

# Youth Investment Fund: Learning and Insight Paper Four

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Emerging findings from the Youth Investment Fund  
Learning Project: Eight things we've learnt so far

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# 1. Introduction

The Youth Investment Fund (YIF) is one of the biggest investments in open access youth provision in recent years. As such, it provides a unique learning opportunity to gain insights into a field that, in terms of impact, is currently under-researched and poorly understood.<sup>1</sup> From the beginning, the YIF learning project set out to test a new approach to evaluation in this context (see section 2.3), in recognition of the profound limitations of traditional impact evaluation in informal and non-formal youth provision.<sup>2</sup> As a result, this evaluation is truly pioneering and we have experienced the risks and rewards that go with such an approach. In this report, we set out early findings about the quality and impact of open access youth provision, alongside insights into the development of feasible and meaningful evaluation approaches for this field.

It is important to note that the findings presented in this report are emergent and reflect data collected over approximately 22 months of our 24-month data collection period. Findings are therefore tentative and should be treated with caution. We have conducted some initial analyses on this incomplete dataset, but more rigorous analyses is needed to test the validity of these emerging findings now that the data collection has ended. At the time of publishing, we are in the process of analysing the full dataset and our final findings will be set out in YIF Learning and Insight Paper Seven, which will be published in Spring 2021.

However, we believe it is important to share emerging findings with grant holders, funders and the wider youth sector at this point in time, to stimulate discussion and debate about what the YIF data is telling us so far, and what this means for the sector. We also hope this report will generate conversations that inform our approach to the full analysis of the YIF data. To this end, we invite you to engage with the YIF learning team to help shape the final stages of the project. Get in touch with the YIF learning team at [YIFlearning@thinknpc.org](mailto:YIFlearning@thinknpc.org).

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<sup>1</sup> [A 2013 review of Youth Work research](#) stated that, 'while there is a high level of research activity in areas such as prevention science and work with children, and some attention has been given to the effectiveness of specific support initiatives in place for young people, the same level of attention has not been placed on developmental activities in youth work.'

<sup>2</sup> [A 2019 article](#) on valuing and evaluating youth work outlined concerns about, 'the way [youth work] practice is recognised and valued by those most deeply involved is disconnected from the way it is required to be measured, monitored and evaluated.' For further information about the challenges of impact evaluation for open access youth provision see: [YIF Learning and Insight Paper Three: A shared outcomes framework for open access youth provision](#).

## 2. The Youth Investment Fund Learning Project

### 2.1 About the Youth Investment Fund

The YIF is a joint investment between the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and The National Lottery Community Fund of £40m, to expand the delivery of open access youth services in six regions of England (see Figure 1) and to enable funded organisations to invest in their own development to increase the sustainability of this youth provision. Grants were awarded to 90 youth organisations. The three-year programme (2017-2020) is providing new opportunities for young people to get involved in their communities and aims to support the personal development of hundreds of thousands of young people across England, building their confidence and supporting their transition to becoming happy, healthy and economically active adults.




Figure 1: Areas receiving YIF funding



### 2.2 Learning project aims

As part of the investment in local voluntary and community youth organisations, the funders allocated £1m to a learning and impact project led by New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), in partnership with the Centre for Youth Impact and a wider consortium of research partners. The learning project commenced in May 2017 and is due to be completed in Spring 2021. Figure 2 shows the intended aims of the learning project.

Figure 2: The YIF project learning aims

-  Co-develop a shared approach to evaluation which is adaptable and appropriate across all provision
-  Build a base of knowledge and insight into young people's engagement in informal & non-formal provision, and how it makes a difference to their lives
-  Leave the sector with what they need to self-evaluate long after YIF funding has ended

Within the YIF, 'open access youth services' are broadly defined and include both traditional youth club provision and more targeted and structured provision across a range of areas including sports, arts, social action and employability. The main unifying features are that young people do not need to be referred to provision, access is 'open', and engagement is voluntary on behalf of the young person.

## 2.3 The YIF evaluation approach

There are inherent challenges in understanding the impact of non-formal, relational provision, particularly that which is open access,<sup>3</sup> and the YIF shared evaluation provides a significant opportunity for the sector to learn and improve. This really matters, because equipping youth organisations to better understand their impact, and to share their learning collectively, is critical in creating the conditions for organisations to improve their services for young people. Our shared approach to evaluation has been designed to align with youth provision and has been co-produced with practitioners. It seeks to take into account measurement challenges and is intended to enhance, rather than detract from, their relationships with young people, whilst enabling formative learning. We believe that young people are uniquely able to explain their relationship with the provision in which they participate, and should have systematic opportunities for doing so. For this reason, young people's feedback is a central part of the YIF evaluation.

Further information about the YIF evaluation design can be found in: [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#) and [YIF Learning and Insight Paper Three: A shared outcomes framework for open access youth provision](#).

