

# 'Children Coming to Hospital': Working with Children to Develop Child-Centred Resources

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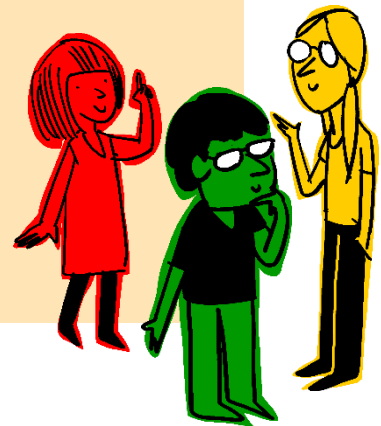
# Why did we do the project?

- We know that children tend to have a better experience if they know what will happen and can get prepared.
- We know that there isn't always enough information to help children know about what might happen when they come to hospital and how they can make their visit as good as possible.
- There is a lack of evidence directly from children around how they would like to be supported before, during and after a procedure.



# What was the focus of the study?

- To develop a deeper understanding of what children want in terms of information, preparation and support to help them have positive encounters in hospital.
- To develop child-centred resources.



# What did we do in the project?

- This qualitative project used drama as a creative and participatory research method – to help children explore and construct stories and acts about hospital procedures.
- We held 2 drama workshops with 15 children aged 7-14 years, run by an expert drama teacher.



# What did we do in the workshops?

- Ground rules.
- Improvised fictitious performance and role play prompted by a 'scene'.
  - Scene 1: **Journey to hospital**
  - Scene 2: **Waiting at the hospital**
  - Scene 3: **Having a procedure** (X-ray, scan, appointment or blood test)
- Winding down and checking the children were okay.



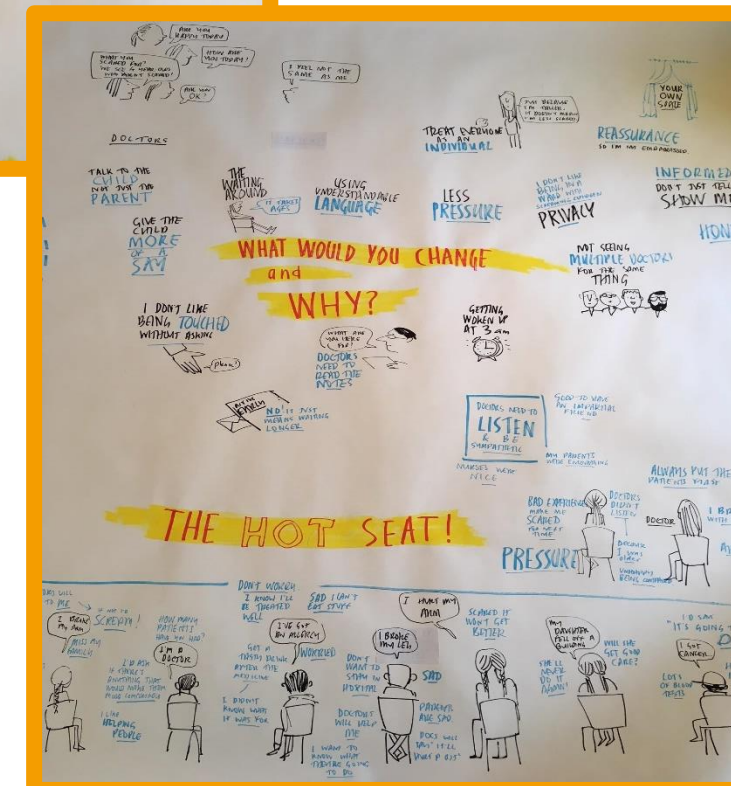
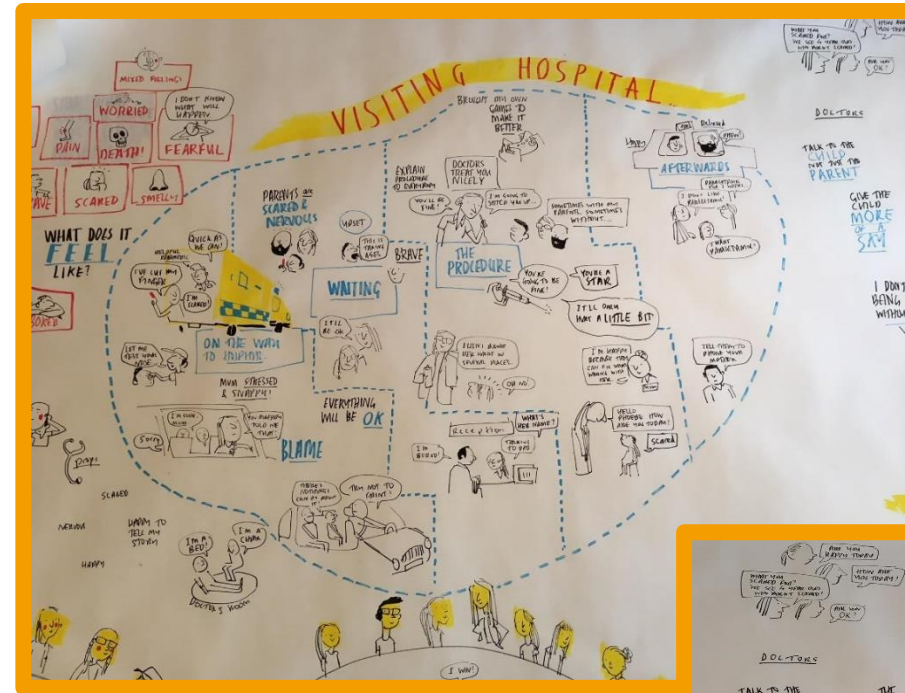
# What did we do in the workshops?

