

PLAN, DO, REVIEW

A guide to
evaluating
your Youth Music
project.

**YOUTH
MUSIC**

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Introduction

The evaluation guidance is made up of three parts.

For Applicants

1. Plan: Creating an evaluation plan for your Youth Music application.

Remember: You only need to follow the guidance in this document to make an application, however you may find it useful to also read Do and Review.

For Grantholders

2. Do: Setting up and carrying out your evaluation plan.

3. Review: Analysing and interpreting your evaluation data.

Part 2: Do

Setting up and carrying out your evaluation.



This guidance will help you to...



Finalise the data collection and review points



Assign roles and responsibilities.



Work safely and ethically



Induct people into the evaluation process

Getting started

Before you read on, you may find it helpful to refer back to:

- Your completed application form (available from <https://grants.youthmusic.org.uk>). This contains:
 - Outcomes and draft evaluation plan.
 - Project timescales.
 - Budget.
- Any advice provided by your Grants & Learning Officer.
- Part 1 of this guidance, which helped you plan your evaluation.

Top tips for evaluation



Keep it simple. Focus on quality of data, not quantity. Measure a few things really well. Make sure your plans are realistic in terms of time and budget.



Involve others. Plan the evaluation with the team (including young people). Reflect on findings together.



Build the process into your plans. Evaluation is a continuous process. Regular review and adjustment will help you to continually improve.

Finalising data collection tools

A summary of different data collection tools and their pros and cons can be found [here](#). As you finalise the tools you plan to use, think about:

- **Accessibility.** Will the questions be understood? Can people engage with the format? Would spoken or creative methods work better than written methods?
- **Time taken to collect, process and analyse data.** Some methods are easy to collect but take longer to process or analyse (e.g. video recordings, focus groups). If you are using questionnaires, then online tools such as SurveyMonkey can help to speed up processing times.
- **The format of your final evaluation.** Will the types of data you are collecting work in your final evaluation? Will they tell you what you want to find out? Consider collecting some multi-media content to help bring your findings to life.

If you are planning to use questionnaires/scales, see [the Youth Music evaluation scales for more guidance](#).

Before you finalise your tools, check-in with key delivery staff to ensure plans are realistic.

When will data be collected?

- Choose the right time to collect your evaluation data. Take time to engage young people and build their trust before you introduce evaluation.
- Don't collect data that is not necessary. Whilst you might record engagement (or attendance) data routinely, you do not need to ask participants to evaluate their progress at every session. Part 1 of this evaluation guidance provides advice on different types of data.
- Build data collection into your staff time and your session planning. You should be clear when the data collection will take place and how long it will take. Separate the process clearly from the music-making. Don't just squeeze it in at the end of a session.

How often to review data

- Once you have collected data, review it regularly and as you go along. This allows you to adjust your plans based on what you are learning. It also makes writing your evaluation easier at the end of the project.
- Use regular reflection meetings to reflect on evaluation data with your team (and external evaluator if you have one). This can help you to interpret what the data means. It will also help you plan adjustments before the project comes to an end.

Roles and responsibilities



Some of the data collection may need to be done by a member of your team who works closely with young people.

- In evaluation, we often ask for sensitive information from people. It can help when the person asking the question has a trusted relationship with the evaluation subject. They should also know how to respond if someone discloses something.

If you are working with an external evaluator, ensure they are inducted into your processes. They should also be introduced to the team and young people.

You'll also need to build time into people's roles to process the data (e.g. transcribing interviews or entering numbers into a spreadsheet) and then analyse it.

Ethics and data protection – the basics

Your evaluation should be conducted ethically. The process should never compromise participant safety. Some basic rules:

- Personal information must be stored securely in line with your organisational data protection and safeguarding policies.
- You should always explain why you are asking for information and how you plan to use it.

- It is important that you have the appropriate consent from participants, or their guardians if they are under 16.
 - Getting forms back from guardians can take time, so factor this into your planning.
- Participants have the right to opt out of the evaluation process at any point.

Further guidance on Ethics and data protection can be found through this link.

Storing data securely

If you collect any form of personal data (such as people's names and other identifying factors) you are required by law to store it securely. This may mean:

- Anonymising data as soon as it has been collected (collect the data anonymously in the first place if you can).
- Password protecting files, including during data transfer.
- Deleting data from emails, devices or personal computers. We advise you not to use personal devices for evaluation.

After you have completed your evaluation of your project, consider whether you need to keep the data. Ensure you don't keep it longer than you need to.



Training and induction

Everyone involved in the project (including young people) should understand what the evaluation is, and why you are doing it. The evaluation respondents should understand that they do not have to participate, and can withdraw at any time.

Induct key staff into the evaluation at the outset. The induction should cover:

- Their role in the evaluation – what are their specific requirements?
- An overview of the wider evaluation plan
- How to make data collection more accessible and engaging for participants. Build in flexibility around formats, timings or approaches.
- Safeguarding, ethics and data protection.
- What you will produce at the end of the project and where you will share it.

Responding to challenges

Evaluation needs to work for you and the young people you work with. Carrying out evaluation in a project can bring challenges. See our Common evaluation challenges resource for examples of common issues other grantholders have experienced.

It's okay to adapt your processes to improve your evaluation. But please share any important learning about the process in your final evaluation.

Need help?

We're here to help if you have any questions or need to make changes.

Available in other parts of this guidance are:

- **Part 1: Plan** - Creating an evaluation plan for your Youth Music application
- **Part 3: Review** - analysing and interpreting your evaluation data

Email your Grants and Learning Officer, or contact us on:

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