

What opportunities can this community setting offer?



First Impressions What does it feel like to arrive here? What is going on? What is the organisation trying to achieve? How valued are the people? You don't get a second chance to make a first impression.

Activities What range of activities are available? What roles or social identities can people take up? Is it clear how people get to participate? What information is available about opening days and times, charges, special clothes and equipment? What qualifications are needed to participate? What is the environment like – fast-paced and loud or...? Is there information that you can take away with you? Can you have a try at things or attend sporadically? Are comprehensive arrangements in place to secure health and safety? What arrangements are in place for people who need extra support? What can people grow into or achieve at this site?

Relationships What is the quality of human relationships? How are you treated by staff? Are staff and others on first name terms? Is there an atmosphere of warmth, and respect? Are the needs of women and people from ethnic minorities recognised? Are there one or more core groups of people to get to know at this place? When, where and how do these people get to talk to each other? Do people in different roles (e.g. front line staff and managers or staff and customers) mix outside of work time? Are there separate toilets, dining rooms, rest rooms, uniforms, facilities? What happens if you ask for help?

Choice and respect Is personal choice encouraged? For example, do people choose the extent of their participation? Can people choose when they attend, when to have a smoke, a break or some food or drink? Can people choose whom to work alongside? Are there alternative services to the one being visited and are staff able and willing to provide information about them? Are personal dignity, individuality and privacy respected? Are there individual plans for each person's participation? Are consumers involved in creating these plans? What information is demanded of participants and how is their confidentiality respected? Lockable spaces to put belongings? Facilities for meeting friends, for making private telephone calls? Dignified toilets and washing spaces? Are people treated in a way that is appropriate to their age? Do staff gossip about consumers?

Participation in the agency and beyond Does the agency promote participation? Is there a complaints, compliments and suggestions system? Is there an advisory panel of customers to advise management? Is information about the achievements and trials facing the agency made available to participants? Did you find the place and the way in? Does the service promote mixing with other resources in the local community? Is information available about other local facilities open to the general public? What contacts are there with national bodies?

Adapted by Peter Bates from service-focused material by David Brandon