- Throughout the performances we used freeze frame and hot seat questions to explore:-
  - What could make things better?
  - How might things be different?
  - What is this person thinking/feeling?
  - Why did that person say/do that?



# What did we do in the project?

- The three researchers took observational notes of the verbal and non-verbal expressions.
- Matt from MisterMunro took visual minutes throughout the session



# What did the children tell us?

The findings focussed on two aspects of coming to hospital for a procedure.

- **“Having to be brave but feeling scared inside”**
- **“Wanting to get involved but being too afraid to ask.”**





# “Having to be brave but feeling scared inside”

- Many of the scenes acted out were woven together by the children using the words *“bored”, “worried”, “scared”, “anxious”, “fear”, “sick” and “nervous”* to portray their feelings before and during clinical procedures.
- Some scenes with older children involved them disguising their feelings of being scared, as they felt they would be judged by health professionals for *“not being grown up enough”*.

*“I am not saying I am scared and worried, I am just sitting quietly – but this does not mean I am okay”*

*“Because I was older they were like just do it anyway. They are like why are you scared cos you are older and younger people are getting it done”*

Whatever you feel is okay.

It is normal to wonder what will happen while you're there.



# “Having to be brave but feeling scared inside”

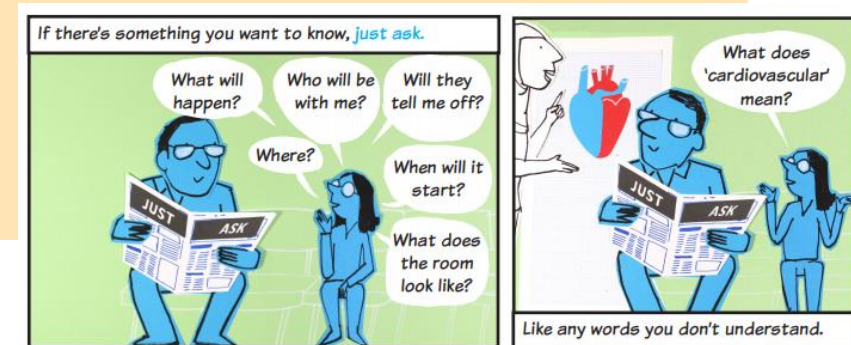
- Children portrayed adult’s language as dismissive of their feelings of anxiety and fear:
  - *“just be brave”* and *“get on with it”*.
  - *“don’t worry it will be alright”* *“everything will be okay”*, *“you will be okay”* and *“you are going to be fine”*.
- The adult’s language seemed to close down children’s expressions of concern, rather than open up conversation about what might be causing them to be worried or scared.



# “Wanting to get involved but being too afraid to ask.”

- Many of the scenes involved children acting out a seemingly invisible or small part in the procedures.
  - receptionist counter where a child’s name was “*given in*” by their parent,
  - health professionals using ‘medical’ language and directing questions and instructions towards their parent.

“use language which I can understand – and ask me not my mum”.



# “Wanting to get involved but being too afraid to ask”

- In some instances children depicted dialogue with health professionals who were not “*really listening*”.
- Some health professionals were depicted as not always being 100% honest and open.

