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TOOL

Team Audit: where is your team now with evidence-informed practice?

This audit has 44 questions in six sections (each covering one aspect of evidence-informed practice). You can use sections separately if you wish. Involve the whole team in conducting the audit. For example, ask team members to answer the questions individually and then meet together to discuss responses and develop consensus. Or you can complete the audit as a group exercise. You could use the results to inform your team development plan.

Section A THE RIGHT CLIMATE FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE (EIP)

Teams that are evidence informed in their practice create a culture of learning and a climate that encourages the status quo to be challenged, new ideas to be shared and different ways of doing things to be considered.

A1 Is there a common understanding within the team of what evidence-informed practice means to your team and what is expected of team members?

yes ☐ no ☐

A2 To what extent are challenge, debate and constructive criticism encouraged in the team?

a lot 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ not at all

A3 Is critical thinking and reflection valued as an essential competence in team members?

yes ☐ no ☐

A4 Is supervision an opportunity to reflect on your practice and experiences, to challenge (and be challenged on) how you work and learn?

always ☐ usually ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

A5 Do all team members generally work collaboratively and productively together, offering encouragement, support and suggestions to help team colleagues in their work?

always ☐ usually ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

A6 Does the team usually make a genuine attempt to learn from its mistakes or does it apportion blame and 'hunt for the guilty'?

tries to learn 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ apportions blame

A7 How happy is the team to share failures / poor results (as well as successes) with others?

very 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ not at all

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Section B CHALLENGING PRACTICE

Evidence-informed teams regularly check out how well they are doing and provide opportunities for challenge and reflection in order to improve continuously.

B1 Is there a common understanding within the team about the purpose of the team, what it's trying to achieve for users and how its performance is measured?

yes ☐ no ☐

B2 Does the team collect information about the outcomes for users of receiving the service?

routinely 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ not at all

B3 Does the team systematically collect, aggregate and consider users' views about the service provided?

routinely 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ not at all

B4 Does the team collect or seek-out information about gaps in the type of services it provides or in the range of users it helps?

routinely 5 ☐ 4 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ not at all

B5 How often does the team formally come together to evaluate its effectiveness and to reflect on team practices, overall team performance and team well-being?

at least once a month ☐ about twice a year ☐ about once a year ☐ rarely ☐

B6 Do you think this is:

too often ☐ about right ☐ not often enough ☐

B7 Is there a common understanding within the team about how well it's doing and what are the areas for improvement?

yes ☐ no ☐

B8 Are local team practices, procedures, development priorities and targets agreed collectively?

always ☐ usually ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐

B9 Can you think of an example in the last month of the following:


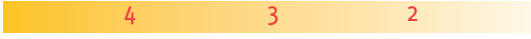


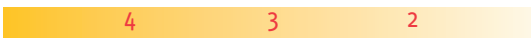


- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • a recent research finding the team has integrated into its practice | yes <input type="checkbox"/> | no <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • a suggestion generated and debated within the team about a better way of working | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • an issue about team performance that the team has explored and investigated | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • a change the team has made as a result of user feedback | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • a learning point the team has identified from a recent mistake, incident or report? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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Section C WIDER RELATIONSHIPS

Being evidence-informed means being outward-looking. This involves sharing knowledge with other teams and agencies and learning from their experiences.

- C1 Is there a common understanding within the team about the 'bigger picture' (the agency's strategies, key priorities and overall performance) in your field of service?
yes ☐ no ☐
- C2 To what extent does the team shape or influence the agency's policy, direction and targets in your field of service?
a lot 5  1 not at all
- C3 To what extent is the team aware of new initiatives, innovations or pilots going on in your field of service elsewhere in the agency and nationally?
very 5  1 not at all
- C4 How many opportunities are there for cross-fertilisation of ideas, problem-solving and networking with other teams in your agency?
a lot 5  1 none at all
- C5 How many opportunities are there for expanding knowledge, developing understanding, learning together and building trusting relationships with colleagues in partner agencies (eg, education, health, YOTs, police, probation, voluntary sector)?
a lot 5  1 none at all
- C6 How many opportunities are there for sharing ideas and pooling knowledge with other colleagues regionally / nationally (eg, by visiting other agencies or in discussion forums)?
a lot 5  1 none at all
- C7 To what extent does the team encourage and welcome social work student placements, secondments, exchanges and visits or attachments from staff in other agencies?
a lot 5  1 not at all
- C8 How close is the team's relationship with colleagues in the agency who can help improve practice (eg, practice / staff development unit, trainers, researchers) and user forums?
very close 5  1 not at all close
- C9 Does the team fully exploit practice development opportunities offered by external agencies (eg, local universities, partner agencies, research in practice, professional bodies, CSCI)?
yes ☐ no ☐

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Section D ACCESS TO EVIDENCE

In order for teams to be research-aware and evidence-minded, they need access to sources of evidence and enough time to make effective use of them.

D1 What % of the team has access to the internet at work at a time and place that suits them?

