

Together Towards Improvement

A Process for Self-Evaluation

Youth Sector

INTRODUCTION -Youth

Increasingly, there is the realisation that if improvement in an organisation's provision is to be initiated and sustained effectively, then it is crucial that a culture of self-evaluation is promoted and that the process of self-evaluation is embedded within the organisation. These materials are but one of a range of resources that may be used to help support the process of self-evaluation of current practices, with the aim of enabling young people to use their learning to enhance their future development.

These materials provide a framework for inspection, which may also be useful to:

- support individual organisations with the development of their self-evaluation processes;
- help organisations to identify their strengths and areas for improvement;
- assist the staff, and managers¹ to incorporate action for improvement into the development plan.

The materials give guidance on:

- the purpose, focus and key features of the self-evaluation process; and
- the use of quality indicators to inform evaluation and lead to improvements.

The materials are structured to allow those who engage in the process of self-evaluation to select and evaluate any aspects of their work, with the aim of improving the quality of the standards of achievement, the quality of learning and provision, and the quality of leadership and management in the organisation.

It is recognised that many organisations:

- engage in a process of review and evaluation;
- are becoming more self-critical of their work;
- recognise where improvements are needed; and
- are implementing programmes and processes, which aim to improve their practice.

This document has been reviewed in light of recent inspection findings and the Departmental Policy document *Priorities for Youth*².

¹ Managers include the Education Authority Head-Quarter Organisation managers and members of voluntary management committees

² *Priorities for Youth - Improving Young People's Lives through Youth Work* (DE 2013)

What is self-evaluation?

Self-evaluation is an on-going, sharply focused process, which involves monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of existing provision and the young people's learning outcomes. It informs and influences youth work practice, the quality of learning and provision for young people and promotes organisational development and improvement.

Self-evaluation involves staff, managers, young people, and where appropriate, other stakeholders, such as, parents to:

- reflect on and have an agreed view of the organisation's current youth work practice;
- identify and celebrate the strengths of the youth organisation;
- identify and address areas for improvement in the work;
- identify priorities through development planning, which will have a positive effect on learning and provision;
- focus on continually improving the quality of provision, and enabling young people to use their learning to enhance their future development; and
- establish a clear and agreed vision for the leadership and management of the organisation.

Is your organisation ready to engage in the process of self-evaluation?

The process of self-evaluation requires willingness and commitment from all who are involved in the life and work of the organisation. Management need to take the lead role in engaging staff, youth workers, young people and parents to evaluate, openly and honestly, the work of the organisation and their particular contribution to what the organisation is achieving and is seeking to improve.

The most important step is to establish a climate where all involved are encouraged to be open about their work, critically evaluate, and, where necessary, improve on their own performance. If an appropriate culture of self-evaluation is to be established, all those involved, from management to the most recently appointed member of staff, should reflect on current practice, accept praise and criticism, and make changes where necessary. The recognition of past achievements, and the affirmation and dissemination of good practice are essential as a foundation for self-evaluation.

Whatever the circumstances:

- the procedures used in the process of self-evaluation should be rigorous, comprehensive and fit for purpose;
- all those involved should understand the methods for self-evaluation and their part in, and contribution to the process;
- the evidence should be qualitative, quantitative and externally verifiable;
- the sources of the evidence should, where appropriate, include relevant documentation;
- managers should take into consideration the views of young people, youth workers and parents;
- ongoing monitoring of youth work practice by managers and staff should be an integral part of the process of self-evaluation; and
- the outcomes of the evaluations should lead to agreed future actions to achieve improvements in the quality of the standards of achievement, the quality of learning and provision, and the quality of leadership and management in the organisation.

Together towards improvement: Evaluating the youth sector

Quality indicators

Introduction

The following quality indicators have been devised by the Education and Training Inspectorate to evaluate provision and promote quality improvement across the youth sector. In the best practice, outstanding youth work is embedded in a process of self-evaluation, which places young people at the centre of the learning process.

The quality indicators for inspecting all education and training provision, including the youth sector, in Northern Ireland focus on:

- The achievements and standards
 - How well do the young people achieve?

The quality of provision for learning

- How effective are youth work planning practice and assessment?
 - How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the young people and the wider community?
 - How well are the young people cared for, guided and supported?
- The leadership and management
 - How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people?

