaluation activities are aligned to one or more of the objectives of the NQF, and contribute evidence towards answering the key evaluation questions and sub questions that underpin the evaluation framework.

We are committed to being open, transparent and responsive. The remainder of this document provides a summary of our past, present and future research and evaluation activities. These are not an exhaustive list, rather highlights of activities that link to one or more of the objectives of the NQF. The activities will be added to over time, based on an increased understanding of the priority areas for research and evaluation, and building upon the evidence from current and emerging research.

In 2017 and 2018, we are also required to produce an annual performance report which includes an assessment against the objectives and outcomes of the National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda (NP NQA) for Early Childhood Education and Care. The initial report will be provided to Education Ministers in December 2017 and the subsequent report in December 2018. Both reports will also be published on our website, following endorsement by the Education Council.

Our NQF performance report will be structured against the following NP NQA objectives and outcomes:

- 'Ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services'
- 'Children attending education and care services are engaged in and benefiting from educational opportunities, and have the knowledge and skills for life and learning, including by promoting greater school readiness' and 'Improve educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services'
- 'Improve public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services for parents, carers and the general public to help inform their choices about the quality of education and care provided to their children'
- 'Children benefit from better social inclusion and reduced disadvantage by providing greater access to quality education and care experiences, which have been demonstrated to have particular benefits for children from disadvantaged backgrounds'
- 'Improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the regulation of education and care services'
- 'Reduce regulatory burden for education and care service providers'
- 'Build a highly skilled workforce'
- 'Foster a joint system of governance to allow the perspectives of all jurisdictions to be taken into account in the operation of the NQF where there is shared responsibility for the regulation of education and care services'.

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
<p>To ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">National audit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Serious incidents (child missing or unaccounted for):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit analysed serious incidents occurring between June 2014 and March 2015 where a child appeared to be missing from a service or unaccounted for ○ the audit identified several actions to improve the quality of serious incidents data. • <i>Significant improvement required rating:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit analysed services which had received an overall quality rating of 'Significant improvement required' on or before 31 October 2015 ○ the audit identified the standards most likely to trigger an overall quality rating of 'Significant improvement required', as well as the outcomes following the rating being given to a service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Serious incidents (injury, trauma or illness):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit will analyse serious incidents that result in injury, trauma or illness between January and September 2017 ○ the audit relates to the following sub questions of the NQF evaluation framework: <p>'To what extent does the NQF support and improve children's safety, health and wellbeing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the health and safety profile of NQF services as measured by incidents relating to children's safety, health and wellbeing? - Are there differences across service types (e.g. according to different service characteristics such as service sub-type, jurisdiction, provider management type, ARIA+ and SEIFA classification)? - What actions are regulatory authorities taking to manage incidents? - To what extent are regulatory interventions improving the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services? What types of interventions are more effective?' • <i>Investigations and enforcement actions:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit will analyse investigations and enforcement actions undertaken by state and territory regulatory authorities between July 2017 and June 2018

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the audit relates to the following sub questions of the NQF evaluation framework: 'To what extent does the NQF support and improve children's safety, health and wellbeing?' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the health and safety profile of NQF services as measured by monitoring, compliance and enforcement action? - Are there differences across service types (e.g. according to different service characteristics such as service sub-type, jurisdiction, provider management type, ARIA+ and SEIFA classification)? - What actions are regulatory authorities taking to manage incidents / complaints / non compliance? - To what extent are regulatory interventions improving the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services? What types of interventions are more effective?'
	<p style="text-align: center;">Occasional papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Children's health and safety (Quality Area 2 of the NQS):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this occasional paper analysed performance against Quality Area 2 across service types, socio economic and remoteness classifications, jurisdictions and management types ○ the paper highlighted Standard 2.3 (each child is protected) and Element 2.3.3 (effective incident and emergency planning and management) of the 2012 NQS as the most challenging aspects of Quality Area 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will publish two occasional papers per year between 2018-2021. At least one of these papers will relate to this NQF objective.