100% 75 50 25 10%

D3 Does the team receive and circulate around team members:

Community Care

journals (eg, C&F Social Work, BJ of SW, Children & Society)

national research reviews (eg, Barnardo's What Works?)

research in practice CDs / tapes

research in practice publications (eg, research reviews, briefings)

research in practice / NCB 'Research and Policy Update' (monthly)

specialist books relevant to your field of service

reports of locally conducted research / evaluations / consultation

local performance info. / tables giving data for your team

local performance info. / tables giving data for all teams

national performance info. / tables giving data for all authorities

often

sometimes

never

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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D4 In the last month, has the team discussed together anything from the list above and what it might mean for your team's practice?

yes ☐ no ☐

D5 Does the team have a system for cataloguing and storing useful articles, publications etc. (ie, a shared, local 'resource library' of evidence that anyone can access when needed)?

yes ☐ no ☐

D6 Do all team members know what library facilities (eg, publications, databases), support from information / researchers and other learning resources are available to them within:

their own agency

yes

no

local partner agencies (eg, education, health, police, housing)

local universities

professional bodies (eg, BAAF)

evidence-informed organisations you are members of (eg, research in practice)

voluntary sector organisations you are members of (eg, NCVCCO, NCB)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

D7 Does the team have a budget with which to buy books / practice development resources?

yes ☐ no ☐

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Section E TEAM SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Teams need to have a good range of skills and competencies in finding and using evidence in order to improve their practice.

		all	most	some	none
E1	How many team members feel confident about their ability to:				
	• reflect on practice (ask relevant questions about the way the team is working)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• think critically (explore assumptions, generalisations, knowledge gaps, reasoning and alternative interpretations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• challenge misleading, superficial, unfair or erroneous thinking, assessments or decisions appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• evidence your own thinking, assessments or decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• conduct literature searches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• know where to find evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• use the internet to access reliable, good quality evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• know the most useful websites in your field of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• check the soundness of research findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• apply and interpret research findings in another context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• understand national and local performance indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• conduct your own research or service evaluations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• collect valid user views through consultation exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• know the key messages from research in your field.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E2	In the last two years, has anyone in the team received formal training in these areas:				
	• reflecting on practice	yes <input type="checkbox"/>	no <input type="checkbox"/>		
	• thinking critically	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• challenging thinking, assessments or decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• evidencing your own thinking, assessments or decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• conducting literature searches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• knowing where to find evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• using the internet to access reliable, good quality evidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• knowing the most useful websites in your field of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• checking the soundness of research findings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• applying / interpreting research findings in another context	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• understanding national and local performance indicators	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• conducting your own research or service evaluations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• collecting valid user views through consultation exercises	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	• knowing the key messages from research in your field.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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E3 Does the team use any of the following approaches to spread these competencies formally from one team member to others within the team:

• team training events

• coaching

• work shadowing

• peer review (eg, of assessments, case files)

• supervision (group or individual).

yes ☐ no ☐

☐ ☐

☐ ☐

☐ ☐

☐ ☐

E4 Does the team have a development plan for the next 12 months that includes action to increase any of these skills or competencies?

yes ☐ no ☐

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Section F LEARNING TOGETHER

A key part of evidence-informed practice is the search for knowledge and understanding. Most of us learn better through doing and by sharing our learning with others.

F1 Generally, how much encouragement and opportunity does the team have to keep abreast of research?

a lot 5 4 3 2 1 not at all

F2 Has the team identified, and discussed with relevant colleagues, what support and help it needs from the organisation for its practice to become more evidence informed?

yes ☐ no ☐

F3 How receptive is the team to trying out new ideas, innovations and suggestions?

very receptive 5 4 3 2 1 not at all receptive

F4 How well does the team encourage, support and reward its members to continue their professional development?

very well 5 4 3 2 1 not at all well

F5 In the last year, can you identify an example of when a team member was encouraged and supported (eg, with time and resources) to explore an area of practice of particular interest to them?

yes ☐ no ☐

F6 How often does the team discuss together particularly difficult or interesting aspects of individual cases in order to pool knowledge, share learning and offer peer support?

routinely 5 4 3 2 1 not at all

F7 How well does the team recognise and share the professional experience, specialist knowledge or learning (eg, from training events) that individual members may have?

very well 5 4 3 2 1 not at all well

F8 To what extent do the following sorts of evidence actually inform decisions about WHAT services / interventions the team provides, WHO receives services and the procedures that determine HOW they are provided:

	a lot	quite a lot	not a lot	not at all
findings from national research	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
local research / evaluations / reviews / consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
performance indicator results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
professional experience / knowledge of team members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
aggregated views of your users	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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So what? Look back at your answers. Use the space below to identify two actions you can take in each section to improve how far evidence informs your team's practice.

Section A The right climate for evidence-informed practice

1

2

Section B Challenging practice

1

2

Section C Wider relationships

1

2

Section D Access to evidence

1

2

Section E Team skills and competencies

1

2

Section F Learning together

1

2

Date completed