

Practice Guide

Education & Inclusion – Children and young people's voice
Young Inspectors, Blackburn with Darwen

Background, purpose and rationale

At the heart of our development was a desire to enable young people to have a voice and focus on giving young people the opportunity to inspect services they use and give critical and constructive feedback to services, projects, funders, organisations, or bodies that provide services to young people in the borough.

The Young Inspectors programme in Blackburn with Darwen has been developed from national guidance, to better serve our local needs.

What we did to improve children's experiences and outcomes

Young Inspectors contribute positively to improving key local services- thereby directly improving outcomes and experiences. The Blackburn with Darwen Young Inspectors Framework was co-produced with young people – with senior management support and guidance including to develop scoring matrices.

We ensure the approach is adaptive including making provision for additional resources that are required due to the nature of the service that is being inspected. This can include IT resource for accessing information online; rooms for in-person interviews with service users, front line staff, managers and even Chief Executives; as well as transport to and from venues. Young people also need support to capture information, plan and conduct interviews, along with shaping their final report.

The Young Inspectors project equips young people with the skills and knowledge to be able to inspect services that they and their peers access. It empowers them with the ability to inspect and provide feedback on where they think a service can be improved or where they have been doing well. Inspecting key areas such as involvement of young people, quality of provision, accessibility and many more crucial areas.

Young Inspectors can be complementary to other quality assurance mechanisms such as Investors in Children – or can indeed replace them, once the programme is more established.

What was the impact?

Young people develop transferable skills and organisations and services can deliver better and more effective outcomes for children and young people.

The experience for young people has been overwhelmingly positive – with feedback around improved confidence, knowledge of local services, report writing, and critical thinking skills. Service. It ensures other young people can feel confident in a service they access having the stamp of approval from their peers.

Services and organisations that undergo Youth Inspections also tell us how positive the whole process has been – though undoubtedly challenging! The assessment framework challenges providers to consider all aspects of their operational delivery to help identify changes and improvements they implemented as a result of the inspection. All services report back that their service has made significant improvements to their offer as a result.

Resources

Find out more

Liz Clarkson

Participation and Inclusion Manager

E: Elizabeth.clarkson@blackburn.gov.uk

<https://www.bwd-yps.co.uk/young-inspectors.html>