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the paper also found that services in remote and very remote areas may benefit from more support to understand and comply with the requirements of Quality Area 2. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Research projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will undertake a discrete research project against this NQF objective in 2019.
<p>To improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">National audit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will undertake three national audits per year between 2018-2021. At least two of these will relate to this NQF objective. The topics and scopes of these audits will be determined in consultation with states and territories through the NQF Regulatory Practice Committee. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Occasional papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Educational program and practice (Quality Area 1 of the NQS):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this occasional paper analysed performance against Quality Area 1 across service types, socio economic and remoteness classifications, jurisdictions and management types ○ the paper highlighted Standard 1.2 (focused, active and reflective educators and co-ordinators), and Element 1.2.1 (ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation) and Element 1.2.3 (critical reflection) of the 2012 NQS as the most challenging aspects of Quality Area 1. ● <i>Leadership and service management (Quality Area 7 of the NQS):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this occasional paper will analyse performance against Quality Area 7 across service types, socio economic and remoteness classifications, jurisdictions and management types. The paper will use quality ratings data as at 1 July 2017.

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Physical environment (Quality Area 3 of the NQS):</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this occasional paper analysed performance against Quality Area 3 across service types, socio economic and remoteness classifications, jurisdictions and management types ○ the paper highlighted Standard 3.3 (sustainable practices and environmental responsibility) and Element 3.3.1 (sustainable practices) of the 2012 NQS as the most challenging aspects of Quality Area 3. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Research projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake a discrete research project against this NQF objective in 2019 and 2022. The project will draw upon a number of data sources, including quality ratings, National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection, Australian Early Development Census and National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy, to examine the ongoing effect of high quality early childhood education and care as children progress through formal schooling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this research relates to the following key question of the NQF evaluation framework: ‘To what extent have children, families and the wider community benefited from the NQF? For example, for children attending services Meeting the NQS or higher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are fewer children experiencing developmental vulnerability? - Is transition to school improved for preschool age children?

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What impact does frequency and duration of attendance have on outcomes? - How do outcomes compare to those children who did not attend ECEC/OSHC?'
<p>To promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services</p>		<p>National audit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quality rating reassessments:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit will analyse all quality rating reassessments as at 1 April 2017 to examine where there has been improvement or decline in service quality ○ the audit relates to the following sub questions of the NQF evaluation framework: <p>'To what extent has the NQF contributed to continuous improvement over time for services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How has the quality profile of services changed over the lifetime of the NQS? - To what extent have service ratings improved at reassessment? - Is the rate of improvement the same for all services? What are the characteristics of services who have improved the most / least (e.g. service type, provider management type, jurisdiction, historical factors)'

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
		<p style="text-align: center;">Occasional papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quality improvement:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this occasional paper will analyse quality rating reassessments across service types, socio economic and remoteness classifications, jurisdictions and management types. The paper will use ratings data as at 1 October 2017. <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">Research projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have undertaken extensive analysis of quality ratings data which is shared with all governments, as well as published as part of our quarterly NQF Snapshot. • We will undertake a discrete research project against this NQF objective in 2018.
<p>To improve efficiency in the regulation of education and care services, including the reduction of regulatory burden</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">National audit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conditions on approvals:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this was our inaugural national audit and analysed conditions on approvals data as at 1 January 2013 ○ the audit identified several actions to improve the quality of conditions on approvals data, as well as additional guidance around the use of conditions. • <i>Waivers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit analysed waivers data as at 1 April 2013 ○ the audit identified several actions to improve the quality of waivers data, as well as additional guidance around the assessment of waiver applications. 	<p style="text-align: center;">National audit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conditions on approvals:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit will analyse conditions on approvals data as at 1 January 2018 ○ the audit relates to the following key question of the NQF evaluation framework: ‘To what extent has the NQF provided an integrated and unified national system with consistency of approach and interpretation of the National Law?’ • <i>Waivers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit will analyse waivers data as at 1 April 2018

