



Every Child Matters

Investing in Children Audit Tool

Introduction

Many children and young people feel a sense of unfairness and inequality in the way you are been treated by public services. With the help of this audit tool you can start to assess the quality of services you use, and compare it to the quality of services received by others (for example, how you are treated, compared to how adults are treated). This audit tool is designed for children and young people themselves, who wish to look at a service of their choice, for example, school, youth centre, health service, transport system – indeed any service used by children and young people where they live.

We developed this audit tool after carrying out research into what the Every Child Matters outcomes mean to children and young people in County Durham. Through this research we began to realise that there is a significant difference between what adults expect and receive from a service, and what children and young people get from a service.

The audit tool is a way of assessing the situation, and where there is evidence of unfair treatment, making a strong case for change.

So what is the audit tool?

The audit tool is a way of measuring how children and young people are treated by services they use and comparing that to how adults are treated.

- Information is collected about what is provided for children and young people;
- Information is collected about what is provided for adults, in similar situation;
- The two sets of information are compared.

Why should we do this?

By conducting an audit of services, evidence will be gathered that children and young people may be able to use to make powerful arguments for change.

The tool should also provide a challenge to adults, (who, in the past have often ignored what children and young people have to say), to explain their actions.

How does it work?

- Children and young people collect information on how they are treated in a certain situation, or by particular groups 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 a similar situation are treated (for example, how are adults treated when they go to the same leisure centre).
- 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.

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 who to present their evidence to (for example, this might be a particular issue in school which the head teacher could put right).

The County Durham Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership which represent all of the public services used by children and young people have agreed that this is a good way of making things better, and they have agreed to look at evidence produced in this way. (However, there will be issues that children and young people believe should be looked at by others outside of public services, e.g. bus companies).

How do we get started?

Here is an 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 what information you want to gather, and what you want to compare this with.

Audit Tool - Example 1

School Toilets

If you decided you wanted to audit the quality of toilets in a school, you could gather the following information.

	Students Toilets	Staff Toilets
How many working toilets 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?		

If your audit shows that young people are expected to use the toilet facilities which would be unacceptable to adults, this can be used as an argument for change.

If you need help

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

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