Taking an Outcomes Approach: From Planning to Evaluation

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Introduction

We're Youth Music. We're a national charity investing in music-making projects for children and young people experiencing challenging circumstances.

We believe everyone should have the chance to make music.

Our projects help young people develop musically, of course, but they have personal and social outcomes too.

We know that those facing difficulties - economic problems, lifelong conditions, tough circumstances or behavioural issues - are often the ones who get the most out of music-making.

Youth Music offers meaningful chances to young people in complicated situations.

Together, we can make a genuine difference to many more young lives.

Who is this guide for?

- **Organisations interested in applying for funding from Youth Music**

We ask all organisations applying for Youth Music funding to use this guide to define their project's overall aim and intended outcomes, and to plan how they will measure their outcomes by choosing indicators and sources of evidence. We also ask all funded projects to use this guide to analyse their evidence, write their evaluation, and share their findings.

- **Anyone planning a music education project for children and young people**

However, this guide can be used by anyone delivering a music-making project with children and young people; it's not just for those applying for or holding Youth Music funding.

What is an outcomes approach?

An outcomes approach means considering the changes you want to bring about with your project, and evaluating its success by exploring to what extent those changes have been

achieved (for example, children felt more confident at the end of a project than at the beginning)

The opposite of an outcomes approach is an outputs approach, where a project is evaluated solely based on tasks carried out and numbers achieved (for example, 50 children took part in a concert).

At Youth Music, the outcomes approach underpins everything we do as a charity and grant maker, guiding us towards our aim of a musically inclusive England. The outcomes approach is designed to help any organisation plan their activities, monitor progress and evaluate their project. Over the past decade, use of the outcomes approach has increased significantly across the charity and cultural sectors, helping organisations to better understand the benefits of their work and deliver better results for their participants and stakeholders.

This guide explains the general principles of taking an outcomes approach and shows you how to apply it to a music-making project for children and young people.

Why take an outcomes approach?

Youth Music is interested not only in what you're doing, but in *why* you're doing it. We want you to apply for funding and deliver your projects with a clear idea of your intended outcomes, or the changes that you are working to bring about. The outcomes approach provides a clear framework for your project, from planning to evaluation. Its purpose is to help you channel your efforts where they can make the biggest difference and to support you in measuring and evidencing the changes you have made.

Youth Music funds developmental music-making projects for children and young people, and strategic work to support the development of the workforce, organisations, and the wider sector. Following this guidance will help you to determine the music, personal, and social outcomes you want to help children and young people achieve, as well as the workforce and organisational outcomes needed to ensure the quality and sustainability of this work.

Taking an outcomes approach has benefits for a wide range of stakeholders:

- **Benefits for your workforce and organisation**

- Understanding what you aim to achieve through your project
- Identifying the outcomes of your project for participants and stakeholders
- Providing confidence that you are delivering an effective project
- Supporting organisational planning by ensuring that your work is fit for purpose
- Reflecting on your practice on a regular basis in order to continually improve the quality of your work
- Demonstrating accountability to your stakeholders
- Building a robust evidence base which could help you secure further funding from a variety of sources

- **Benefits for Youth Music**
  - Understanding the impact of our funding
  - Identifying learning and effective practice to share with the wider sector
  - Supporting future grant-making decisions by providing evidence of what works
  - Demonstrating accountability as a recipient of public funding from the National Lottery via Arts Council England
  - Advocating on behalf of the sector about the impact of music-making

- **Benefits for the wider sector**
  - Learning about effective practice in other organisations
  - Improving the quality of their practice by integrating this learning
  - Developing a culture of outcomes-focused, evidence-based working

- **Benefits for children and young people**
  - Through benefits to all these stakeholders, taking an outcomes approach supports the quality and sustainability of music-making projects across the sector and ultimately leads to better outcomes for children and young people in challenging circumstances.

The basic principles that underpin the outcomes approach are similar to other planning and evaluation frameworks. For example, you might have come across the terms 'action-research cycle', 'plan, do, review', or 'theory of change'. They are all closely related and follow a similar process.

How to use this guide

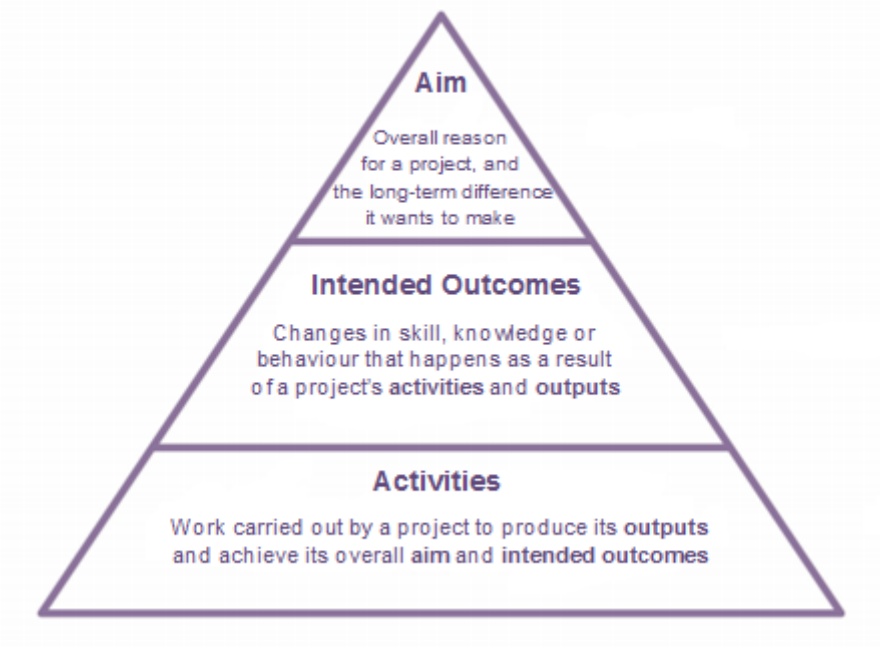
This guide will take you through the outcomes approach by breaking it down into five steps:

1. Planning your project
2. Measuring your outcomes
3. Analysing your evidence
4. Writing your evaluation
5. Sharing your findings

There will be general guidance on each step, as well as practical examples of how to apply this guidance to a typical project funded by Youth Music. You can either read the guidance and examples together or focus on whichever approach appeals to you more.

You can choose to read this guide in one sitting, or you may find it more manageable to tackle one step at a time as you approach that stage of your project. At the end of each step, we will summarise the key points.

Step 1: Planning your project



Planning triangle (adapted by Youth Music from Charities Evaluation Services)

Youth Music's outcomes approach is built on the Charities Evaluation Services' planning triangle, which is a useful tool for visualising the relationship between what your project is doing and why. The planning triangle represents your project on three levels: the overall aim, the intended outcomes, and the activities. As the figure shows, the overall aim sits at the top of the planning triangle. The intended outcomes sit beneath and support the overall aim, and the activities sit beneath and support the intended outcomes.

Since each level of the triangle is supported by the ones below it, this tool allows you to think about each level and how it relates to the others. For example, it allows you to check that your overall aim is supported by appropriate activities, and to explain to others how these activities will lead to your intended outcomes and, ultimately, your overall aim.

In this section, we will give examples of the process of completing the triangle step-by-step for two types of projects: a music-making project with children and young people, and a workforce/organisational development project.

Identifying the need

Before you begin planning your project, the first step is to understand why your project needs to exist in the first place. This may start out as a gut feeling or an intuitive awareness of a gap that needs to be filled. However, it is important to back up these thoughts and feelings with robust evidence. This will help you to understand more clearly what type of project is needed and what changes you want to achieve.

Your evidence may include:

- **Government datasets and statistics:** There are many government datasets and statistics to help you determine the extent of an issue in your neighbourhood or local authority and compare it with the regional or national need. For example, Neighbourhood Statistics (ONS) provides a wide range of statistics broken down into different categories,[1] the Indices of Deprivation (DCLG) provides statistics on relative deprivation in England,[2] and the CASE Local Culture and Heritage Profile Tool (DCMS) provides detailed information about cultural participation at the local authority level.[3]

- **Existing research and evaluation:** This may include your own evaluation reports from previous projects with the proposed target group, reports from other organisations working with a similar target group, or published academic research relating specifically to the circumstance or location of your target participants. You may be able to find relevant publications on the Resources and Research section of the Youth Music Network,[4] the CASE Database (DCMS),[5] or Google Scholar.[6]

- **Consultation with your intended participants:** If you already have contact with your intended target group, we encourage you to survey them and ask what their current needs are and what type of project would help support those needs. You can do this by creating a simple questionnaire or by organising focus groups. If you don't yet have contact with your participants, think about the target group you're planning to work with and consider the needs (or barriers) that might arise. You may also find

1. http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/
2. https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015
3. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-programme-local-tools-sport-and-culture-and-heritage
4. http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/resources
5. http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/webdatabases4/Intro.aspx?ID=2
6. https://scholar.google.co.uk/

it helpful to consult with those who know your intended target group well if you are unable to consult with them directly.

It is important to draw on a wide range of sources to give you a better understanding of what needs exist for your target group. You will also be able to make a stronger case for the need if you have multiple sources of evidence that corroborate each other. Once you have identified the needs of your target group, you can begin to think about the key issue underlying these needs and design a project to address this issue.

Defining your overall aim

Your project's **overall aim** is why it exists and the long-term difference it wants to make, or its intended **impact**. It should address the key issue underlying the needs of your target group. In order to identify your project's overall aim, ask yourself these three questions:

1. Who is in your target group (e.g. their ages, location, challenging circumstances)?
2. What is the key issue faced by your target group?
3. What positive change will your project achieve for your target group on this issue?

Whilst it is important to be ambitious with your project's overall aim, it should be achievable. Make sure you have sense-checked what you are trying to achieve with the scope of your programme of work, ensuring your proposal is realistic within the limits of your funding request and project duration and organisational capacity.

Top tips for defining your overall aim

- Your overall aim should describe the long-term change that it will achieve for your target group by using a verb that indicates the direction of change, e.g. 'improve', 'increase', 'enhance', 'reduce', 'raise', 'strengthen'.

✗	✓
To support young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in North London into employment	To improve access to employment for ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

- Your overall aim should address a single key issue faced by your target group, rather than a number of smaller issues.

✗	✓
To improve organisational capacity, support, and partnerships for delivering music-making activities in early years settings across the local area	To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early years settings across the local area

- Your overall aim should be specific about your project's target group, e.g. age, location, challenging circumstances.

✗	✓
To improve the employability of young ex-offenders	To improve access to employment for young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

- Your overall aim should only describe what long-term change your project will make, not how it will work toward this aim.