The indicators in the right-hand column are inter-related, but may not all apply in each situation; they are not evenly weighted and are not to be seen as a check list. They are used by the Education and Training Inspectorate as the framework for inspection, and for organisations to assist with the process of critical reflection that is at the heart of any self-evaluation.

Section A: Achievements and standards

Q. How well do the young people achieve?

Personal Development: How effectively do the young people develop personal attitudes, values and self-confidence and build on connections between formal and informal education?

Indicators:

Evaluate the extent to which the young people:

- Acquire skills, interests, knowledge; and an understanding of themselves, others and society.
- Develop critical reflective thinking skills.
- Manage their behaviours in a range of situations, using resilience, persistence, commitment and coping strategies.
- Demonstrate the ability to articulate, connect and apply their learning in new and different situations.
- Demonstrate high levels of motivation, commitment and enjoyment.
- Progress into leadership roles, through effective training and appropriate responsibilities.
- Develop further self-confidence, self-belief and self-esteem.
- Recognise their own strengths, and set goals for personal development
- Participate confidently in decision-making and problem-solving in their youth work setting and in the wider community.
- Contribute to the evaluation of their achievements and those of others
- Use their initiative be enterprising and resourceful in overcoming challenges
- Use and develop further their creativity skills.
- Identify barriers to their learning, set targets and achieve positive outcomes.
- Recognise and build on the connections between their formal and informal education.
- Achieve appropriate accreditation.

Evaluation

Evidence

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Q. How well do the young people achieve?	
<p>Social Development: How effectively do the young people function socially and contribute economically?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the young people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy good relationships with one another. • Demonstrate collaborative working through group work and team-building to achieve collective goals. • Take action to affect and influence change, to best meet their own needs and those of others. • Are given opportunities to meet and work with a range of diverse groups and individuals from the local and wider community. • Display understanding, compassion and sensitivity towards the rights and feelings of others. • Resolve conflict and confrontation sensitively. • Develop a critical understanding of issues within their community and become more active citizens. • Demonstrate involvement in a range of volunteering opportunities. • Develop an understanding of their role as global citizens.
Evaluation	Evidence

Section B: Provision for learning

Q. How effective are youth work planning, practice and assessment?

<p>Planning: How effective is the programme planning in meeting the organisation's objectives?</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <p><i>Evaluate the extent to which the staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan programmes which focus on the assessed personal and social developmental needs of young people. • Plan for the development of the young people's knowledge, understanding and skills. • Plan programmes relevant to the organisation's key objectives. • Involve the young people in planning and designing programmes. • Have planned objectives, which are understood and agreed by the young people.
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Evaluation	Evidence
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<p>Q. How effective are youth work planning, practice and assessment?</p>	
<p>Practice: How effective is the youth work practice in meeting the needs and interests of the young people?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop purposeful relationships with the young people using effective interpersonal skills. • Provide regular issue-based programmes relevant to the identified needs, age and experience of the young people. • Provide innovative and challenging programmes that are contemporary and adapted to meet the changing needs and interests of the young people. • Use effective facilitation skills to establish suitable conditions for formal and informal group work. • Provide group work interventions which interest, engage and progress the young people in their learning. • Target and meet the needs of young people who are vulnerable, marginalised or disaffected. • Involve the young people in leading, making decisions about and evaluating programmes.
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Evidence</p>

Q. How effective are youth work planning, practice and assessment?	
<p>Assessment: How effective is assessment in improving the learning experiences and promoting high quality outcomes for young people?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the staff:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate assessment methods to recognise and record the young people’s achievements. • Involve the young people in evaluating programmes. • Use peer-assessment and self-assessment by the young people, to reflect on their own and others’ progress. • Celebrate with the young people their achievements and those of their peers. • Record how on-going reflection improves subsequent planning and provision.
Evaluation	Evidence

Q. How well do the learning experiences, programmes and activities meet the needs of the young people and the wider community?

