This guide brings together, in one place, the publications and resources dedicated to children and young people in order to support those who want to keep up-to-date, and for those aiming to improve the value for money of their services.

Children and young people matter

A guide to publications and resources, April 2010
The Audit Commission is an independent watchdog, driving economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone.

Our work across local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services means that we have a unique perspective. We promote value for money for taxpayers, auditing the £200 billion spent by 11,000 local public bodies.

As a force for improvement, we work in partnership to assess local public services and make practical recommendations for promoting a better quality of life for local people.
Online resources

Education of looked-after children
This toolkit support councils in their planning to improve the educational outcomes of looked-after children. The downloadable self-assessment resource has seven areas of investigation.
1 Leadership and management
2 Performance management
3 The education experience
4 Support for education attainment through the care planning system
5 Residential and foster care support
6 Health, wellbeing and safety
7 Involving children and young people

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/lactoolkit

Improving children’s trusts resource pack
This is a voluntary, online self-evaluation tool to help your children’s trust board to improve governance and value for money. It helps your children’s partnerships identify where more work is needed, and it will generate an action plan. It covers eight themes.
1 Involvement of children and young people, families, carers
2 Partnership working
3 Leadership culture and behaviour
4 Managing the Children and Young People’s Plan
5 Governance of arrangements for safeguarding
6 Performance management and scrutiny
7 Value for money and resource management
8 Capacity and workforce

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/improvingchildrenstrusts
Resource pack for children’s trusts: Value for money in special educational needs and disabilities and in additional educational needs
Substantial sums of public money are allocated nationally to ensure that the additional and special educational needs of pupils are met. This resource pack includes a self-assessment to help children’s trusts identify how to improve value for money in the services they provide. It includes practice examples drawn from fieldwork and from other published sources covers five themes.
1 Assessing needs
2 Strategy
3 Finance
4 Provision
5 Outcome evaluation
The pack was developed in partnership with the National Strategies and Department for Children, Schools and Families.

www.sen.aen.audit-commission.gov.uk

School survey
The School Survey is a joint initiative by the Audit Commission in partnership with Ofsted, Estyn, the Northern Ireland and Wales Audit Offices, councils, and head teacher and governor associations. It is a source of evidence about schools’ views of the support they receive from their council, as well as their views on services provided locally for children and young people.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolsurvey
Special and additional educational needs and value for money in schools
This pack, designed with the National Strategies, offers a seven-stage model for considering special additional needs and additional educational needs value for money. It covers budgets and spending, assessment, provision and evaluation. The self-review format prompts schools to gather relevant management information and build a picture of their current practice. In the final stage, it creates an action plan from the responses.

http://sen-aen.audit-commission.gov.uk

School balances
This tool provides auditors and councils with key information about how effectively school balances are managed. It is updated annually.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/schoolbalances

Strategic management of school places and value for money
This is a diagnostic that supports local authorities in their planning for falling school rolls. It enables authorities to compare their position with other authorities when it comes to current and projected surplus places in primary and secondary schools.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/surplusplaces
Children’s trusts: briefing paper on improving financial management
This briefing paper, produced with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), provides practical guidance on improving financial management in children’s trusts. It has proved useful for partners in children’s trust and their finance and support staff.

Managing school resources
A voluntary online self-assessment tool, that creates an action plan providing schools with a structure for value for money discussions, and signposts useful value for money resources.

http://wwwaudit-commission.gov.uk/managingresources

Workforce tool
A tool for secondary schools, it supports schools in breaking down expenditure by subject and comparing expenditure with outcomes, supporting assessments of the efficiency of workforce deployment.

http://wwwaudit-commission.gov.uk/workforcetool

All our children and young people resources and publications can be found at: wwwaudit-commission.gov.uk/childrenandyoungepeople
Publications

Against the odds
Young people not in education, employment and training (NEET)
July 2010

The study on young people NEET will help councils and their partners take on their new responsibilities for 16-19 funding, review current activities and use their resources effectively to tackle NEET levels.

The study is supported by several tools including:

- self-assessment questions for partners;
- good practice case studies;
- briefings for practitioners;
- a funding mapping tool (available in September); and
- a tool for costing the NEET cohort (available in September).

More details about the study are available on our website at:
www.audit-commission.gov.uk/neet
Are we there yet?
Improving Governance and Resource Management in Children’s Trusts
October 2008

This report examines the progress local councils and their partners are making in developing children’s trusts. Progress is slow in achieving better outcomes for children and young people. However, there has been improvement in bringing professionals together. Children’s trusts boards can use the self-assessment tool to check they have the governance arrangements in place, for the best use of public money that benefits children and young people.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/childrenstrusts
Giving children a healthy start
A review of health improvements in children from birth to five years
February 2010

This report assesses the local implementation of national policy from 1999 to 2009 on the health of children from birth to five years old in England.

The report discusses the impact of government funding on health outcomes for the under-fives; how local bodies effectively manage their resources; and the extent to which they are providing good value for money. It provides recommendations for national and local bodies, as well as examples of notable practice.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/healthystart
Valuable lessons
Improving Economy and Efficiency in Schools
July 2009

The report recognises that accountability for spending in schools is weak. The focus has been on effectiveness, with little regard to economy and efficiency, so there is considerable potential for efficiency savings.

www.audit-commission.gov.uk/valuablelessons

Tired of hanging around
Using Sport and Leisure to Prevent Anti-social Behaviour by Young People
January 2009

This study looks at the role of sport and leisure in preventing anti-social behaviour in young people aged 8 to 19 years. The report offers a scrutiny tool to review youth anti-social behaviour in an area, and activities available to reduce or prevent it.

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