✗	✓
To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early years settings across the local area through providing training and support for early years practitioners and senior leadership in these settings	To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early years settings across the local area

Example: Music-Making Project

Who is your target group?	Young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden
What is the key issue faced by your target group?	Lack of access to employment
What positive change will your project aim to achieve for your target group in this area?	To improve access to employment for young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

Example: Workforce/Organisational Development Project

Who is your target group?	Early years settings in the local area
What is the key issue faced by your target group?	Lack of long term music-making activities for early years children
What positive change will your project aim to achieve for your target group in this area?	To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early years settings across the local area

Defining your intended outcomes

Your project's **intended outcomes** are the changes in skills, knowledge, or behaviour that you predict will happen as a result of the activities delivered. To plan your intended outcomes, you first need to identify the barriers currently in the way of achieving your project's overall aim. These barriers will usually be linked to the needs stemming from the key issue faced by your target group. Your outcomes are the specific positive changes that your project will aim to achieve for your target group in the short- to medium-term, which will support long-term progress toward your project's overall aim. They should relate closely to the activities you intend to provide, be able to be described thoroughly using research methods, and be achievable and realistic within the time and resources attached to the project.

Youth Music's outcomes framework defines the five broad areas of change that we support through our funding. These relate to musical, personal, and social outcomes for children and young people, and workforce and organisational outcomes (see below)

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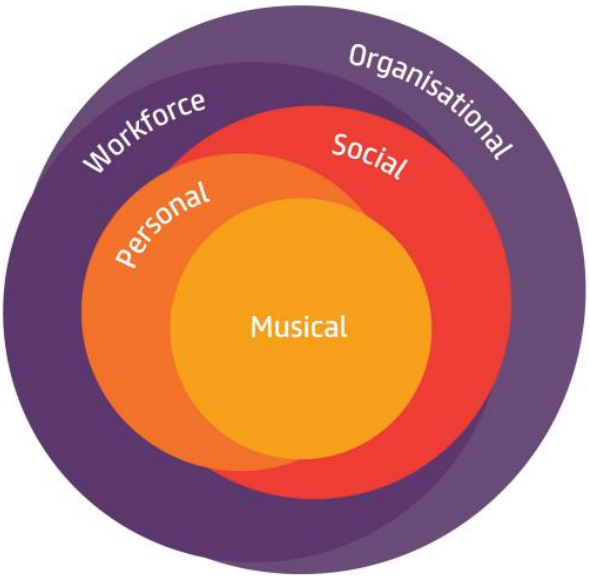


Youth Music's Outcome Areas

Musical outcomes

Musical outcomes are those relating to any aspect of musical development: this can include people's musical skills, knowledge and abilities. Everyone has some level of musicality and we are looking for projects that build on this in a way that is appropriate for the participants. When working towards musical outcomes we want projects to be specific about which aspects of musicality they are looking to develop.

Personal outcomes

Personal outcomes are those relating to any aspect of personal development: this can include people's skills, knowledge and abilities. Personal outcomes relate to how people feel about themselves, how they might be able to do things they weren't able to before, or how they have developed their understanding of the world. This includes educational development and emotional development. Personal development is also strongly linked to social development and both are strongly linked to musical development.

Social outcomes

Social outcomes relate to changes in a person or group of people that can have broader benefits for people and society beyond the individual. Social outcomes can be based on changes in a person, or can be based on changes in communities or environments that relate to a person or group of people. Thinking about why positive cultural, health and educational experiences and outcomes which improve many people's lives are so important to individuals also helps us to think about broader social outcomes.

Workforce outcomes

Workforce outcomes relate to the skills, knowledge and personal development of the workforce employed on a project. These aren't direct changes in the young people you're working with, but they add a great deal of value to the workforce and, by extension, the project and the participants. In all projects we would encourage you to think about the needs of the workforce and how to measure and evaluate their development.

Organisational outcomes

Organisational outcomes refer to either your own or another organisation and are to do with how well-equipped organisations are to help children and young people to develop in and through music, and to support the broader youth music sector. They might relate to an organisation's ability to support children and young people, an organisation's level of connectedness, or an organisation's resilience to external changes. Organisational outcomes can also relate to organisational policies, procedures or cultures.

How do I know which outcomes to choose?

There are endless ways to bring about positive musical, personal and social development. The most important thing is to be appropriate to your participants' needs and ensure that they have input into the project. Everyone will be on their own learning and progression journeys and you will be doing what you can to support their individual paths. That said, you will know from previous work and from consulting with participants which are the main areas of development you intend to focus on. This applies to outcomes relating to the workforce or organisations too. Think about where you and your colleagues are now, and where the evidence tells you that funding is needed to improve things.

How do I know whether outcomes are musical, personal, social, workforce or organisational?

We know there is a great deal of cross-over between outcomes – learning to play a musical instrument may increase confidence (and performing in front of others might change the perceptions of a community) – all of which needs to happen with the support of excellent practitioners and organisations. Setting and measuring outcomes is not an exact science, and the outcomes framework is designed to be flexible, but thinking clearly about the potential effects your activities will reveal just how many different outcomes you might achieve. This process is simply about structuring the work in a sensible and measurable way.

Top tips for identifying your intended outcomes

- As with your overall aim, your intended outcomes should describe the short- to-medium term changes that it will achieve for your target group by using a verb that indicates the direction of change, e.g. 'improve', 'increase', 'enhance', 'raise', 'strengthen'.

✗	✓
To support young ex-offenders to apply for jobs	To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs

- Your intended outcomes should focus on changes in skills, knowledge, or behaviour.

✗	✓
To increase the number of partnerships between early years settings and local organisations that can support the sustainability of their offer ***Although this indicates the direction of change, it does not relate to a change in skills, knowledge, or behaviour. If you want to increase the number of partnerships, think about what change in skills, knowledge, or behaviour would help develop these partnerships.***	To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early years settings ***This intended outcome supposes that a strong relationship between the hub and early years settings would help develop these partnerships.***

- As with your overall aim, your intended outcomes should each address a single, specific change, rather than a group of related changes or a large, complex change.

✗	✓
To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs and improve their job-seeking skills	To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs

In the above example, we have chosen to focus in on one of the two outcome areas. If both changes were considered critical to the project it would be worth cover them separately in two discrete outcomes.

- As with your overall aim, your intended outcomes should only describe what short- to medium-term changes your project will make, not how it will work toward these outcomes.

✗	✓
To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early years settings through facilitating partnership-working	To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early years settings

Your intended outcomes should link clearly to your project's overall aim. To assess this link, ask yourself this question: if you achieve this outcome, will that bring you closer to achieving your overall aim?

Example: Music-Making Project
Overall aim: To improve access to employment for young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

What are the barriers to your overall aim?	**How will your project address these barriers?**	**Intended outcome**
Young ex-offenders lack the skills that employers are seeking	It will improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders	To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders
Young ex-offenders lack the confidence to apply for jobs	It will increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs	To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs
Employers are hesitant to hire someone with a previous conviction	It will improve perceptions of candidates with a previous conviction among hiring managers in music-sector organisations	To improve perceptions of candidates with a previous conviction among hiring managers in music-sector organisations

Example: Workforce/Organisational Development Project
Overall aim: To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early-years settings across the local area

What are the barriers to your overall aim?	How will your project address these barriers?	Intended outcome
Early-years practitioners lack the specialist skills needed to deliver music-making activities	It will improve early-years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	To improve early-years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities
There is a lack of organisational support for music-making activities in early-years settings	It will increase support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early-years settings	To increase support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early-years settings
Early-year settings are not well connected with local organisations that can support the sustainability of their music offer	It will strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early-years settings	To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early-years settings

Note: As shown in the examples above, it is not necessary to repeat every detail about your target group in your intended outcomes, e.g. if you have already stated in your overall aim that you are working with young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden, you can simply say 'young ex-offenders' in your intended outcomes, as it can be assumed that the other characteristics have not changed.

Developing your activities

Your project's **activities** are the work carried out in order to achieve its overall aim and intended outcomes. These activities typically lead to the production of **outputs**, the products or services delivered as part of the project (e.g. music-making sessions, music facilitator toolkits). While you use 'change' language for your outcomes (e.g. an improvement in employability skills), you should use 'doing' words for your activities (e.g. by providing traineeships).

It is crucial that each intended outcome is supported by at least one activity and each activity is linked to at least one outcome. This will give you a concrete plan for what you need to do to work toward your intended outcomes. If any of your planned activities aren't linked to your intended outcomes, you need to consider why you're delivering this activity and whether it should continue.

As part of our assessment process, Youth Music will consider how effectively your proposed activities will enable you to achieve your project's overall aim and intended outcomes. The biggest oversight we tend to see in project planning is a lack of detailed consideration of how the activities will bring about the aim and outcomes. It's important to consider what role different activities play within the project, as well as their order and priority.

Top tips for developing your activities

- Your activities should describe what you will do by using a verb that indicates the delivery of an output, e.g. 'provide', 'deliver', 'facilitate', 'offer', 'run'.

✗	✓
To improve the offer of music administration and studio traineeships for young ex-offenders	To provide music administration and studio management traineeships for young ex-offenders

- Your activities should only describe what you will do, not what changes will result from these activities.

✗	✓
To facilitate partnership working between hub partnerships and early years settings, strengthening these settings' musical and creative networks	To facilitate partnership working between hub partners and early years settings

- Your activities should only describe work that relates to the production of project-specific outputs that will support progress toward the project's overall aim and intended outcomes. They should not include broader organisational activities such as fundraising and evaluation.

Example: Music-Making Project

Overall aim: To improve access to employment for young ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

Intended outcomes (what do you plan to achieve?)	**Activities (what do you plan to do?)**
To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders	To provide music administration and studio management traineeships for young ex-offenders
To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs	To deliver workshops for young ex-offenders on writing CVs and creating music portfolios
To improve perceptions of candidates with a previous conviction among hiring managers in music-sector organisations	To run awareness-raising events at music industry conferences

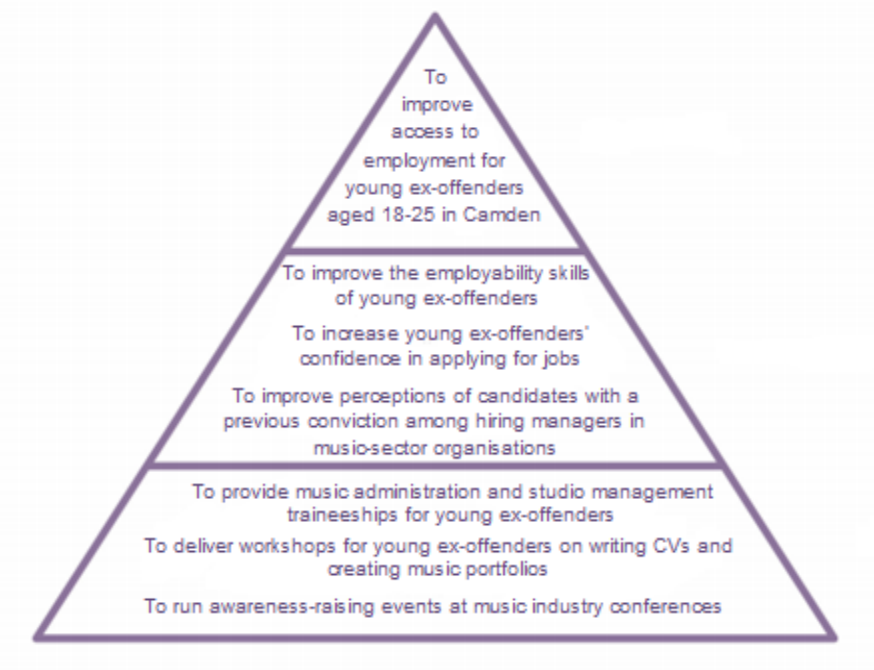
Example: Workforce/Organisational Development Project

