

User engagement

Accounts Commission
November 2022

- Long history of engaging with users as part of the fieldwork for audits
 - Direct engagement as part of performance audits and BVARs through surveys, focus groups, interviews – conducted by the audit team or contracted out
 - Engagement with groups who work with service users – through advisory groups, interviews and focus groups
- More recent engagement at planning and prioritising stages
 - Equalities and Human Rights Advisory Group
 - Youth panel
 - Community Empowerment Advisory Group
 - Ongoing engagement with third sector organisations
- Recent example of user participation - Peer co-facilitation of focus groups with young people by members of the youth panel

Improving outcomes for young people through school education



ACCOUNTS COMMISSION ✓ AUDITOR GENERAL ✓

Presented to the Auditor General by the Accounts Commission

Self-directed support 2017 progress report



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Early learning and childcare



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Cardiology services



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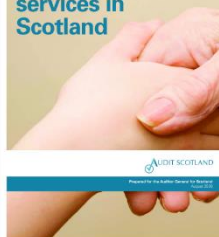
Transport for health and social care



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Review of palliative care services in Scotland



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Social work in Scotland



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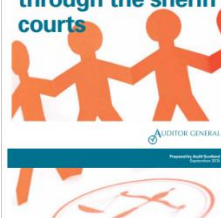
Managing long-term conditions



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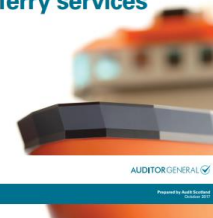
Efficiency of prosecuting criminal cases through the sheriff courts



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Transport Scotland's ferry services



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Emergency departments



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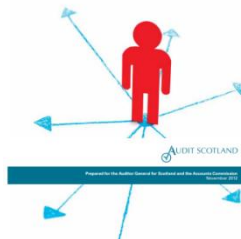
Primary care out-of-hours services



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Reducing reoffending in Scotland



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Overview of mental health services



AUDITOR GENERAL

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Managing NHS waiting lists

A review of new arrangements



AUDITOR GENERAL

Presented to the Auditor General by the Accounts Commission

- It takes a long time and a lot of work and resources to do this well – should start from the scoping stage of an audit and go through to publication
- Can add significant value to our audits
- Not appropriate for all audit work
- Different approaches are needed for different service users
- Third sector organisations can provide good access but with no formal contract this presents risks
- Need to prioritise where, when and how we engage with service users so that it has most value and impact
- We need a clear strategy for our user engagement work, with clear links to our broader citizen engagement. Need to consider how wide and how ambitious we want this to be.

- Planning for the significant time required
- Ensuring we have access to the skills required
- Balance between in-house work and commissioned
- How to prioritise audits where this would bring most value
- Engagement needs to be meaningful and used appropriately
- How to engage with people who aren't using services
- Clarity on how this evidence will be used as part of the range of evidence collected
- People who engage with us need to benefit from it
- Consideration of if, and how, we compensate participants and third sector partners
- Ensuring we are inclusive, consider accessibility for participants, and in line with the UNCRC and broader human rights considerations
- Ethical issues, e.g. informed consent, child protection, staff wellbeing when discussing upsetting issues with service users
- Data protection issues

- Part of our wider approach to user engagement
- Builds on our previous experience of working with the Inform100 youth panel and Youth Scotland from 2018 – 2020
- 16 young advisers from across Scotland, aged 12 – 23 when the panel started
- Had 14 meetings
 - 3 residential meetings
 - 8 one-day panel meetings
 - 3 virtual panel meetings following Covid-19 lockdown
 - Less meetings than planned due to the impact of Covid-19
- Panel engaged with 7 audit teams and with our communications team
- Young advisers presented on their experience at a Commission meeting and at the staff conference

Broadly met the aims of the project - 1

Stated aims	
Young people are able to influence and participate in all stages of our audit work	Achieved – Input to scoping / pre-scoping stage on a number of audits; input throughout the education audit; better understand of young person's perspective
Our audit work has more impact among young people	Limited impact beyond the panel members – Panel was unable to produce its own output on school education as planned due to Covid-19
Young people are able to provide us with advice on a range of issues	Achieved – included advising us on audit methods, engaging with young people and how best to shape and communicate our messages.

** Recognising that the young advisers do not represent all young people*

Broadly met the aims of the project - 2

Stated aims	
Young people are involved in some of our audits	Achieved for the school education audit – young advisers were directly involved
The young people involved gain valuable experience and skills.	Achieved – positive feedback from those who stayed involved; most achieved Dynamic Youth Awards
Increased skills and capacity among Audit Scotland staff to do more direct engagement with young people	Limited – staff had training which helped with understanding of youth engagement, but we recognise the specialist skills involved in working with young people in this way.

- Working with specialist youth workers
- Youth-led approach
- Positive relationships between the young people, third sector partner and Audit Scotland staff
- Mix of work and fun
- Non-judgemental approach of Audit Scotland staff
- The young people felt they benefited from being involved, eg increased self-confidence

- High drop-off rate among the young advisers
 - A lot changes in their lives over 2 years
 - Difficult to fit alongside other commitments – full Saturday for panel meetings is a big commitment
 - Difficult for volunteers to know what to expect; not all interested in all the topics discussed
- Planned wider online group didn't work
- Virtual meetings were less successful

- Most value in a more intensive and longer-term approach and working with specialist youth workers to build relationships and trust
- Take more time to establish the group – more frequent and shorter meetings (and connection with established groups)
- Focus on more concrete topics
- Don't assume advisers can stay involved for a long period of time
- Takes a lot of staff time

- Aim to establish a new youth advisory group in early 2023, working with a third sector partner
- Plan to develop a longer-term, ongoing approach to youth engagement in discussion with the new youth advisory group
- Anticipate this will include engaging with existing forums such as the Scottish Youth Parliament and Children's Parliament

- Engaging with people in audits in our current work programme where this would add most value and sharing what we learn
 - adult mental health
 - digital exclusion
- Tie in with our work strengthening our consideration of equalities and human rights
- Further develop and implement our plans for youth engagement
- Develop our longer-term strategy and the actions needed to support it
- Discuss with AGS and Accounts Commission in spring 2023