



# Getting the best out of the toolkit

A user guide to the commissioning toolkit

# Commissioning Toolkit of Parenting Programmes User Guide

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## 1. What is the Commissioning Toolkit?

The Commissioning Toolkit is a searchable online database of parenting programmes and approaches<sup>1</sup> available in England. It is aimed at commissioners and provides detailed information about each programme's

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<sup>1</sup> As not all parenting interventions are fully worked-up programmes, we also use the term 'approach' (see glossary). Throughout this guide, the term 'programmes' should be understood to include both programmes and approaches.

aims, content, target groups and training requirements. Most importantly, it also provides information about their quality and effectiveness, enabling commissioners to make informed choices about how suitable a programme is for meeting the needs of specific groups of parents.

## **2. How do I access the Commissioning Toolkit and find programmes?**

There is a direct link to the Commissioning Toolkit at [www.commissioningtoolkit.org](http://www.commissioningtoolkit.org). It can also be accessed via the CWDC website [www.cwdcouncil.org.uk](http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk). In order to view all the Commissioning Toolkit content, users must first register for an account – this is free and only takes a few minutes. To find a programme you can:

- View all programmes – this displays all the entries in the database in alphabetical order by title.
- Search for programmes in a specific category by checking boxes in the category list.
- Enter a relevant word, phrase or programme title in the search box.

## **3. Why has the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) developed the Commissioning Toolkit?**

Work with stakeholders and, in particular, commissioners of parenting programmes identified a demand for clear and objective advice. Not only do parents have the right to expect high-quality interventions that have been demonstrated to work, but commissioners must be able to justify why they are spending money on one programme and not another.

Not all parenting programmes are effective. While some are high quality and have high quality evidence to positive outcomes, others are poor and have few positive outcomes or, in some cases, harmful outcomes. On behalf of the DCSF, The National Academy for Parenting Research (NAPR) has developed an evaluation tool to enable commissioners to have clear and objective information to enable them to invest in effective parenting programmes. The Commissioning Toolkit presents commissioners with detailed descriptions of parenting programmes and ratings to help inform their decisions.

## **4. How comprehensive is it?**

The Commissioning Toolkit lists parenting programmes put forward by programme developers using information supplied by the developers themselves. It does not contain every programme currently in use in England

but we hope that the database will eventually contain more than 200 national and international programmes.

## **5. What makes a good quality evidence based parenting programme?**

Some programmes have the potential for excellence but do not yet have sufficient evidence of effectiveness. The highest quality parenting programmes contain several key elements:

- They are specifically designed and delivered as parenting programmes. They must include specific interventions to improve the parent-child relationship with detailed strategies to deal with common problems. This does not include other general programmes (e.g. life coaching or couples counselling) that may have a minor element of parenting or the child-parent or the child-parent relationship in them.
- Targeted populations and explicit recruitment processes. Good programmes clearly specify their target population and include explicit processes to ensure that appropriate families (as determined by their level of need or risk) can be recruited into and participate in the programme.
- Explicit content based on sound theory. What parents learn and how information is delivered to parents needs to be based on explicit and sound theoretical frameworks that have evidence for being effective when working with the targeted population.
- Best practice in training, supervision and fidelity of programme. The developers need to carefully consider and specify their training, supervision and implementation procedures so that their programme can be replicated and delivered in new and independent settings.
- A robust evidence base. Developers need to ensure that they have collected and analysed data to show that participation in the programme results in positive, substantial and long-lasting improvement on targeted outcomes for parents and their children.

## **6. How are programmes evaluated?**

After an intensive review of the international literature, NAPR has developed a measure using objective criteria for evaluating the quality of parenting programmes. This is the Parenting Programme Evaluation Tool (PPET).

The evaluation tool allows NAPR to evaluate programmes against best practice standards demonstrated by well-known international programmes that have proven positive outcomes.

The evaluation tool provides a rating for each of the following four elements using a scale of quality ratings ranging from 4 to 0.

**4 = all criteria are met (Demonstrates best practice)**

**3 = most criteria are met**

**2 = some criteria are met**

**1 = a few criteria are met**

**0 = no criteria are met**

The four elements that programme are evaluated against are:

**Element 1: Targeted populations and explicit recruitment processes.**

This element looks at how specific the target population is and how the programme matches their needs.