Overall aim: To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early-years settings in the local area

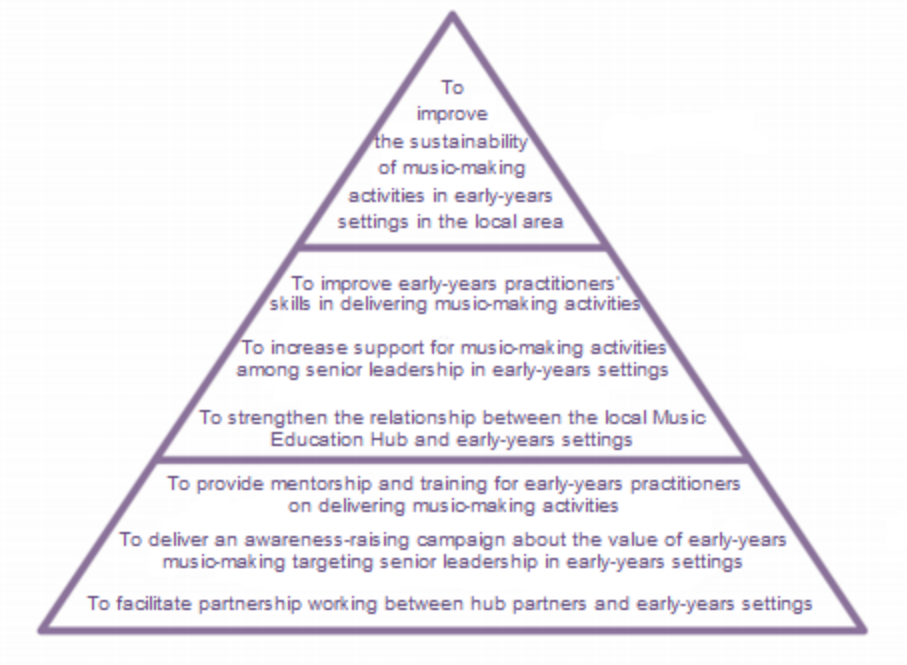
Intended outcomes (what do you plan to achieve?)	**Activities (what do you plan to do?)**
To improve early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	To provide mentorship and training for early years practitioners on delivering music-making activities
To increase support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early years settings	To deliver an awareness-raising campaign about the value of early years music-making targeting senior leadership in early years settings
To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early years settings	To facilitate partnership working between hub partners and early years settings

Reviewing your planning triangle

Once you have decided your project's overall aim, intended outcomes, and activities, you should put them all together in your planning triangle and review it to make sure it fits together logically. You can find completed planning triangles below for the example music-making project and example workforce/organisational development project:



Planning triangle for the example music-making project



Planning triangle for the example workforce/organisational development project

With this completed visual representation of your project, you can quickly and easily see how different parts of your project relate to the whole and explain it to others. If you follow all of the top tips on defining your overall aim, defining your intended outcomes, and developing your activities, you'll have a robust project plan, increasing the likelihood of successfully addressing the needs of your target group.

Key points to remember about planning your project

- Your project's **activities** are the work carried out in order to achieve its intended outcomes. In turn, your project's **intended outcomes** are the changes in skills, knowledge, or behaviour needed to overcome the barriers to achieving your project's overall **aim**.
- Using the planning triangle tool will help you to understand how your intended outcomes and activities will support the overall aim of your project.
- Using existing statistics, research and dialogue with potential participants will help you to evidence and articulate the need for your project.

Step 2: Monitoring your outcomes

Your completed planning triangle (please see Step 1: Planning your project) will guide you in the planning and delivery of your project. However, in order to understand the difference you are making, you also need to **monitor** your work. That is, you need to develop systematic ways of collecting data that allow you to check your progress toward your intended outcomes.

In your planning triangle, you described each of your intended outcomes by using a verb that indicated the direction of change (e.g. 'improve', 'increase', 'enhance', 'raise', 'strengthen'). When you monitor your work, you are checking how much movement has been made in this direction, or the distance travelled. For example, how much has your project improved young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs? How much has it strengthened the relationship between the music education hub and early years settings?

Monitoring is a process that should happen continually throughout your project in order to **evaluate** your work. That is, monitoring allows you to check that your project is supporting progress in the right direction and, if it's not, to make changes. If you're making progress in the right direction, it will provide evidence – and give you confidence – that you're delivering an effective project.

In order to monitor and evaluate your work, you need to decide what data to collect and how to collect it.

Choosing your indicators

Outcome **indicators** are specific, observable things that happen which allow you to monitor progress toward your intended outcomes. For example, if you are aiming to improve young people's employability skills, you need to think about how you will know whether these have developed – in this case, young people's self-assessment of their employability skills would be an indicator of their progress towards a project's intended musical outcome.

However, although an indicator can give you an idea of how much progress you're making towards an outcome, it doesn't show the full picture. An indicator only captures one perspective, making it subjective and unreliable on its own. If you rely just on, for example, young people's self-assessment, you'll be likely to end up with a biased perspective on their progress.

You should therefore have several indicators for each outcome to give you a range of perspectives on what's happening. By combining multiple indicators, you can overcome the weaknesses or intrinsic biases of any one indicator, giving your findings greater credibility and validity. If you combine the young people's self-assessment with the music leader's assessment of their musical skills, you'll get a more balanced understanding of how much progress they're making. You may also find it is helpful in some instances to ask young people to reflect on how far they have travelled over the course of a programme once it is underway, rather than at the outset and then end (e.g. what were your musical skills when you started the project, and what are your musical skills now). Either way, triangulation or reflection on self-assessments can provide a prompt for further discussion with participants about their progress, and even provide evidence of progress.

On the other hand, although it is important to have a range of indicators, you also need to be realistic about the number of indicators you'll monitor throughout your project. For Youth Music funding, you are required to have three indicators for each intended outcome.

The perspectives represented among your indicators may include feedback from your participants, music leaders, support workers, parents/carers, project manager, and other stakeholders. You could also consider external indicators from third-party perspectives. For example, the number and level of accreditations earned can be used as indicators of young people's engagement with education. Equally, you might already be collecting certain kinds of information as part of your monitoring systems, for example, attendance data. Think about whether this information could help you monitor the success of your outcomes.

When choosing your indicators, it is important to make sure that they can really help you to understand how much progress you are making toward your intended outcomes. For example, if your support workers don't have a musical background, their assessment of the young people's musical skills won't give you the best understanding of the participants' progress. Similarly, attendance data is a good indicator for an outcome around engagement, but if your outcome is about an improvement in skills or confidence, for example, consider whether attendance data alone will be enough to indicate change.

Example: Music-Making Project

Overall aim: To improve access to employment for ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

Intended outcome	**Indicators**
To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders	Young ex-offenders' self-assessment of their employability skills Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' employability skills Number and level of accreditations achieved
To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs	Young ex-offenders' self-assessment of their confidence in applying for jobs Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' job application materials Feedback from employers about participants' job applications and interviews
To improve perceptions of candidates with a previous conviction among hiring managers in music-sector organisations	Number of different employers hiring graduates of our programme Number of programme graduates receiving job offers from employers participating in the scheme Feedback from employers about the work skills of young people hired from our programme

Example: Workforce/Organisational Development Project

Overall aim: To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early years settings across the local area

Intended outcome	**Indicators**
To improve early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	Early years practitioners' self-assessment of their skills in delivering music-making activities Mentor/trainers' assessment of early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities Project manager's assessment of early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities
To increase support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early years settings	Self-reported level of support for music-making activities by senior leadership in early years settings Feedback from early years practitioners about the level of support for music-making activities among senior leadership in each setting Project manager's assessment of the level of support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early years settings
To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early years settings	Self-reported depth of partnerships between hub partners and early years settings Number of new partnerships between hub partners and early years settings Duration of new partnership agreements between hub partners and early years settings

Choosing your sources of evidence

When choosing your indicators, you will naturally start to think about how you will collect and record this data. The data that you capture in relation to your indicators are called **sources of evidence**. They are records of your indicators that allow you to measure or assess progress toward your intended outcomes. For example, if your indicator is young people's self-assessment of their musical skills, your sources of evidence for this indicator are the physical (or electronic) records of their self-assessments, such as evaluation scales, reflective diaries, or video interviews.

An indicator can have many different sources of evidence, and it is up to you to decide which source of evidence is the most effective way of collecting and recording data relating to that indicator. Different sources of evidence provide different types of data about your indicators, which have different levels of usefulness in different contexts. In particular, you need to decide whether your sources of evidence will provide quantitative or qualitative data. **Quantitative** data sources produce a number, quantity, amount or range. It includes sources of evidence like evaluation scales. These sources of evidence allow you to easily collect and analyse data from a large number of respondents but can provide a superficial view of what is happening. Although quantitative sources of evidence may appear to be more objective, it is important to remember that they can also carry biases. For example, evaluation scales may be quantitative, but they are still rooted in the subjective opinions of the people completing the scales.

A primary benefit of quantitative data is that they can enable you to compare your work with other projects happening across the sector, particularly if you use shared measurement tools. Shared measurement comes from multiple projects or organisations using the same tools to monitor and evaluate progress toward similar outcomes. These tools are typically validated, meaning that there has been research carried out to demonstrate their effectiveness at measuring these outcomes. Using shared measurement tools also helps funding bodies like Youth Music and other infrastructure organisations to collate data from a wide range of organisations into a national body of evidence of the impact of music-making.

Qualitative data is descriptive, and less easily measurable. It includes sources of evidence like reflective diaries and video interviews. These sources of evidence provide a more nuanced view of progress but are more labour-intensive to collect and analyse. With large target groups, it may not always be possible to collect and analyse qualitative data for every participant, and you may need to focus on a smaller sample.

Different sources of evidence for qualitative data can give vastly different results. For example, if you ask for young people's self-assessment of their musical skills in one-to-one interviews and in group contexts, they may provide different levels of information or even give entirely different assessments. It is important to make sure your sources of evidence are well matched to the respondent and the information you are seeking.

