



# YOUTH MUSIC

Trailblazer Fund and  
Catalyser Fund  
Evaluation Guidance

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# What's this guide for?

Youth Music funds organisations that are open to developing and evaluate and reflect on what they do.

That's why we ask you to tell us about what you want to learn through your project.

In the Trailblazer and Catalyser application forms we ask you about:

- What you want to learn during your project or programme?
- How will you reflect and adapt your delivery over the course of your grant?

This guide will help you think about your reflection and evaluations plans and how to write that into your application form.

**We think that reflection and evaluation should be built into every project.**

This is because it helps you think about what works, what doesn't work and how you might improve. Our priority is that evaluation is a learning process.

**But....**

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. For some projects a small-scale, in-house process works best. For others, evaluation may be bigger and involve external evaluators.

**Ultimately, evaluation needs to work for you!**

# Planning your evaluation

## 1. What do you want to learn?

Identify your question(s). Think of your project as an opportunity to do some 'action research'.

Choose something relevant to your project or organisation.

See our real-life examples in next section.



## 2. How will you find out?

Think about how you will gather data and who will you gather it from. This might be children and young people, the workforce, parents or partners.

Build in time to analyse and reflect on the information you gather.



## 3. How will you act on the findings?

Ensure you can adapt your current or future activities based on your findings. Make it someone's responsibility and building in some contingency time and budget.

If you want to use the information externally, then plan in time to present the findings in an engaging way.

# What do you want to learn?

Your evaluation doesn't have to cover every part of your project.

Often, projects have more than one question they want to answer. That's fine, so long as your evaluation is manageable. Don't overstretch yourself by trying to do too much.

Here are some real-life examples from Youth Music's funded partners...

What are the barriers that young people face when trying to access the music industry? How can our programme help with this?

How do we work with children and families so they develop a sense of belonging and ownership of our project?

How does lyric-writing support wellbeing?

How can we increase regular engagement in our sessions?

What are the best ways to increase the participation of young people in the development and steering of our organisation?

How can support our workforce of practitioners to improve their co-creation with young people?

# How will you find out?

To evaluate, you'll need to gather information ("data") and reflect on it. Whatever data collection method you use, try and make it creative, accessible and engaging.

Don't collect too much! This may lead to disengagement from young people or result in too much information for you to analyse.

Remember to build in time and budget to analyse the information and reflect on it.

Here are some Youth Music funded partner examples....

Children will be asked to think about their personal journey and what is changing for them. They may choose to write, draw or record voice notes to document this.

We've scheduled a half day reflection session with the participants and core team at the mid-way point to hear everyone's thoughts about how the programme is going and how it can be improved.

We'll monitor attendance, retention and progression data alongside feedback from young people to identify areas for improvement.

Continuous professional development (CPD) days equip our mentors with the necessary skills to deliver, discuss, observe, and evaluate the process effectively.

We'll do this through interactive polls, (short) surveys, sketchbooks, observations, learning journals (for staff), and individually-tailored participant interviews (early, mid, end).

We'll encourage parents to keep a journal, voice-notes or photographs of their child's musical journey.

# What will you do with the findings?

Plan your evaluation so that you can respond to the findings and maximise the use of the data you have collected. Make sure you have planned time and resources to adapt, based on what you've found out.

When you do your final Youth Music report, create something that will be most useful to you. That could be to promote your project, a training tool, or to report to other funders.

Here's how some of Youth Music's funded partners do it...

We will collate findings to date and provide a short and engaging project evaluation report which will contribute to development and sustainability – sharing with partners and potential funders.

Sessions are filmed, and the co-created materials, recordings and feedback will form a portfolio to enable internal evaluation, external exhibition of the work, and to shape future evolution.

Paid staff time will be built into all sessions for structured reflection, and to suggest new approaches and to recommend necessary changes and actions.

The Young People's Steering Group will explore what is working well and why as well as what should change and how.

Our recorded semi-structured interviews help us to understand the qualitative experiences, but we can also use them as marketing material.

Final group reflection podcast looking at capturing the participants' experiences and helping to goal set their future ambitions.



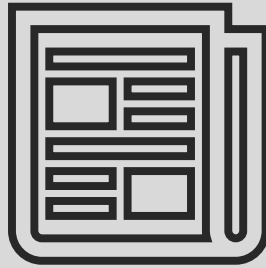
# How do I report to Youth Music?

If you get a grant from Youth Music, we'll ask you to submit a final report at the end.

Most organisations will also submit an interim report while the project is underway.

There is some data Youth Music asks you to collect, which we have summarised on this slide. Make sure you build this into your planning.

[Download reporting templates](#)

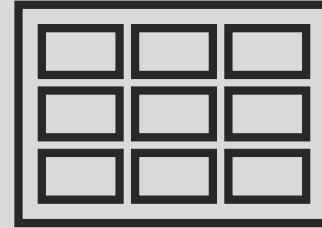


## 1. Evaluation reporting

Flexible format (e.g. written report, webpage, podcast, documentary, presentation deck).

Analyse and interpret the information you collected, discuss your findings and tell us:

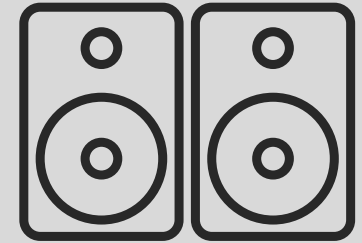
- What you learnt
- How you reflected and adapted.



## 2. Monitoring and stats

This covers the activities that were delivered and how you spent the grant.

We ask for statistics covering young people reach, demographics, staff profile, sessions, and progression outputs.



## 3. Music and comms outputs

The opportunity for you to showcase your work through photos, music and videos. This is an optional part of the report.



# YOUTH MUSIC

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