

Every Child Matters

Investing in Children Audit Tool

Introduction

Have you ever felt a sense of unfairness and inequality in the way you are being treated within a service? For example, have you ever been told you can't enter your local leisure centre after 6pm if you're under the age of 16!

With the help of this audit tool you can start to assess the quality of services in which we use, and compare it to other services and groups of people in society (for example, how are you treated by a service provider compared to adults).

This audit tool is designed for children and young people who wish to look at a service of their choice, be it, their school; local youth centre; leisure centre; health service; transport system, any service used by children and young people where they live. This can then be compared to another service, e.g. another school or simply to another group of people who also use the service, e.g. adults.

We developed this audit tool after carrying out research into what the Every Child Matters outcomes mean to children and young people. Through this research we began to realise that there is a big difference between what adults expect and receive from a service, to what children and young people get from a service. It became clear that the rights and needs of children and young people are being ignored by service providers that, as a society, we all have the right to use!

So what is the audit tool?

The audit tool is a way of measuring how children and young people are treated within services they use and comparing that to how adults are treated. For example, why do some leisure centres kick out young people under the age of sixteen after 6pm when adults can use the leisure centre whenever they desire?

Why should we do this?

Once you have completed the audit of a service, the audit tool will then provide evidence that children and young people can then use to make powerful arguments for change, i.e. The fact that the leisure centre has a sign that says children and young people under the age of sixteen are not allowed to use their local leisure centre after 6pm is a way of discriminating against young people, therefore this should be seen as unlawful, as it would be if the sign read, 'no disabled people after 6pm.'

The tool should also provide a challenge to adults, whom in the past have ignored what children and young people have to say, to explain their actions (why they do what they do)

How does it work?

Children and young people collect information on how they are treated in a certain situation, or by particular group of people (for example, how they are treated when they go to their local leisure centre).

They can then collect information on how adults in the same leisure centre (are example, are they discriminated against because of their age, are they allowed to use the leisure centre after 6pm, etc)

The two sets of information can then be compared to find out if children and young people are being treated in an equivalent way to adults. The result can then answer the question, 'Are the rights and needs of children and young people treat equally to the rights and needs of adults?')

What happens next?

If the evidence you have gathered shows that children and young people are being treated unjustly, you can then use that information to argue for change.

Who will listen to this?

It is up to each group of children and young people or individuals using the audit tool to decide present their evidence to (for example, this might be a particular issue in school in which the head teacher could put right).

The Every Child Matters County Group who represent all of the public services used by children and young people have argued that this is a good way making things better.

However, this could be an issue that children and young people believe should be looked at by the director of a bus company like Go Northern.

How do we get started?

Here is some example of how children and young people have used the Audit Tool. However, once you have decided which service it is you want to audit, it is up to you to decide how you are going to carry it out. You may come up with a different and more effective way of carrying out the audit, it's up to you!

If you need support with the Audit Tool, you can contact; Investing in Children via post, phone or email, details are as follows,

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Audit Tool
Example 1

School Toilets

If you decided you wanted to audit you schools toilets you could gather a set of questions to form a questionnaire,

	Students Toilets	Staff Toilets
How many working toilets do you have per student/staff?		
How many toilets have working doors and locks?		
How often is the toilet paper refilled?		
How many of the girl's toilets have sanitary bins?		
How often is the hand towels/soap refilled?		
How often are the toilets cleaned?		
When are students/staff allowed to use the toilets?		
Is the main door to the toilets locked?		
Do you need special permission to use the toilets, for example, do you have to sign a book at reception or get a key to unlock them?		

You can, firstly, answer these questions for yourself then decide to either ask a member of staff to carry out the survey or simply get them to answer the questions if they know the answers. You might want to ask another member of staff to compare their answers.

Example 2

Leisure Centre (mystery Shopper)

This can simple be done by you using the service as you normally would, for example, going to the gym or going swimming. It does not need to be carried out in a form of a questionnaire as this could make the staff suspicious, instead you can simply observe staff, pick up information leaflets and timetables for the activities available and the costs to participate in them. This can be done both by yourself or with a group of friends.

Before you start you may want to have a good idea of what you are looking for!

For example, thinking about what you as a young person expects from a service,

- Are you made to feel welcome (attitude of leisure centre staff),
- Are you treated with respect or do you feel like you are being discriminated against,
- Are there rules that apply to you and not to other people i.e. no one under the age of sixteen after 6pm,
- The cost to use the leisure centres,
- Access to and from the leisure centre,
- Do you know how to make a complaint (in case you even did),