Source of Evidence	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
Accreditations achieved	An objective measurement	Not always appropriate for target participants
	If started at the beginning of the project, an accreditation is concrete evidence of a change or improvement in skill that can be cited as a result of the project	Sometimes costly
Feedback forms	Gives a viewpoint about the project other than your own May identify things you had not thought about	May not be fully reflective of participant's opinions: they may be saying what they believe you want to hear
Informal feedback through conversations and observations	Feedback gathered can often be more spontaneous or genuine 'off the cuff' remarks Captures the person's thoughts at that exact moment	Difficult to record spontaneously or recall exactly what was said later on
Notes, minutes, and emails	Good supporting evidence which is easy to dig out and provide alongside an evaluation report	Not always necessary/appropriate to share externally
	Often provides good anecdotal evidence about a particular child or session that might be forgotten later on or in a more formal interview/questionnaire setting	Rarely relevant as standalone evidence

Evaluation scales	Objective – can be used with a number of participants to measure the same factor. Can often be interpreted quantitatively to generate percentages, statistics etc. Can be used at beginning/middle/end of a project to track progress.	Can be time consuming if you are using scales to measure a large number of participants. Often rigid – some scales may not be appropriate for target participants, for example young people with literacy problems may need support to complete it themselves.
Reflective diaries	Useful for gathering observations from the participant's perspective, including things that they might not wish to say in an interview Can collect a high volume of data Data collection does not require a lot of organisational input as it is up to the participant	If too structured, the participant may not have the freedom to write what they really like. If too free, the participant may not know what to write. Time consuming for participant Analysis can be time consuming for organisation
Photos, videos, and recordings	Easy and quick to share if time is limited A good way of showing off participants' work resulting from the project delivered	Can be difficult to obtain the correct permission from parents/carers For evaluation purposes, they need to <u>show</u> us something – we always love to see pictures and videos of your projects but in this case they need to demonstrate a change rather than just document what you did.

Observations	If recorded over a prolonged period of time, observations can demonstrate real change or development in groups and individuals Often more ethical than other more intrusive methods	Often requires an extra staff member to make and record observations, which isn't always possible Can be difficult to keep consistent across a prolonged period of time People may behave differently if they know they are being observed
Focus groups (e.g. youth boards and councils)	Good for gathering a lot of different perspectives in one go Participants often steer the conversation to interesting topics that interviewer may not have thought about, but are important.	Some participants may dominate the conversation – or shy away from saying anything. Interviewer may have to mediate or regain control if the conversation veers off topic.
Structured interviews	Allows you to design your own list of interview questions to find out exactly what you want to know Can be used with a number of participants to measure the same factor	Strict Time consuming if conducting a lot of interviews Often contain a lot of closed end questions, which tend to generate less rich data
Semi-structured interviews	Involves more open-ended questions which generate richer data, whilst still having a list of questions to guide the interviewer Allows you to design your own list of interview questions to find out exactly what you want to know	Time consuming if conducting a lot of interviews Although more flexible than structured interviews, this can make it harder to ensure the conversation stays relevant Answers will differ more, making them harder to compare to those of another interviewee

Creative methods	Adaptable to exactly what you want to measure	Can require a lot of thought and planning to be effective
	Provides a bespoke method of data collection for working with people who might have more complex needs	May be daunting to participants – needs to remain fairly simple
Case studies	Detailed, personal, in-depth study of an individual participant and their story	Gives information from the perspective of just one individual
		Very personal, meaning it is unlikely that every participant will be willing

As you can see, all types of sources of evidence have their strengths and their weaknesses. Therefore, as with indicators, it is important to use a variety of sources of evidence so that these strengths and weaknesses balance each other out. By **triangulating** your indicators and sources of evidence, or verifying your findings by combining multiple perspectives and methods, you can overcome the weaknesses of any one perspective or method, giving your evaluation greater credibility and validity.

In choosing your indicators and sources of evidence, you should ensure that they are appropriate to your project, taking into account the ages and circumstances of your participants and that they will draw out the data you need in a positive way that will engage your participants. For example, if your project is working with children who aren't confident with reading and writing, you will have more success collecting self-assessment data via video interviews than via written questionnaires. If your participants experience social anxiety, they will be likely to feel more comfortable providing feedback in one-on-one situations than in a group.

Additionally, you can embrace musical creativity in your approach to monitoring and evaluation! For example, you could use recordings of participants' music-making as a prompt for them to reflect on their musical skills, perhaps comparing recordings from the beginning of the project and the end of the project. Or you could ask participants to draw a picture or write a short story that reflects on their development through your project.

Whatever sources of evidence you decide on, it is important to consider at the outset how long it will take you to collect and analyse your sources of evidence *before* you finalise your evaluation plan. For example, it may seem prudent to record all music-making sessions to use as evidence, but will you have capacity to review hours of video footage? Who will analyse the footage, and how long would it take them?

Likewise, it is important to consider the number of people you survey (i.e. your sample size). It is likely you would not have time to interview every participant taking part in your programme of work, but by interviewing a representative sample from across the programme you can present the range of experiences. Equally, if you are working with thousands of young people, you would not necessarily expect to be able to survey every participant to collect quantitative data, so you should think how to best represent the participants across your programme, and who it is most important to survey. A questionnaire completed by a participant who has attended a years' worth of activity is likely to be much more revealing that one completed by a participant taking part in a single taster session.

Example: Music-Making Project
Aim: To improve the access to employment for ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

Intended Outcome	**Indicators**	**Sources of Evidence**
To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders	Young ex-offenders' self-assessment of their employability skills	Evaluation scales
	Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' employability skills	Music leader reflective diaries
	Number and level of accreditations achieved	Arts Award and NOCN certificates
To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs	Young ex-offenders' self-assessment of their confidence in applying for jobs	Reflective diaries Annotated job application materials
	Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' job application materials	Annotated job application materials
	Feedback from employers about participants' job	Email/telephone interviews

	applications and interviews	
To improve employers' perceptions of candidates with a previous conviction	Number of different employers hiring graduates of our programme	Records kept by project staff
	Number of programme graduates receiving job offers from employers participating in the scheme	Records kept by project staff
	Feedback from employers about the work skills of young people hired from our programme	Follow-up email/telephone interviews

Example: Workforce/Organisational Development Project
Overall aim: To improve the sustainability of music-making projects in early-years settings across the local area

Intended Outcome	**Indicators**	**Sources of Evidence**
To improve early-years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	Early-years practitioners' self-assessment of their skills in delivering music-making activities	Reflective notes using Youth Music Professional Practice Scale and Youth Music Quality Framework
	Mentor/trainer's assessment of early-years' practitioners skills in delivering music-making activities	Session observations notes using Youth Music Professional Practice Scale and Youth Music Quality Framework
	Project manager's assessment of early-years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	Session observations notes using Youth Music Professional Practice Scale and Youth Music Quality Framework

To increase support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early-years settings	Self-reported level of support for music-making activities by senior leadership in early-years settings	One-to-one interviews with senior leadership in early-years settings
	Feedback from early-years practitioners about the level of support for music-making activities among senior leadership in their setting	One-to-one interviews with early-years practitioners
	Project manager's assessment of the level of support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early-years settings	Minutes from meetings with senior leadership in early-years settings
To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early-years settings	Depth of partnerships between hub partners and early-years settings	Follow-up online survey to hub partners and early-years settings
	Number of new partnerships between hub partners and early-years settings	One-to-one interviews with senior leadership in early years settings
	Duration of new partnerships between hub partners and early-years settings	

Collecting your data

When choosing your indicators and sources of evidence, you should also think about the practicalities of collecting this data to make sure that your plan is realistic and achievable. Make sure you have thought carefully all the data you are already collecting and considered how (if at all!) this could be of use in your evaluation in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. We would encourage you to ask for input from your delivery team about your monitoring and evaluation plan, including how best to collect this data, as you'll need their

buy-in to ensure that it happens smoothly and effectively. Moreover, you need to ensure that your delivery team is confident in what they need to do and, crucially, why.

Since you want to measure the change that happens as a result of your work, you need to collect your monitoring and evaluation data at least twice during your project: at the beginning and at the end. The data collected at the beginning of the project is called the **baseline**. Its purpose is to show what the situation is like before your project intervenes. The data collected at the end shows the outcomes of your project.

In some instances, you may find it problematic or even misleading to collect baseline data at the beginning of your intervention. In these cases, it can be useful to use reflective questionnaires to explore how young people feel they have developed over the course of the programme – either by asking people to review and comment on their baseline assessments, or by asking them to evaluate where they thought where in their first session, compared to where they feel they are now once the programme is underway. In either case, these can be triangulated to add rigour to the measurement.

You may also find it useful to collect data at additional points throughout your project to help you monitor your progress. The number of data collection points you choose to have will depend on the length of your project.

In order to track the change throughout your project, your indicators and sources of evidence should be the exactly the same at each data collection point (including asking the same questions to the same interview respondents).

Ideally, your data collection processes should be fully integrated into the delivery of your project - make time for collecting data within your session so that it doesn't feel like an add-on. Be upfront with your participants about your data collection plans, introducing the idea early on in your project and ensuring that you give them the opportunity for discussion or questions. Participants are more likely to see it as a positive process if you explain that collecting data gives them the opportunity to voice their opinions, see the progress they've made, and shape future projects.

Example: Music-Making Project

Aim: To improve access to employment for ex-offenders aged 18-25 in Camden

Intended Outcome	Indicators	Sources of Evidence	When will it be collected	Who will collect it
To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders	Young ex-offenders' self-assessment of their employability skills	Evaluation scales	At the beginning of the project and end of every session	Young people to complete, music leaders to collect
	Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' employability skills	Music leader reflective diaries	At the beginning, midpoint, and end of the project	Music leaders to complete
	Number and level of accreditations achieved	Arts Award and NOCN certificates	At the end of the project	Music leaders
To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs	Young ex-offenders' self-assessment of their confidence in applying for jobs	Reflective diaries	Monthly	Career advisers/workshop leaders
	Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' job application materials	Annotated job application materials	At the beginning, midpoint, and end of the project	Project manager
	Feedback from employers about participants' job applications and interviews	Email/telephone interviews	Monthly	Career advisers/workshop leaders

To improve employers' perceptions of candidates with a previous conviction	Number of different employers hiring graduates of our programme	Records kept by project staff	Monthly record updates	Project manager
	Number of programme graduates receiving job offers from employers participating in the scheme	Records kept by project staff	Monthly record updates	Project manager
	Feedback from employers about the work skills of young people hired from our programme	Follow-up email/telephone interviews	One month after start of employment for any young person hired from our programme	Project manager Career advisers/workshop leaders

Example: Workforce/Organisational Development Project

Aim: To improve the sustainability of music-making activities in early-years settings across the local area

Intended Outcome	Indicators	Source of Evidences	When will it be collected	Who will collect it
To improve early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	Early years-practitioners' self-assessment of their skills in delivering music-making activities	Reflective notes using Youth Music Professional Practice Scale and Youth Music Quality Framework	At the beginning of the project, at every midterm, and at the end of every term	Mentor/trainer or project manager
	Mentor/trainer's assessment of early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	Session observation notes using Youth Music Professional Practice Scale and Youth Music Quality Framework	At the beginning of the project and at the end of every term	Project manager
	Project manager's assessment of early years practitioners' skills in delivering music-making activities	Session observation notes using Youth Music Professional Practice Scale and Youth Music Quality Framework	At the beginning and end of the project	Project manager
To increase support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early years settings	Self-reported level of support for music-making activities by senior leadership in early years settings	One-to-one interviews with senior leadership in early years settings	At the beginning and end of the project	Project manager
	Feedback from early-years practitioners about the level of support for music-making activities among senior leadership in their settings	One-to-one interviews with early years practitioners		
	Project manager's assessment of the	Minutes from meetings with senior leadership in		

	level of support for music-making activities among senior leadership in early years settings	early years settings		
To strengthen the relationship between the local Music Education Hub and early years settings	Depth of partnership between hub partners and early years settings Number of new partnerships between hub partners and early years settings Duration of new partnerships between hub partners and early years settings	Follow-up online survey to hub partners and early years settings	One month after the end of the project	Project manager

Ethics and consent

You will need to obtain consent for data collection from participants (for those aged 16 or over) or a parent/carer/guardian (if under 16). You should ensure everyone has clear understanding of the collection methods you'll be using, what the data will be used for, and ask them to sign a consent form to keep as a record.