<p>Curriculum: How appropriate is the range of learning opportunities and experiences?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the organisation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a programme that enables and progresses the personal and social development of the young people • Has a well-embedded culture of participation. • Contributes to the development of the young people’s empowerment to bring about change within their communities. • Has a broad and balanced curriculum, which matches the needs of the young people attending the provision, and attracts other potential users. • Provides accreditation and recognised training opportunities, which enhance the young people’s employability skills. • Provides a curriculum which addresses the social and personal barriers which young people have to learning. • Identifies and supports marginalised and vulnerable young people using appropriate intervention strategies. • Provide effective outreach and detached youth work programmes. • Provides programmes which address the issues of equity, diversity and inter-dependence. • Engages the young people in programmes to maintain good physical and mental health. •
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Evidence</p>

Q. How well are the young people cared for, guided and supported?	
<p>Pastoral care and ethos: How effectively do the staff work to ensure the welfare and enjoyment of the young people and to encourage their personal development?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the organisation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear and effective policies and procedures in place to guide the pastoral care of the young people. • Provides a welcoming, comfortable and stimulating learning environment for the young people. • Provides accommodation which is in line with all current legislation, including health and safety regulations. • Increases the young people's awareness of risk factors, gives advice and support, and refers them to specialist help when appropriate. • Acts as an advocate for the young people. • Supports the young people to represent themselves, in local and wider contexts. • Establishes mutual respect, trust and positive relationships at all levels. • Provide programmes that engage young people in developing a healthy lifestyle. • Promotes healthy eating and physical activity to encourage the young people to adopt healthy lifestyles. • Agrees acceptable standards of behaviour and discipline with the young people.
Evaluation	Evidence

Section C: Leadership and Management	
Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people?	
<p>Strategic Leadership: How effective are senior managers and management committees in providing strategic leadership to achieve high standards of youth provision?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates continuous quality improvement across all areas of the provision. • Provides effective curricular leadership and management, which assess accurately and meets the needs of the young people. • Plans and reviews realistic objectives and targets for youth provision with the young people, the staff and takes account of the local context. • Engages young people in the governance and management of the provision. • Deploys and supervises staff effectively. • Recruits, trains and sustains the involvement of volunteers. • Has connected and coherent planning at all levels. • Has a clear vision for the future direction of the work with young people.
Evaluation	Evidence

Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people?	
<p>Action to promote improvement: How effective are managers in sustaining continuous improvements across the youth provision?</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <p><i>Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses appropriate self-evaluation to review provision. • Has a clear action planning process in place to bring about improvement. • Uses the views of the young people, staff and relevant stakeholders when planning, evaluating and improving the provision. • Disseminates best practice. • Provides appropriate continuous professional development for all staff. • Provides accredited, relevant qualifications for staff, to improve their youth work skills and enhance their employability options. • Monitors and evaluates the impact of staff development. • Analyses and uses data to understand the impact of the services on the young people.
Evaluation	Evidence

Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people?	
<p>External Links: How effective are the links and partnerships with parents other providers (including schools), other agencies and the wider community, to identify and to meet the current and future needs of the young people?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes effective communication with relevant partners and stakeholders. • Works effectively with partners to add value to the experiences of the young people. • Makes effective use of their expertise and experience to improve the learning outcomes for young people.
Evaluation	Evidence

Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people?	
<p>Equality of opportunity: How effective is the organisation in promoting inclusion and in widening access for all young people?</p>	<p>Indicators: <i>Evaluate the extent to which the leadership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides accessible programmes, which reflect the diverse needs of the young people. • Provides access for all young people irrespective of any additional needs or diversity of background. • Takes positive steps to develop mutual understanding and trust through an appreciation of difference. • Has in place effective procedures to challenge and eliminate oppressive behaviour. • Has established links and engages with young people from minority and ethnic groups within the local community.
Evaluation	Evidence

Q. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting the young people?	
<p>Safeguarding: How effective is the leadership at having in place procedures and arrangements to promote and safeguard the welfare and protection of young people and vulnerable adults?</p>	<p>Indicators:</p> <p><i>Evaluate the extent to which the organisation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has clear and effective policies and procedures in place, in line with current legislation, for the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults. • Has established a code of conduct to guide all staff. • Models and encourages acceptable, agreed standards of behaviour. • Creates an ethos of respect for others and caring among the young people. • Provides appropriate up-to-date training for management, staff and volunteers. • Informs regularly the children, young people, their parents and all relevant parties of the current policies, including complaints procedure. • Has appropriate procedures to deal with complaints by, and against, the young people and staff.
Evaluation	Evidence