### 2.3.1 The YIF five types of data

We have worked with the YIF grant holders to collect five types of data that underpin the evaluation approach:

1. **Beneficiary data**—Administrative data on which young people were engaging with YIF activities. This was collected on an ongoing basis as young people joined the YIF provision or at the outset of the learning project for young people who were already attending activities.<sup>4</sup>
2. **Engagement data**—Administrative data on the types of activities young people were engaging in and how often. We developed groupings of activities that would contribute to our understanding of provision (and potentially its impact), which are mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive. Activities could be categorised as either: detached or building-based; group or individual; targeted or universal; drop-in or fixed; time-limited or open-ended; and unstructured or structured (see [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#), p.11, for full definitions of these categories). This data was collected from organisations on an ongoing basis as young people engaged with the YIF provision.
3. **Feedback data**—Systematic feedback from young people about their experiences of YIF provision, based on the mechanisms of change identified through the co-produced YIF theory of change (see [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#), p.6, for further information). The YIF feedback process used a set of 17 'core questions', from which organisations could select questions to include in a bespoke survey.<sup>5</sup> This was intended to be collected during four discrete rounds of data collection during the project, each lasting approximately two months. In reality, data collection was continuous and did not fall inside the two-month timeslots. As a result, the data is currently presented from four consecutive rounds of data collection.
4. **Quality data**—Self assessment data on the quality of provision using the Programme Quality Assessment tool (see [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#), p.14, for

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<sup>3</sup> For a review of these challenges see: [The everyday and the remarkable: valuing and evaluating youth work](#). For further information about the challenges of measuring outcomes for young people taking part in open access youth provision, see [YIF Learning and Insight Paper Three: A shared outcomes framework for open access youth provision](#).

<sup>4</sup> The YIF supported both existing and expanded provision, meaning that many young people who participated in the YIF funded activities were already engaged with the grant holder.

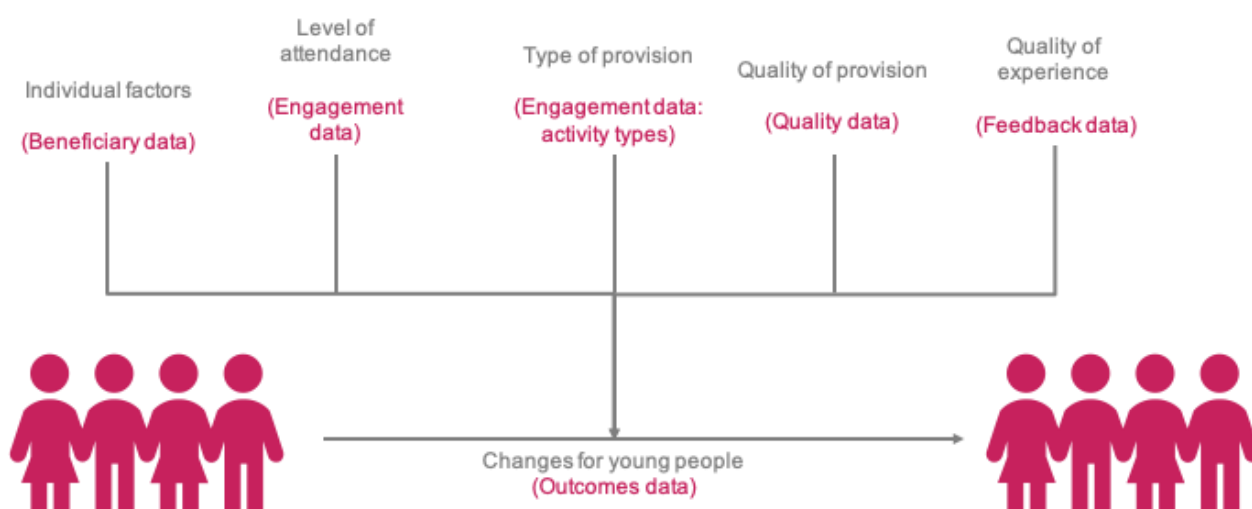
<sup>5</sup> Plus, an additional open question which is not included in this report: 'Are there any other services that [organisations/the project] could offer that you would value?'. The feedback questions were co-designed with grant holders.

further information).<sup>6</sup> This was part of an ‘assess-plan-improve’ cycle (see Appendix B), which was intended to take approximately six months and to be completed up to four times during the learning project. In reality, organisations took part in the quality process when it was convenient for them, and completed the number of cycles that they found most useful or most feasible based on time and resource. Quality data is therefore reported based on the number of times an organisation took part in the process, regardless of when they participated.

5. **Outcomes data**—A repeated survey measuring the intermediate outcomes identified in the theory of change over time. For young people who were already attending the YIF provision, this was intended to be collected at baseline with a follow up survey after six months.<sup>7</sup> For young people new to provision, there was an additional survey after three months. In reality, data was collected at varying intervals. Baseline data only is included in this early findings report.