- Who is the programme designed for?
- What levels of need are addressed?
- What outcomes are expected?

**Element 2: Explicit content based on sound theory.**

This element considers the quality of the programme content and the process in place to make sure it is delivered well.

- What is the underpinning theory?
- How does the programme content reflect this?
- How is the programme delivered?

**Element 3: Best practice in training, supervision and adherence to the programme.**

This looks at the quality of implementation and what processes are in place to make sure that the programme is delivered consistently and correctly.

- How do you train, support and supervise people to deliver the programme?
- How do you ensure consistency and fidelity in the programme delivery?

**Element 4: A robust evidence base.**

This element looks at what processes are in place to gather evidence to make sure that the programme is delivering what it claims to do.

- What is the likely effect of the programme/approach on the targeted outcome?
- Is there any evidence for the effectiveness of the programme and what is the quality of that evidence?

## **7. Inclusion on the Commissioning Toolkit – a two stage process.**

Programmes are added onto the Commissioning Toolkit in two stages. The first stage is when the developer provides information on their programme and self rates the programme against the four elements above. The second stage is when the programme is formally evaluated by the evaluation team using the PPET. The Commissioning Toolkit shows whether a programme is currently self-rated or NAPR-rated.

Once the programme has been through the evaluation process, the self-rating is replaced by the NAPR rating. In submitting a programme to the Commissioning Toolkit for evaluation, the developer accepts that the ratings are final and that they may differ from their own self ratings.

The order in which programmes are NAPR rated is determined by their relevance to government-set priority groups and parents and the date the programme was submitted.

## **8. How do programme developers submit a programme for inclusion on the Commissioning Toolkit?**

Programme developers who want their programme to be included on the Commissioning Toolkit should complete a programme submission form describing their programme in detail and a self-evaluation of their programme. Where a developer is submitting multiple programmes, a separate form has to be completed for each individual programme.

The PPET also gives guidance to programme developers on what constitutes an effective, good quality programme. This enables them to think about how they might increase the quality of existing programmes.

## **9. What happens during the evaluation process?**

Once the programme submission is received and checked by the evaluation team, the programme will be published on the Commissioning Toolkit with the developer's self ratings.

Before the programme is evaluated, the evaluation team will contact the developer and ask them to provide all supporting materials, including manuals and handbooks. The team may also recommend changes to the submission form to more accurately represent the programme on the Commissioning Toolkit if necessary.

Two evaluators independently consider the materials and evidence provided to assess and rate the programme. They are blind to the developer's self-rating and do not confer when carrying out their evaluation. The two evaluators' ratings are then submitted to and deliberated by an evaluation panel. The evaluation panel then reaches a consensus on the ratings of the programme without knowing the developer's self ratings. The evaluation panel's rating is final.

Programme developers are provided with the final ratings and feedback and these ratings are published on the Commissioning Toolkit.

## **10. How often are the quality ratings reviewed?**

Once programmes have been rated, the evaluation team will aim to review each programme 12 months after the ratings are published on the Commissioning Toolkit. Early reviews will be considered at the discretion of the evaluation panel in exceptional circumstances. Reviews will not be considered until a minimum of three months after publication of the ratings on the Commissioning Toolkit.

Developers of self-rated programmes awaiting Academy evaluation can request to change their self-evaluation to take account of relevant new information. This might be, for example, where a developer has just completed an evaluation demonstrating positive change in child outcomes.

## **11. Is inclusion in the Commissioning Toolkit an endorsement of a programme?**

No. Inclusion of a programme on the Commissioning Toolkit is not an endorsement, recommendation, validation or accreditation/seal of approval. The ratings only serve as a guide to commissioners and developers about the quality of each programme.

Developers need to be aware that they are being evaluated against the best developed and most effective parenting programmes that are sometimes delivered internationally so that highest scores reflect absolute best practice in the field. When submitting their programmes, developers must ensure that they have provided specific and detailed evidence for each of the four elements and importantly, that the programme is a specific parenting programme.