Everyone has the right to refuse to participate in the evaluation process at any point and you must destroy all data relating to that person if they wish to withdraw from the process.

Taking part in any research exercise can be a reflective process and you should be equipped to support the children and young people if they find it difficult. This is especially true when working with vulnerable children and young people. Make it clear that everyone is free to stop participating at any point, and be prepared to signpost young people to appropriate services if you cannot deal with any issues raised. It is important to remember that no evaluation should come at the cost of the wellbeing of the participant.

For further information on research ethics please see the Social Research Association's guidelines: http://the-sra.org.uk/research-ethics/

Data protection and privacy

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the processing of information relating to individuals that your organisation may hold. You are responsible for the secure storage of information to ensure confidentiality at every step of the process. Under no circumstances should a third party be able to identify which data corresponds to which person.

You can ensure anonymity by using an ID system which assigns a unique identifying number or code (ID number) to each individual. Any piece of data you store should not contain the name of the participant, only their ID number. You should store your ID system, which matches names with their corresponding ID numbers, separately from any other data you keep.

All data should be treated in confidence and stored securely. You should anonymise any data as soon as possible after collection.

For further information on data protection and privacy, please see the Social Research Association's guidelines: http://the-sra.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/MRS-SRA-DP-Guidelines-updated-April-2013.pdf

Key points to remember about monitoring your outcomes

- Monitoring your outcomes allows you to check that your project is progressing in the right direction. If it is, you have evidence to show your impact. And if not, you can make changes.
- An **indicator** is an observable marker of progress that allows you to monitor your advancement toward your intended outcomes. For each intended outcome, you are required to set three indicators from a range of different perspectives, and these three indicators should add up to give a balanced understanding of how much progress the project is making.

- A **source of evidence** is a record of your indicator that allows you measure or assess progress towards your outcome. You should try to collect a mix of qualitative and quantitative data from a range of sources in order to give your evaluation greater credibility and validity. You should think carefully about all the data you are already collecting, and what that might tell you.
- **Ethics and consent:** you should always ensure that your participants have a clear understanding of what their data will be used for, and keep as a record of their signed consent form. You have a responsibility to store data securely, and if anyone chooses to withdraw from the process you must destroy all data relating to that person.

Step 3: Analysing your evidence

Once you've collected all your data, the next step is to analyse it.

Analysis is the process of converting your raw data—such as assessment forms, photos, and video diaries—into useful information to help you monitor and evaluate your project. This information can then be used as evidence of your progress toward your intended outcomes.

Raw data alone isn't very informative. It's only when you take the time to carefully understand what it shows that findings become clear. When reporting on the outcomes of your project, you need to analyse the data in order to guide your reader, pointing out the trends and patterns that you've identified so that they understand how you reached your conclusion.

- Start by analysing the evidence for each indicator separately

For example, you might have chosen to measure participants' employability skills by using two different sources of evidence:

1. Evaluation scales showing participants' self-assessment of their employability skills
2. Evaluation scales showing the music leaders' assessment of the participants' employability skills

You should analyse the evaluation scales from each group separately rather than combining them into a single numerical analysis, because each indicator represents a different perspective.

As you analyse your evidence, keep sense-checking your findings to see if they fit with your overall impressions and expectations. This will help you to avoid errors in your analysis and understand the limitations of your data. It will also mean that can you to examine your initial impressions and think about whether they're reflected in reality.

Analysing quantitative evidence

Quantitative evidence can be a useful way of showing overall progress toward an intended outcome across the cohort of participants on your project. In order to show this progress, you first need to convert your raw data into averages and trends. This section will look at two different ways of analysing your quantitative data: by level of change and by likelihood of change.

In this example, a project has measured participants' self-assessment of their team-working skills by collecting evaluation scales from them at half-termly intervals. (Notice that this table only includes participants for whom a full data set is available. For the purposes of this example, the participant names have been included – however for a real data set it would be important to redact any identifying characteristics of your sample).

On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), I would rate my current level of team-working skills…

Name	Baseline	Term 1 half-term	Term 1 end	Term 2 half-term	Term 2 end	Term 3 half-term	Term 3 end	Overall Change
Apoorva	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-2
Brendan	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
Chui-Yip	3	3	3	3	2	2	4	1
Demir	2	2	3	3	4	2	4	2
Elisabeth	2	2	3	2	4	3	3	1
François	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1
Gabriella	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	1
Hugh	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	0
Ioana	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	1
Jamal	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1

Using this data you can calculate a number of different things:

- The average rating of all participants at each data collection point
- The overall change for each participant
- The average overall change for all participants

To measure these ratings and changes, you firstly need to simplify the figures into averages.

The **mean average** is calculated by adding up all the values and dividing by the number of values. The mean is more commonly used but can be skewed by a small number of outlying values.

The **median average** is calculated by arranging the list of numbers from smallest to largest, then choosing the figure in the middle. (If there is an even number of numbers in a list, it is calculated as the mean of the two middle values.)The median is often a better indication of what is typical, but it works best when you have a large data set.

You'll need to decide which average is more meaningful to use for your particular data set. The table below shows both types of averages, but the rest of this analysis will use the mean average.

On a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), I would rate my current level of team-working skills…

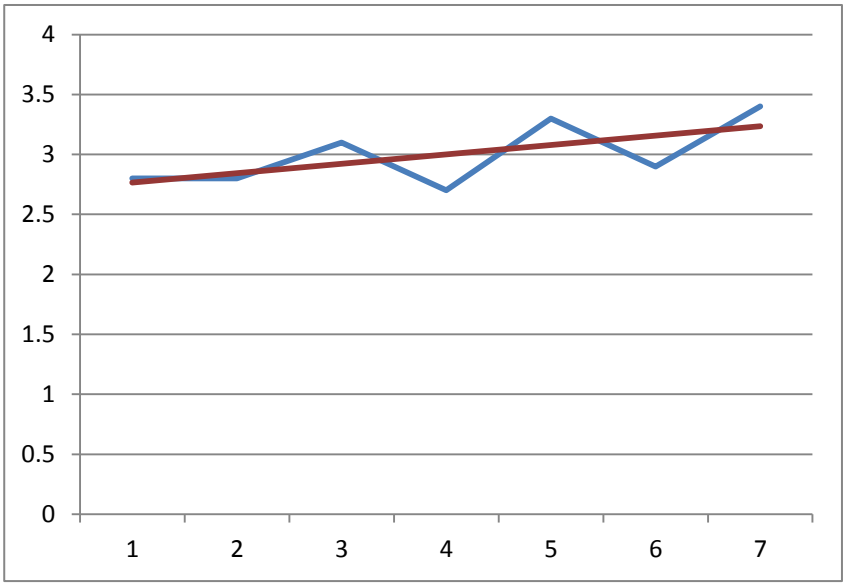
Name	**Baseline**	**Term 1 half-term**	**Term 1 end**	**Term 2 half-term**	**Term 2 end**	**Term 3 half-term**	**Term 3 end**	**Overall Change**
Apoorva	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	-2
Brendan	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
Chui-Yip	3	3	3	3	2	2	4	1
Demir	2	2	3	3	4	2	4	2
Elisabeth	2	2	3	2	4	3	3	1
François	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	1
Gabriella	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	1
Hugh	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	0
Ioana	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	1
Jamal	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1
Mean	**2.8**	**2.8**	**3.1**	**2.7**	**3.3**	**2.9**	**3.4**	**0.6**
Median	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**2.5**	**3.5**	**1**

Once you've calculated the averages, you'll start to notice trends and patterns.

For example:

- Seven out of 10 participants' ratings were higher at the end of the project than at the beginning of the project. Two participants' ratings were the same at the beginning and the end of the project. One participant's rating went down from the beginning to the end of the project. This means that overall, 70% of participants believed that their team-working skills had improved through this project.
- The average overall rating was highest at the end of each term.
- Overall, participants' ratings did go up over the course of the project, with an average change of 0.6.

You can also visualise this data by creating a chart. The example below includes both a line chart of the average self-assessment rating at each point (in blue) and a trend line (in red) showing the general course of progress toward the intended outcome.



The trend line makes it easier to see the overall direction and rate of travel toward the outcome. It also allows you to pinpoint when the actual averages outperformed or underperformed the trend. As you can see in the chart above, although the average self-assessment rating fluctuates over the course of the project, there is a slight upward trend overall. This confirms the calculated average increase of 0.6 out of 5 in their self-assessment rating.

Depending on what types of data you collected and the size of your data set, there may also be other useful ways of analysing your evidence, such as calculating the **mode average** (the most frequently occurring value) or the **range** (the difference between the highest and lowest values).

Analysing qualitative evidence

Qualitative data sources can seem overwhelming. For example, if you've collected reflective diaries from the participants with self-evaluations of their progress through the project, you may find that the diaries contain lots of information that doesn't relate to any of your

outcomes. You may also find that the diaries contain reflections relating to musical, personal, and social outcomes—all combined together within the same entry.

Coding your data

- The first step in analysing qualitative evidence is to identify which data relates to the particular outcomes that you are measuring. You can do this by **coding** your data.

Coding is the process of labelling your data so that it can be easily retrieved at a later stage for further analysis. It's similar to using a hashtag on social media. People who are interested in a particular topic can search for that hashtag to find all posts related to that topic, and your use of that hashtag will ensure that your post shows up in their search results. Similarly, the purpose of coding evaluation data is to develop a way to easily find all the data labelled with a particular code and see it all in one place.

- Your coding method can take many different forms, and you can do it at the end of your project or as you go along.

For example, if the reflective diaries are in notebooks, you can code relevant parts of an entry using a different coloured sticky tab for each code. When you want to find everything related to a given code, you can scan through all the notebooks for entries with the corresponding colour of sticky tab.

If you prefer to work electronically, you can create a spreadsheet to keep track of all the data you have against your coding scheme (see table below). You can then use a filter to find all the data linked to a given code. Your organisation may also have specialist qualitative data analysis software that you can use for coding. Your choice of method will depend on the amount of data you're collecting, the number of people analysing the data, and your preferred way of working.