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use of the Operational Policy Manual:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit, undertaken in early 2015, examined the extent to which state and territory regulatory authority staff access the Operational Policy Manual and how useful they find it. It also examined the use and value placed on it by providers of education and care services ○ the audit found that the Operational Policy Manual was viewed as a valuable resource by both regulatory authority staff and service providers, and has subsequently led to the Guide to the NQF being combined with the Operational Policy Manual to produce a streamlined, single reference document for both regulatory authority staff and service providers. The new reference document will be published prior to 1 October 2017. • <i>Scheduling and undertaking quality assessment and rating:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit analysed a sample of assessment and rating records in the NQA ITS to compare the time state and territory regulatory authorities typically spent on stages of the quality assessment and rating process for the period between 1 July 2013 and 30 June 2016 ○ the audit found that the overall assessment and rating process took notably fewer working days in 2015-16 than in 2013-14, as measured by elapsed days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the audit relates to the following sub questions of the NQF evaluation framework: 'To what extent is regulatory burden being reduced for providers under the NQF?' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent has the national system improved the consistency of regulation from the provider perspective? - To what extent have refinements, such as legislative changes, reduced the costs of complying with the NQF over time'

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
	<p style="text-align: center;">Occasional papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Promoting consistency and efficiency under the NQF:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this occasional paper examined activities to promote efficiency and consistency of outcomes in the implementation and administration of the NQF ○ striving for efficiency and consistency is a collaborative effort between the eight state and territory regulatory authorities, the Australian Government and ACECQA ○ the paper highlights the breadth and depth of collaboration to identify, implement and review approaches to promote consistency and efficiency, and includes case studies to illustrate how certain activities positively contribute. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Occasional papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will publish two occasional papers per year between 2018-2021. At least one of these papers will relate to this NQF objective.
	<p style="text-align: center;">Research projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regulatory burden:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this project comprised a three wave longitudinal study to measure change over time in the perception of regulatory burden among providers of education and care services ○ the same providers were surveyed in 2013, 2014 and 2015 ○ the project revealed a statistically significant reduction in the perception of overall burden between 2013 and 2015. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Research projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regulatory burden:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ we will undertake further research into the perception of regulatory burden among providers of education and care services in 2017, 2018 and 2020 ○ the research relates to the following sub questions of the NQF evaluation framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ‘To what extent is regulatory burden being reduced for providers?’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent has the national system improved the consistency of regulation from the provider perspective? - To what extent have refinements, such as legislative changes, reduced the costs of complying with the NQF over time?’

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
<p>To improve public knowledge and access to information about the quality of education and care services</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">National audit reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Determining rating levels:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit, undertaken in mid 2014, examined how state and territory authorised officers determine quality ratings at the standard level ○ the audit identified the standards that authorised officers find most challenging to rate and focused on six standards that displayed the greatest degree of variation across states and territories ○ the audit identified several actions to improve how regulatory authorities and ACECQA monitor and guide consistency in rating decisions. • <i>Individual standard and element analysis:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this audit, undertaken in mid 2016, analysed a sample of more than 130 quality assessment and rating reports ○ the audit found that the written quality of assessment and rating reports was markedly better than the sample of reports that had been examined in the previous 'Determining rating levels' audit ○ the audit identified a number of actions to enhance existing guidance and training for authorised officers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake three national audits per year between 2018-2021. At least two of these will relate to this NQF objective. The topics and scopes of these audits will be determined in consultation with states and territories through the NQF Regulatory Practice Committee.

NQF objective	ACECQA's activities (2012-17)	ACECQA's activities (2017-21)
	<p style="text-align: center;">Occasional papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will publish two occasional papers per year between 2018-2021. At least one of these papers will relate to this NQF objective. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Research projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Families research:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in 2014, we commissioned a pilot study to gauge families' awareness and understanding of the NQF and quality ratings ○ the research found that there was limited awareness of the NQF and provided advice on engaging with families.