“don’t say it won’t hurt if it will, just be honest and say it might just hurt a bit”

“Doctor: Is it hurting?  
Child: A bit  
Doctor: Perfect, okay.....when you have had this you are free to go”

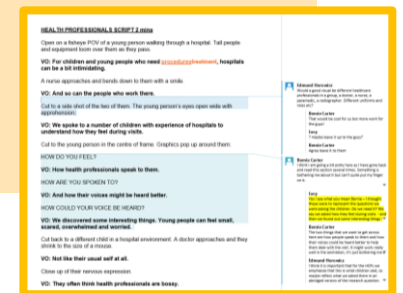


# Creating 'Children Coming to Hospital'



# What did we do to create the resource?

- We wanted to create two short animations (one for health professionals and one for children).
- We worked with what the children had told us were the most important things and drafted a script.
- Then drafted the script again and again.
- We sent the script to the children and their parents to see if it 'made sense' and if the messages were 'true' to what the children had told us.
- Storyboarding



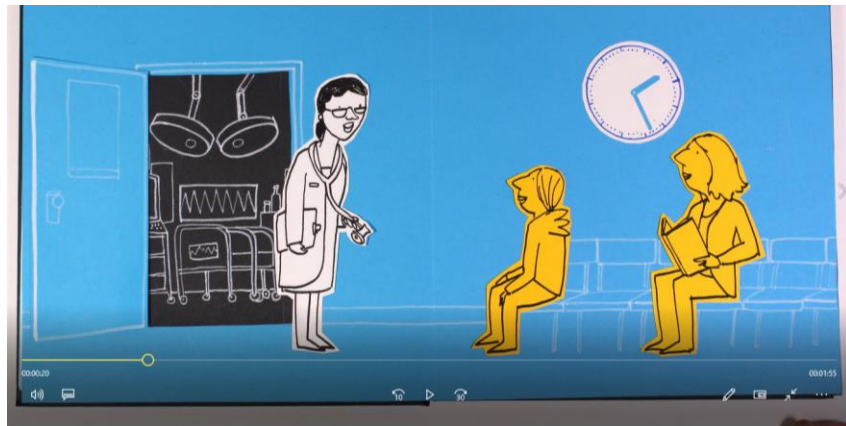
# What did we do to create the resource?

- Children said a comic strip would be useful and engaging.
- We used the screens from the animation as a basis for the comic.
- Some parts worked and some didn't work as well.



# The 'Children Coming to Hospital' Resource.

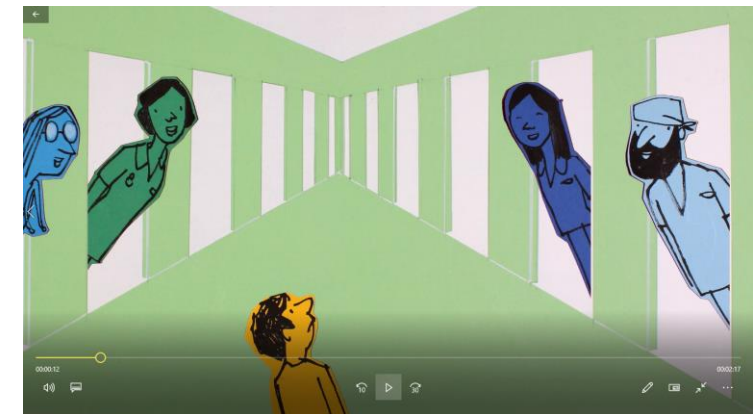
The animation for children



The comic strip



The animation for health professionals



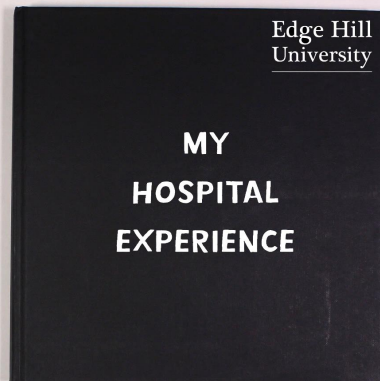


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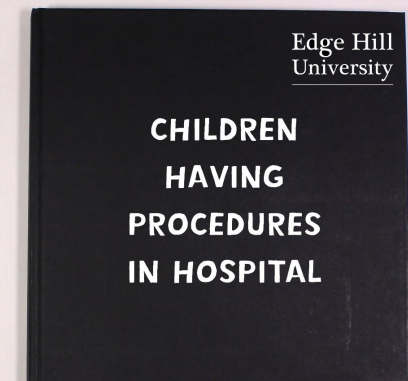
The animation for children



The comic strip



The animation for health professionals



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**CHILDREN  
HAVING  
PROCEDURES  
IN HOSPITAL**

# Thank you!



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<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/childrencomingtohospital/>