- Start by coding your data against your intended outcomes. Work carefully through the data that you've collected, and apply codes to the parts of the data that are relevant to each outcome – whether that data is positive or negative.
- If parts of the data are relevant to more than one outcome, apply a separate code for each outcome.
- Ensure you only code parts of the data that are relevant to your outcomes. If parts of the data aren't relevant to any of your outcomes, they don't need to be coded, but

you might want to flag them up to come back to later if you notice anything else particularly interesting appearing in the data set.

Remember that your participants (or whoever else is filling in the diary) may not be using the same language as you. For example, in the table below, the first outcome concerns 'employability skills' – however, the young people are unlikely to use this term, so you may need to read between the lines for things that they've written about working with others, patience, motivation etc.

- At this stage, don’t stop and try to analyse your evidence. Just keep going until you’ve coded all the relevant data against your intended outcomes.

Source of Evidence	Respondent	Date Collected	Content	Code
Reflective Diary	Apoorva	Session 1 – 10 September	*When I went in the room and saw all the different equipment I didn't really know what I was doing there, I wasn't drawn to anything in particular. We got shown round all the different bits of equipment and started working with a sound editing computer programme but I got annoyed at myself because I couldn't think of anything I wanted to do and someone else in my group seemed to get the hang of it really quick. Mine sounded rubbish but it was interesting to get the chance to see it all on the screens.*	Outcome 1 – To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders
Reflective Diary	Apoorva	Session 15 – 17 December	*I've just finished recording the first song for my Arts Award portfolio, it's my mates playing Chasing Cars. At one part of the day I could feel myself getting annoyed with them because they kept getting this one bit wrong. But it will take me a while to get it edited anyway so I can always go back and ask them to redo it if it sounds bad. I'm excited to get started on the mix.*	Outcome 1 - To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders
Reflective Diary	Apoorva	Session 1 – 10 September	No data relating to Outcome 2.	Outcome 2 – To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs
Reflective Diary	Apoorva	Session 15 – 17 December	*I was late to the session today because I got held up after an interview I had to get trained up to be a mentor for kids who are in trouble like I was but once I caught up I managed to get quite a bit recorded for my track*	Outcome 2 – To increase young ex-offenders' confidence in applying for jobs

Reviewing and analysing your data

- Once you've finished coding your data, you can then **review** everything you've coded under each particular outcome and **analyse** its content.

- As you review the data, keep an eye out for trends and patterns.

For example, if analysing reflective diaries, you would read all the coded data from the entries at the beginning of the project and compare it with the coded data from the entries in subsequent sessions and at the end of the project. How does the participants' self-evaluation of their employability skills change throughout the project?

Different ways of reading the data will give you different understandings of the group's collective and individual progress toward this outcome. You may also choose to read through the diary entries for each participant in chronological order to get a better feel for their individual journeys through the project.

- When reviewing your data, remember that you are looking for **evidence of progress toward the intended outcome**.

With the reflective diaries, this would involve comparing their diary entries at the beginning of the project (i.e. your baseline) and end of the project. For example, you may find that at the beginning of the project, participants talked about their employability skills in more negative terms, and by the end of the project, their reflections became more positive.

In any piece of qualitative research, you are looking to explore the range of experiences and opinions across the participants, not the number. Both positive and negative views are an important part of the picture and are equally valid and as such should be given equal weighting in your discussion.

Session 1
10 September

Apoorva – When I went in the room and saw all the different equipment I didn't really know what I was doing there, I wasn't drawn to anything in particular. We got shown round all the different bits of equipment and started working with a sound editing computer programme but I got annoyed at myself because I couldn't think of anything I wanted to do and someone else in my group seemed to get the hang of it really quick. Mine sounded rubbish but it was interesting to get the chance to see it all on the screens.

Brendan – To be honest I'm not sure if it's my thing. It was a bit boring and I'm not very creative so I'll try it for a few more weeks because my youth worker is making me but my gut feeling is that it's not for me.

Session 15
17 December

Apoorva – I've just finished recording the first song for my Arts Award portfolio, it's my mates playing Chasing Cars. At one part of the day I could feel myself getting annoyed with them because they kept getting this one bit wrong. But it will take me a while to get it edited anyway so I can always go back and ask them to redo it if it sounds bad. I'm excited to get started on the mix.

Brendan – I spent most of the session helping Gabriella with a bit of her mix because I'm a bit further ahead than her and she was struggling with some of the equipment. She said at the end that she was glad we worked together because she wasn't really enjoying herself before I started helping her and that made me proud of myself for sticking it out

Example qualitative data comparison: beginning and end of project

In diary entries from the end of the project, participants might reflect on how far they think they've progressed since the start. This can be particularly useful if baseline data is missing for any individual.

When I first started here, I thought it was boring and I could have sworn I was going to stop coming at the first possible point. Now I've written 2 songs and I'm working on my third, and the music leader thinks I should start recording them next term so I can have something to be really proud of.

If you have a large data set, you may find it helpful to visualise your data by creating a word cloud showing the most frequently used words at the beginning of the project and comparing it with a word cloud showing the most frequently used words at the end of the project:

Drawing conclusions

- As you review the coded data and start to identify trends and patterns, write down your initial thoughts and observations.
- Review your data again, and check that the data supports your analysis. If not, ask yourself how you can revise your analysis to make it better reflect your data. You can also ask a colleague to explore the data and check your analysis to see if they reach the same conclusion.

Keep in mind that although the data might seem to relate to an area of change, it might not necessarily provide evidence of progress toward the intended outcome. For example, this quote from a music leader's final assessment of a participant at first appears to provide evidence of a musical outcome:

> *Jamal loved jamming on the guitar and would often sign out one of the centre's guitars to take home. His mum told the youth workers that he would practice for hours at home every night, working on material that we had learned in that week's session.*

This quote tells us about Jamal's love of the instrument, but it does not tell us whether he progressed in his enjoyment of music-making or his technical skills on the guitar. In order for this quote to be meaningful, it would need to be paired with evidence showing that the participant previously had no interest in music-making or that the many hours of practice helped improve his technical skills on the guitar.

Conversely, absence of data can sometimes tell you a lot. In the example qualitative coding table, you can see that in week 1, there was no available data from Apoorva about their confidence in applying for jobs, but in week 12, it was clear from the participant's diary that they had applied for a job/training opportunity and been invited to an interview. When added to other sources of evidence, you may be able to draw a conclusion from this omission of data at the baseline point about the participant's confidence (or lack of confidence) in applying for jobs at different points of the project.

Discovering unintended outcomes

The process of coding your data against your intended outcomes, then analysing it for evidence of progress is a top-down approach that focuses on expected findings.

You may also wish to take a bottom-up approach by coding any unintended outcomes that you identified through the process of reviewing the evidence.

For example, when reviewing reflective diaries, you may find that many of the participants talk about the impact of the project on their understanding of music professions and the music industry, although this was not an intended outcome of your project. In this case, you should go back through all your evidence and apply a new code for this unintended outcome to any relevant data. (If you already have a good idea of your unintended outcomes through your involvement with the project delivery, you may wish to begin applying this code from the outset.) Once you've completed this process, you can review all the data you coded within this outcome and analyse its content the same way that you did for your intended outcomes.

Triangulating your evidence

Once you've analysed all the different data sources, you'll need to consider whether the evidence for each indicator supports the same conclusion about the level of progress toward the intended outcome. The technique of using multiple indicators and sources of evidence in order to check your findings is called **triangulation** (because you need at least three different sources to draw robust conclusions).

- Combining different perspectives and methods allows you to overcome the intrinsic biases or weaknesses of any single perspective or method.

Imagine you relied solely on your participants' self-assessment of their musical skills to tell you about their progress: people are intrinsically biased, and you would have no way of knowing how accurate their self-assessments were. They might over-report their progress out of bravado or under-report due to a lack of self-confidence. If you combine the participants' self-assessments with the music leaders' assessments, you'll have a much better idea of how much progress participants have made through the project.

- As you triangulate your indicators and sources of evidence, you may find that they have varying levels of agreement with each other. If they all support the same conclusion, your work is done – now you just need to write it up! However, more commonly, you will find that different sources don't always match up in a straightforward way. In this case, your task will be to determine the true level of progress toward your intended outcome by considering the relative strengths and weaknesses of your different indicators and sources of evidence.

Triangulation: an example scenario

Your intended outcome is increased employability skills, and your indicators are the participants' self-assessment of these skills, the music leader's assessment of the participants' skills, and the level and number of accreditations achieved.

The participants' self-assessment shows only a small increase in their skills, but the music leader reports that the participants have made significant progress in their employability skills, and the majority of the participants achieved Arts Award Bronze—the first time any of them has achieved a qualification in an arts subject.

Therefore, you will want to look more closely at the outlier: why do the participants' self-assessments show only a small increase in their employability skills? Did they over-rate their skills at the beginning of the project or under-rate their skills at the end of the project? In either case, you should think about why this could be. What are the weaknesses of self-assessment that may have led the participants to over-rate or under-rate their skills?

Since the music leader's assessment and the level and number of accreditations achieved both suggest that the participants have made significant progress toward this outcome, two out of the three indicators agree with each other. You may therefore conclude that progress has indeed been made.

You may find it helpful, if appropriate, to explore the participants reflections on this and discuss if they feel like progress has been made and even discuss how their self-assessment may have differed and why.

Key points to remember about analysing your evidence

- Analysis is the process of converting your raw data from all your data sources —such as assessment forms, photos, and video diaries—into useful information to help you monitor and evaluate your project. This information can then be used as **evidence** of your progress toward your intended outcomes.
- Analysing quantitative evidence is done by converting your numerical data into averages and trends. Analysing qualitative evidence is more about pulling out themes and ideas that are relevant to your outcomes.
- Triangulation is the process of using multiple indicators and sources of evidence in order to back up and confirm your findings. It involves combining different perspectives and methods to make allowances for any biases or weaknesses.
- The process of analysis will give you an idea of how well you are progressing towards your intended outcomes and how you think things might progress even further in the future. These findings and ideas are essential in evaluating the impact of your project.

Step 4: Writing your evaluation

When writing up your evaluation, you should structure your report in a way that corresponds with the outcomes and indicators that you have set. Presenting your outcomes under separate headings as per the online form will not only help the readers of your report to digest all the information, but will also help to keep you focused on what you are writing. There is likely to be some overlap between outcomes, but you can explain this in your document (for example you might say “see more on this topic under outcome 4”.)

Tell us how many responses you collected and when you took them. We know it won’t always be possible to collect responses from every young person at every point of the way, so if you tell us this and let us know how many of the young people you are including in your analysis it will be much clearer (and more accurate). If you are collecting data at various points of your project, you may not get a full set of responses from one or two young people – maybe if they start the project late, or don’t finish it. In this case, it would be wise to consider how these responses might affect the assumptions you make about your data – that isn’t to say you should exclude them altogether, but you might think about whether it’s accurate to include them in statistical analysis, for example.

Make sure all your data has been anonymised. If data includes real names or contact information of anyone involved in the project, it could violate the data protection responsibilities you have for your participants, their parents, and the workforce (for more information, see the Ethics and Data Protection paragraphs in Section 2).