Commissioners should determine whether programmes they are considering commissioning meet their needs, are appropriate for the target population and

are suitable for the skills, experience, expertise and training of their local parenting workforce.

## **12. How do I find out more about a particular programme?**

Contact details for developers are included on the Commissioning Toolkit so commissioners can obtain further information directly from them. Many of the programmes listed have their own websites, some of which provide examples of programme materials for parents and training opportunities for practitioners.

Here are some questions that a commissioner may wish to ask a developer:

- What training and support is available in my geographical area?
- Where is the programme currently being used?
- Does the developer have new information not yet presented on the Commissioning Toolkit (e.g. evaluations currently underway)?
- How might the programme meet my specific needs?
- What is the developer's capacity (and timescales) for delivery?

Parenting UK has a selection of parenting programme materials available for view at its Parenting Practitioner Reference Library in London, which will continue to be expanded. Contact Parenting UK for details – [www.parentinguk.org](http://www.parentinguk.org)

## **13. Further information and resources**

For further information on the Commissioning Toolkit, please email [toolkit@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:toolkit@kcl.ac.uk)

Feedback on the Commissioning Toolkit can be emailed to [parentsandfamilies@cwdcouncil.org.uk](mailto:parentsandfamilies@cwdcouncil.org.uk)

Usage of the Commissioning Toolkit is subject to our Terms and Conditions.

Please read these before registering for a user account.

## 14. Purpose of the Commissioning Toolkit

The *Commissioning Toolkit of Parenting Programmes* is a database of national and international parenting programmes and approaches<sup>2</sup> available in England.

It aimed at commissioners and provides detailed information about each programme's aims, content, target groups and training requirements. Most importantly, it also provides information about their quality and effectiveness, enabling commissioners to make informed choices about how suitable a programme is for meeting the needs of specific groups of parents.

Each programme is evaluated using a quality rating scale, the Parenting Programme Evaluation Tool (PPET). This quality rating scale is based on international standards of best practice.

If programme providers wish to be included in the Commissioning Toolkit and evaluated, they need to agree to the terms and conditions and complete the online Submission Form. This form asks for details of the programme and initially includes the developer's own self-rating of their programme quality based on the evaluation tool (PPET). Developers are asked to rate the quality of their programme on each of the following four elements:

- Target population and expected outcomes
- Programme content, theoretical framework, and delivery processes
- Implementation processes (e.g. staff training and support and adherence to the programme)
- Quality of the evidence of effectiveness

There is no charge for being included on the Commissioning Toolkit. The Toolkit is aimed primarily at parenting programme commissioners so the advantage of being included is that commissioners searching for high quality programmes can see the full range of programmes on offer and can decide which meet their specific needs best.

The evaluation team also aims to support programme developers to improve the quality of programmes by taking an evidence-based approach. This is done mainly through workshops, guidance notes for programme developers and feedback when the programme is evaluated by the PPET evaluation team. Unfortunately due to limited resources we are unable to provide individual assistance to programme developers.

In submitting programme details for inclusion in the Toolkit, programme developers agree to the evaluation team independently evaluating the programme or approach and acceptance of the ratings. Developers should

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note that Evaluation Panel ratings of the quality of their programme may differ from self-ratings *and may, in fact, be lower*.

## **15. The Evaluation Process**

### **Stage 1: Submission**

Developers submit a programme to the Commissioning Toolkit using an online Programme Submission form. This is checked by the evaluation team before the programme details and self-ratings are published on the Toolkit.

### **Stage 2: Evaluation**

All programmes are then independently evaluated by evaluation team. The evaluation team will inform programme developers when their programme is going to be evaluated and further information is requested at this point. The evaluation is based on the developer's submission form, which needs to be supported by additional evidence in programme materials, resources and supporting documentation provided. Developers need to make sure that they provide all relevant information at this point as the evaluation team cannot accept additional information after this stage.

The evaluation team will communicate with developers to clarify points or request further information to enable them to carry out the evaluation. Developers need to be aware that evaluations are based on the evidence submitted and are rated strictly against the 4 criteria specified in the PPET.