Work chronologically: if you have collected data at several points of the project, tell us the situation at the beginning of the project (baseline data) and use the narrative to compare it to later responses collected, so that it is clear to the reader what change has occurred. We appreciate there are some circumstances where you won’t able to collect extensive data at every point of the project, but the purpose of your evaluation report is to determine whether a change or improvement has been made. As a minimum, if you are able to collect data at the beginning and end points of your project, you should be able to carry out basic analysis to decide whether or not this change or improvement has occurred.

Describe the emergent trends and themes in your data. With qualitative data, if, for instance, you’ve carried out interviews with participants, parents and teachers, and they’re all talking about the same thing, let us know. In the same way, if you notice in your quantitative data

that the average scores from Likert scales are increasing or decreasing, tell us why it's interesting and what you think it means.

Use selected quotes in your evaluation to demonstrate overall progress toward your intended outcome. You may wish to use quotes showing overall trends or identify particular case studies. You may also wish to include quotes from the outliers and examine why they differ from the rest.

If you submit photos or videos as evidence, make sure to describe what is happening and explain how they demonstrate progress toward your intended outcome.

Tell us about any surprises in the data. We understand that trends may not always show improvement – if you spot something like this, explain why you think it happened and how you intend to respond to it. Similarly, if something has improved at a greater scale or faster pace than you anticipated, consider why that might be. This can sometimes be the most valuable information to share with Youth Music, and with other projects, so people can learn from mistakes or approaches that haven't had the desired effect.

Tell us about the limitations of the data. There will sometimes be issues with collecting full data sets so it's good practice to consider that when you write the full report. Write about the external factors that might have contributed to the outcomes of your project – for example, if any of your participants are also having external music lessons, these might have an impact on their improving skills alongside the work you're doing with them.

What not to do:

- Don't just tell us what data you've collected. Summarise the findings of the data (providing examples where relevant) and explain how you interpret it. In order to convince your reader that the outcome has been fully or partially achieved, a detailed analysis is crucial.

- Don't simply submit your raw data without commenting on it. The data you have collected is most meaningful when it is embedded into the narrative of your report and linked back to the project and its outcomes.

Example project evaluation report

This example demonstrates each of the 'what to do' steps and how to use them when you write your evaluation report. It is made up of extracts from high quality evaluation reports submitted to Youth Music (these have been adapted and changed in order to preserve the anonymity of the organisations and ensure continuity with the narrative of the example project).

This example shows a write-up for just one outcome – you would need to do a similar write-up of each of your outcomes.

The numbers of each 'what to do' step are indicated in brackets throughout the example report.

Outcome 1

To improve the employability skills of young ex-offenders

Indicators for Outcome 1

- Young ex-offenders' assessment of their own employability skills
- Music leaders' assessment of young ex-offenders' employability skills
- Number and level of accreditations achieved

Sources of Evidence for Outcome 1

- Evaluation scales
- Music leader reflective diaries
- Arts Award and NOCN certificates

a) Indicator and source of evidence 1 (150 words)

Of 70 participants, 59 returned evaluations at the beginning(84%).We collected the next set of data halfway through the project, and at the end.(2)

At the beginning:(4)

- 22% rated their motivation to find employment as strong/fairly strong and 14% felt they had a good idea of the job they would like to apply for.
- 24% felt they had the necessary skillset for a job in a customer service environment
- 29% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel good about myself'.

By the end: (4)

- 83% rated their motivation to find employment as strong/fairly strong and 69% felt they had a good idea of the job they would like to apply for.
- 44% felt they had the necessary skillset for a job in customer service. This is not as high as we anticipated (8), but we have considered this further in the reflection below.
- 88% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement 'I feel good about myself'.

b) Indicator and source of evidence 2 (150 words)

Music leaders completed reflective diaries at the end of every session, providing comments on the young people's personal development, especially in terms of employment. Observations of one young person, David* (3), illustrate the distance travelled: (6)

"David's editing has progressed this week but there is still work to be done. He took quite a strong leadership approach in the group session demonstrating a confident streak in him that we haven't seen before. However, he got frustrated with one of the other boys in the group and stormed off to work on his own half way through the session."– ML observation, week 3

"On his way out today David told me he was interested in training to be a care worker. He wasn't convinced he should go for it but the fact he has acknowledged it shows progress, both in his confidence and in his consideration of others." - ML observation, week 10

c) Indicator and source of evidence 3 (150 words)

At the beginning of the project, some young people seemed reluctant to start an Arts Award, with one or two commenting that they didn't want to put in the extra work towards gaining qualifications, they just wanted to have a bit of fun. However, this reluctance started to lift and 62 of the young people were awarded their Bronze Arts Award earlier this month. (5) A few have expressed an interest in progressing on to Silver while others are looking forward to using their portfolios and certificates on their CVs.(4)

The NOCN qualifications were a little harder to come by as they involved extra preparation beyond the remit of what the young people needed to do for their Arts Award portfolios. However 30 young people were entered for their Level 1 Certificate in Employability and we are awaiting the results. We anticipate that at least two thirds will achieve this goal.

Reflecting on the above, summarise what the indicators collectively demonstrate about your progress toward this outcome. In your discussion, you may wish to consider the strengths and limitations of the data you collected and any anomalies in your findings. Do all your indicators suggest movement in the same direction? If not, can you suggest why? (300 words)

We have seen a great deal of progress towards this outcome, which is mostly evidenced by the young people's perception of their increased employability skills, but supported by their accreditations and our Music Leaders' observations. The most pertinent result is that our participants feel better about themselves and have found motivation to enter employment in the coming weeks and months, following the end of the project. (5)

There were those who were less positive in their final evaluation scales, and we consulted them on the reasons why this might be. Reasons include feeling that they needed some more direct one-on-one sessions with a careers adviser, or wanting to follow a more specific route like healthcare or cooking rather than a general customer service role. For those who were still unsure, we plan to refer them to our partners who can offer advice that is more specific to their needs.(8) This nevertheless demonstrates an awareness of what is required of them to enter employment professionally and confidently, and their willingness to improve is demonstrated in the successful completion of Arts Award and NOCN accreditation.

We recognise that there could be external factors affecting these improvements as well as the intervention of the project. For example, two of our participants whose parents have been very active in their efforts to help find the young people employment have been in contact with a separate careers specialist who has worked one-on-one with them for an hour a week for the final five weeks of the project. (9)

Finally our music leader observations have given us an insight into some of the specific skills the young people have honed, such as patience and team working, which will ultimately contribute to their successful entry into professional working environments.

Key points to remember about writing your evaluation

- When writing your report, remember to make the most out of the data you have collected by telling us what you think it means in terms of the progress you have made towards your outcomes. Telling us what data you collected is one thing, but it means so much more if you tell us what implications this data has for your project, its outcomes, and your future work.
- Tell us about any surprises in the data that you perhaps weren't expecting – for instance, if the data is telling you that your progress towards your intended outcomes isn't as far as you anticipated, that's OK, but tell us why and what you think about it. Equally, tell us about any limitations of your data, for example, if you've had issues with collecting from a particular source, make sure you highlight that in your report.

- It is important that you don’t submit your raw data without commenting on it. This doesn’t do your hard work justice, and it could also have implications for your data protection responsibilities.

Step 5: Sharing your findings

After all your hard work planning your project, measuring your outcomes, analysing your evidence, and writing your evaluation, it's important to share your findings so that others can learn from your project. Here are some ideas of ways you can do that.

Sharing internally

It's important to share your evaluation within your organisation in order to celebrate your achievements. Hearing about the project's impact can help your staff to feel more confident in their work and motivate them to deliver similar projects in the future. Additionally, the evaluation can help your organisation to review and improve its ways of working.

When sharing your evaluation internally, you should first think about who your audience is. Are you sharing it with all staff or only the project team? With delivery staff, management, trustees, or all of the above? You should tailor your message differently for each audience in order to ensure that it is interesting and relevant to their roles. Depending on the findings of your evaluation, you may also need to communicate it in way that is sensitive to your audience. For example, if your evaluation found that the delivery staff needed more training on working with children experiencing challenging circumstances, you will need to think about how to communicate this finding tactfully to them.

Next, you should consider the best way to share your findings in order to get your message across most effectively and engage your audience. For example, if you want to talk through the evaluation in detail with your project team in order to plan for the next project, you can ask people to read through the evaluation individually and come prepared to discuss it in a team meeting. If you're most interested in sharing your findings widely in order to keep staff updated about your organisation's achievements, you can highlight the key points in an all-staff newsletter.

It's also important to share your evaluation with your project partners. Strong evidence of impact can help them to more clearly see the value of the partnership and motivate them to work with you again on similar projects. The evaluation can also be a useful way for your organisations to reflect on the strength of the partnership and how you can improve your partnership working in the future.

Depending on the group of participants you worked with, it may also be appropriate to share your evaluation with them (either in full or just part of it). If you're sharing your evaluation with participants, you should think carefully about how best to present these findings in a way that is sensitive to their feelings and needs. You might also think about how your evaluation can support you in recruiting future participants: how can you best communicate the difference that your project can make in their lives, using language that will resonate with them?

Sharing externally

Sharing your evaluation with the wider music education sector can help support learning and improve practice in other organisations, ultimately leading to better outcomes for children and young people in challenging circumstances. A great way to reach a wide audience across the sector is to write a blog post about your findings for the Youth Music Network – it's a funding requirement for Youth Music grantholders to post at least once on the site during their project, so whilst you aren't obliged to post about your evaluation findings, you could use this as an opportunity to share them with other grantholders if you wish!

You can also think about other places where people who will be interested in your work are likely to turn for professional knowledge and resources. For example, you could write for websites or publications that are relevant to the focus of your project, or you could present your findings in person at a Music Education Hub steering group meeting or sector-wide conference. In deciding how to share your findings across the sector, think carefully about your key message and target audience, and choose the most suitable way to share this message with them.

Your evaluation can be a useful tool for demonstrating the impact of your work to other current and potential funders aside from Youth Music. Most funders will ask that you report back at the end of your project, and providing robust evidence of impact can reassure them that your grant was money well spent. You can draw on your findings in future funding applications as evidence of impact, which can help convince funders that your work will continue to make a difference in the future.

Additionally, you can share key findings from your evaluation with the general public to help raise awareness of your work and contribute to your organisation's wider fundraising effects. This might include highlighting your impact on your website, flyers and social media. You

could write a press release to generate publicity for your organisation in the local media. For more advice on this topic, see Youth Music's guide to writing a press release.[7]

Key points to remember about sharing your findings

- Sharing the findings of your project can be a valuable process to go through as it allows you to celebrate and share your success with those involved, support the learning of those in your organisation and beyond, and receive feedback from others.

- It's important to consider your audience and tailor your message differently depending on who it's aimed at so that it's clear and relevant to their role and interests. Similarly, if there's any sensitive information, you will need to think about how you can communicate this carefully.

- Look for opportunities to share your findings as widely as possible. These could include writing on the Youth Music Network, speaking at a conference, and highlighting your impact on your organisation's website.

[8.] http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/sites/default/files/users/Guide_to_writing_a_press_release.pdf

Summary

We hope that this guide has been useful for the planning and production of your project evaluation. To conclude, we have summarised each of the sections in this guide into some vital bullet points:

Step 1: Planning your project

- Your project's **activities** are the work carried out in order to achieve its intended outcomes. In turn, your project's **intended outcomes** are the changes in skills, knowledge, or behaviour needed to overcome the barriers to achieving your project's overall **aim**.
- Using the planning triangle tool will help you to understand how your intended outcomes and activities will support the overall aim of your project.
- Using existing statistics, research and dialogue with potential participants will help you to evidence and articulate the need for your project.

Step 2: Monitoring your outcomes

- Monitoring your outcomes allows you to check that your project is progressing in the right direction, If it is, you have evidence to show your impact. And if not, you can make changes.
- An **indicator** is an observable marker of progress that allows you to monitor your advancement toward your intended outcomes. For each intended outcome, you are required to set three indicators from a range of different perspectives, and these three indicators should add up to give a balanced understanding of how much progress the project is making.
- A **source of evidence** is a record of your indicator that allows you measure or assess progress towards your outcome. You should try to collect a mix of qualitative and quantitative data from a range of sources in order to give your evaluation greater credibility and validity.
- **Ethics and consent:** you should always ensure that your participants have a clear understanding of what their data will be used for, and keep as a record of their signed

consent form. You have a responsibility to store data securely, and if anyone chooses to withdraw from the process you must destroy all data relating to that person.

Step 3: Analysing your evidence

- Analysis is the process of converting your raw data from all your data sources —such as assessment forms, photos, and video diaries—into useful information to help you monitor and evaluate your project. This information can then be used as **evidence** of your progress toward your intended outcomes.
- Analysing quantitative evidence is done by converting your numerical data into averages and trends. Analysing qualitative evidence is more about pulling out themes and ideas that are relevant to your outcomes.
- Triangulation is the process of using multiple indicators and sources of evidence in order to back up and confirm your findings. It involves combining different perspectives and methods to make allowances for any biases or weaknesses.

  The process of analysis will give you an idea of how well you are progressing towards your intended outcomes and how you think things might progress even further in the future. These findings and ideas are essential in evaluating the impact of your project.

Step 4: Writing your evaluation

- When writing your report, remember to make the most out of the data you have collected by telling us what you think it means in terms of the progress you have made towards your outcomes. Telling us what data you collected is one thing, but it means so much more if you tell us what implications this data has for your project, its outcomes, and your future work.
- Tell us about any surprises in the data that you perhaps weren't expecting – for instance, if the data is telling you that your progress towards your intended outcomes isn't as far as you anticipated, that's OK, but tell us why and what you think about it. Equally, tell us about any limitations of your data, for example, if you've had issues with collecting from a particular source, make sure you highlight that in your report.

- It is important that you don’t submit your raw data without commenting on it. This doesn’t do your hard work justice, and it could also have implications for your data protection responsibilities.

Step 5: Sharing your findings

- Sharing the findings of your project can be a valuable process to go through as it allows you to celebrate and share your success with those involved, support the learning of those in your organisation and beyond, and receive feedback from others.

- It’s important to consider your audience and tailor your message differently depending on who it’s aimed at so that it’s clear and relevant to their role and interests. Similarly, if there’s any sensitive information, you will need to think about how you can communicate this carefully.

- Look for opportunities to share your findings as widely as possible. These could include writing on the Youth Music Network, speaking at a conference, and highlighting your impact on your organisation’s website.

Appendix 1: Glossary of terms

activity	work carried out by a project to produce its **outputs** and achieve its overall **aim** and intended **outcomes**
aim	overall reason for a project and the long-term difference it is intended to make (also called **mission**)
baseline	data that shows what a situation is like before a project intervenes
data	any information collected
evaluation	using **monitoring data** to understand the effectiveness of a project
evidence	**data** that can be used to prove or disprove a claim
impact	broader or longer-term change that happens as a result of a project's **activities**, **outputs**, and **outcomes**
indicator	specific, observable phenomenon that can be measured or assessed to demonstrate progress toward a goal; an **outcome indicator** shows progress toward an intended outcome
mission	same as **aim**
monitoring	collecting **data** in a systematic way to check progress against a project's intended **outcomes**
outcome	change in skills, knowledge, or behaviour that happens as a result of a project's **activities** and **outputs**; these changes are typically short- to medium-term and support long-term progress toward a project's overall **aim**

output	product or service resulting from project **activities** and delivered as part of that project
planning triangle	tool for planning and visualising a project's overall **aim**, intended **outcomes**, and **activities**
qualitative	relating to words
quantitative	relating to numbers
source of evidence	record of an indicator that can be used to measure or assess progress toward a goal; data collected in relation to an indicator
triangulation	process of verifying findings by combining multiple perspectives and methods

Appendix 2: Evaluation tools

Tools for measuring a variety of outcomes

Outcomes Star

Has a selection of evaluation tools. Lists pros and cons, age range, settings, and circumstances for each.

Tools for measuring musical outcomes

Youth Music Early Years Musical Assessment Scale

Separate scales for different age brackets of early years children (0-2, 2-3, 3-5) to be filled in by any participating adult. Five-point Likert scale questions about the way early years children interact with music.

https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6201/download?token=Wn0mM2TV

Youth Music Young Musicians Development Scale

Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 6-10) about their enjoyment of music, and their own perceptions of their musical abilities. Questions use faces instead of numbers, ranging from a very sad face to a very happy face.

https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6213/download?token=kfaOZC1D

Youth Music Musical Development Scale

Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 11+) about their enjoyment of music, and their own perceptions of their musical abilities. Includes a ladder measure ('Cantrill's Ladder) used to measure the young person's awareness of music-making opportunities going on in their community.

https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6206/download?token=SHxKF5q4

Sounds of Intent Framework

Framework investigating the musical development of children and young people of all ages with learning difficulties. The framework covers a whole range of ability from profound and

multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) to those with autism, with or without exceptional musical abilities. Completed by music leader or other observing adult.
http://soundsofintent.org/about-soi

Sounds of Intent in the Early Years
Based on the original Sounds of Intent Framework, adapted for use with children aged 0-5 in the earlier stages of musical development. Completed by music leader or other observing adult.
http://www.eysoi.org/

Tools for measuring personal outcomes

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale
Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 13+). One version has seven statements and the other has 14, enabling the monitoring of mental wellbeing. The items are all worded positively and cover both feeling and functioning aspects of mental wellbeing. This is an established tool used widely in mental health settings.
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/

Youth Music Attitude and Behaviour Scale
Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 11-18) about how they feel they have developed skills such as working with others, punctuality and commitment.
https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6199/download?token=Uwz6YkPT

Youth Music Wellbeing Scale
Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 11-18) about how they have been recently feeling. Based on Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. There is also a ladder measure (‘Cantrill’s Ladder’) used to capture overall wellbeing.
https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6212/download?token=uTCIjell

Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the Ability to Bounce Back

Six-question tool scored on a Likert scale of 1-5 that can be used to assess the ability to bounce back or recover from stress, with total score divided by the number of questions to give an overall score.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23164897_The_Brief_Resilience_Scale_Assessing_the_Ability_to_Bounce_Back

General Self-Efficacy Scale

Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 12+) that is designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life.
http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/selfscal.htm

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Four-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 12+) that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self.
https://socy.umd.edu/quick-links/using-rosenberg-self-esteem-scale

Evaluation framework published by Public Health England

Includes a useful list of validated evaluation scales and questionnaires
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arts-for-health-and-wellbeing-an-evaluation-framework

A Methodological Review of Resilience Measurement Scales

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3042897/

Tools for measuring social outcomes

Youth Music Agency and Citizenship Scale

Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 11-18) designed to measure how much they feel in control of their lives, able to make decisions, and feel connected to their communities.
https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6198/download?token=Tedh6jT-

Children's Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Scale

Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the young person (aged 6+) which assesses feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction.

http://www.excellenceforchildandyouth.ca/sites/default/files/meas_attach/Loneliness_and_Social_Dissatisfaction_Questionnaire_(LSDQ).pdf

Tools for measuring workforce outcomes

Youth Music Music Practitioner scales

Five-point Likert scale questions addressed to the music leader involved in the project which are split into two scales designed to capture their reflections: the Job Satisfaction Scale and the Professional Practice Scale. These can be used to assess how those employed to deliver your projects feel about their work.

https://network.youthmusic.org.uk/file/6205/download?token=7mHYX3O1

Tools for measuring organisational outcomes

Inspiring Impact Measuring Up! Tool

Step-by-step self-assessment tool for charitable organisations and social enterprises, allowing organisations to review and improve their impact practice. Generates a report allowing organisations to see where their impact practice is going well and where there is room for improvement.

http://inspiringimpact.org/measuringup/

Arts Council England's Self Evaluation Framework

An online tool to help arts organisations to self-evaluate. Focuses on six areas: vision, external environment, artistic aspirations & programme, participation & engagement, organisational capacity & capability, and business model.

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/selfevaluation/framework/

Appendix 3: Additional guidance

Big Lottery Fund: Help with Aims and Outcomes
https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/funding-guidance/applying-for-funding/aims-and-outcomes/help-with-aims-and-outcomes

Charities Evaluation Services
http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/

Creating Your Theory of Change: NPC's Practical Guide
http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/creating-your-theory-of-change/

Creative and Credible
Evaluation support for arts and health organisations and practitioners
http://creativeandcredible.co.uk/

Describe the Difference Your Work Makes: Build Your Framework for Evaluation
http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/Resources/CharitiesEvaluationServices/Documents/Describe%20the%20difference%20your%20work%20makesFINAL.pdf

Example Planning Triangles
http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/tools-and-resources/outcomes-and-outcome-indicators/example-planning-triangles/index.html

Guidance for Developing a Theory of Change for Your Programme
https://www.nesta.org.uk/sites/default/files/theory_of_change_guidance_for_applicants_.pdf

Information Collection Methods: Choosing Tools for Assessing Impact
http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/tools-and-resources/planning-for-monitoring-evaluation/information-collection-methods.html

Inspiring Impact

UK-wide collaborative programme to help organisations know what to measure and how to measure
http://inspiringimpact.org/

Jargonbuster
Glossary of key terms in voluntary sector management, commissioning, and procurement
http://www.jargonbusters.org.uk/

The JET Pack (Journey to EmploymenT) framework
http://inspiringimpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/The-JET-Pack.pdf?Downloadchecked=true

New Philanthropy Capital: Four Pillar Approach
http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/npcs-four-pillar-approach/

Theory of Change: The Beginning of Making a Difference
http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/theory-of-change/

Youth Music Evaluation Builder
http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/learning/youth-music-evaluation-builder

Youth Music Network
http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/

Youth Music Outcomes Framework
http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/sites/default/files/users/Funding_docs/Taking_an_outcomes_approach.pdf

Youth Music's Top Tips for Evaluation Reporting
http://network.youthmusic.org.uk/resources/blogs/nick-wilsdon/top-tips-project-evaluation-reporting