Evaluations are conducted independently by at least two evaluators who are blind to the developer's self-rating and each other's initial ratings. The two evaluators' ratings are then submitted to an Evaluation Panel. The Panel ensures consistency of approach between the evaluators, challenges evaluators when ratings differ, ensures that evidence exists to support claims and ensures a consistent standard across all programmes. The final rating and feedback to the developer is decided by the Panel.

Developers are informed of the Evaluation Panel's final ratings and given brief feedback on the reason for the ratings. The final ratings will then be published on the Commissioning Toolkit.

Developers should be clear that in submitting their programme for inclusion in the Commissioning Toolkit, they agree to the evaluation team independently evaluating the programme and accept the ratings. Developers should note that Evaluation Panel ratings may differ from self-ratings and may, in fact, be lower. Developers will be informed of the Evaluation team's rating prior to its publication on the Toolkit and only have a right of appeal if they believe the evaluation process has not been followed properly. When the Evaluation

Panel's ratings are published on the Toolkit, they **will replace developers' self-ratings**.

### **Stage 3: Review**

Once programmes have been rated, the evaluation team will aim to review each programme 12 months after the ratings are published on the Toolkit. Early reviews will be considered at the discretion of the Evaluation Panel in exceptional circumstances. Reviews will not be considered until a minimum of 3 months after the publication of the ratings on the Commissioning Toolkit.

## **16. Terms and Conditions**

1. In submitting programme details for inclusion in the Toolkit, programme developers agree to the evaluation team independently evaluating the programme or approach and acceptance of the ratings. Developers should note that Evaluation Panel ratings of the quality of their programme may differ from self-ratings **and may, in fact, be lower**.
2. Information supplied by developers about programmes/approaches will be stored according to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. It will be published electronically and available to the public on the Commissioning Toolkit of Parenting Programmes database but will not be passed to any third party without their consent.
3. The information supplied via the Programme Submission Form will be used for the purpose stated on the Commissioning Toolkit and the User Guide and any information you provide in emails to us relating to your submission will be used for the explicit purpose for which it was supplied/requested.
4. We will not collect any information about individual users except that requested on the form as part of the registration process and for any necessary administration of the system. Information will not be used in any way which enables individual users to be identified other than for the purposes stated.
5. When a programme has been submitted to the Commissioning Toolkit, we assume that it is an original programme and that the developers have cleared copyright and dealt with any intellectual property issues for any components that were designed by another person or organisation.
6. Once a programme has been rated, no further materials, resources or evidence can be requested or accepted by the evaluation team.

7. Once submitted to the Commissioning Toolkit, a completed submission becomes **read-only** and can only be amended by the evaluation team.
8. Programmes may **not be removed** from the database but may be archived at the request of the developer, **if** the programme or approach is no longer available and in use in England or at the discretion for the Evaluation team if the programme does not meet the definition of a 'parenting programmes' full details of archived programmes will not be available for public view but the reason for archiving and a brief description of the programme.
9. We reserve the right to amend and/or edit any information submitted in the free text fields in regard to details to be published in the Commissioning Toolkit.
10. Early annual reviews will be considered at the discretion of Evaluation Panel in exceptional circumstances. Reviews will not be considered until a minimum of 3 months after the publication of the ratings on the Commissioning Toolkit. Once a programme has been through an early annual review, it cannot be reviewed again for 12 months.
11. Relevant parenting programme resources and materials provided by the programme developers and stored by the evaluation team during the evaluation process will be returned to developers following completion of the evaluation unless otherwise agreed by the developers.
12. Data submitted to the Commissioning Toolkit may be used by the evaluation team for audit and evaluation purposes. Descriptive statistics involving programme ratings may also be used for further development of the Commissioning Toolkit.
13. Limitation of liability – we will under no circumstance be liable for indirect, special or consequential damages including any loss of business, revenue, profits or data in relation to submission of information for the Toolkit.
14. We reserve the right to revise these terms and conditions if necessary.

***In submitting a programme to the Commissioning Toolkit, you confirm that you have read and understand the information above and agree to the terms and conditions stated.***

The Children's Workforce Development Council leads change so that the thousands of people and volunteers working with children and young people across England are able to do the best job they possibly can.

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