We intentionally set out to collect the most common types of data (beneficiary and engagement) from all the YIF grant holders and to work with sub-sets of grant holders to collect data that required more resource and capacity (feedback, quality and outcomes). By collecting these five different types of data, we can look at what each type of data tells us separately (e.g. what are the relative strengths and weaknesses in the quality of youth provision) and in relation to each other (e.g. how does the quality of provision impact upon young people’s experiences of youth provision? Do different groups of young people have different experiences of youth provision?). Plus, we can look at how the elements of youth provision, measured in the first four types of data, affect outcomes for young people (i.e. what works, for whom, in what conditions. See Figure 3).

Figure 3: Investigating the relationships between the different elements of open access youth provision and changes for young people



### 2.3.2 Implementation of the YIF approach to data collection

The scale of the data collection for the YIF learning project was ambitious and has not been attempted before in the youth sector. We strove to collect consistent data across 90 organisations of different sizes, and with varied levels of

<sup>6</sup> Developed by the [David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#).

<sup>7</sup> For young people already attending the YIF provision, the baseline is the first questionnaire completed. It is not necessarily a baseline relative to registration.

resource, capacity and skills. This, in part, necessitated a ‘learning as we go’ approach to data collection, both for the grant holders and the learning team. Many of the YIF funded organisations made significant progress in developing their ability to collect shared data but the process highlighted areas where improvements in the consistency and quality of the data gathered are needed. These are not unique to the YIF grant holders or youth sector organisations as a whole, but nevertheless are important considerations for organisations to address. Specific data collection challenges include:

- **Lack of fidelity and flexible delivery**—Whilst clear guidance for data collection was provided, some grant holders adapted the process to suit their delivery and the young people with whom they were working. As outlined in section 2.3.1, this included changing the timelines for collecting feedback, quality and outcomes data, and adapting feedback questions. Data collection methods for feedback data were intended to be flexible, so some grant holders chose to use printed questionnaires whilst others asked young people to throw balls into buckets to represent their answers. As the process was devolved to grant holders, we have limited information through which to judge the fidelity with which the data collection was conducted. However, stringent criteria are being applied to the data during the analysis to exclude data that is of poor quality, for instance, where the question wording has been adapted in the feedback surveys.
- **Understanding how representative the YIF data is of the overall YIF beneficiary cohort**—Grant holders were asked at the outset of the learning project to provide beneficiary and engagement data for all the YIF participants attending provision from May 2018-April 2020, to provide a complete picture of the YIF’s reach during this time period. However, some organisations did not submit this data for the two-year period of the evaluation and some only submitted partial data. Based on feedback from grant holders, we know that this was sometimes a conscious decision where organisations chose a subsection of their activities on which to focus their available data collection resources, and at other times the result of capacity issues or changes in staff was that they were unable to share all their beneficiary and attendance data with us. Technical issues also affected some organisations’ ability to submit data, for example, challenges integrating their data collection platform with the digital IMPACT platform used in the YIF learning project. As a result, it is not possible to precisely calculate the proportion of YIF beneficiaries for whom we have data. For the full analysis, we are reviewing the options for estimating the reach of the YIF.
- **Missing demographic data**—Large amounts of demographic data are missing about the young people who attended the YIF provision during the learning project. Gender information is missing for 18% of young people, ethnicity data is missing for 36% of young people, and age is missing for 27% of young people. We are working with the YIF funded organisations to understand the reasons for this, but initial conversations suggest that this issue is not specific to the YIF data. Reasons described by grant holders include: young people, understandably, being unwilling to provide personal information if they are unclear of the purpose for which it is being collected (particularly ethnicity data); data was collected but in an incompatible format (e.g. age instead of date of birth or using a different set of options to describe gender or ethnicity); technical difficulties with sharing data (e.g. uploading data to the IMPACT system); this data collection not being standard practice for some grant holders (e.g. membership forms may not include a question about ethnicity); and challenges with data collection due to staff turnover.
- **Exclusion of data**—We received beneficiary and engagement data that, based on the available information, appeared to be outside of the YIF funding period or the learning project’s parameters. This included data about individuals who were outside of the YIF age range or were registered as taking part in activities prior to the learning project data collection timeframe, but not during it.<sup>8</sup> This data was excluded from the analyses on which this report is based.<sup>9</sup> In total we received beneficiary data for 79,682 young people. Of this total, 19,710 young people’s data was excluded as, according to the information provided, they stopped attending activities prior to the beginning of the YIF learning project. A further 2,739 was excluded as they were outside of the age range supported by the YIF and 742 young people’s data was excluded as they were both outside of the age range and stopped attending provision prior to the start of the learning project. The remaining beneficiary sample size is 56,491 and this is the beneficiary data

<sup>8</sup> The YIF defines ‘young people’ as those who are 10 to 18 years old or 10 to 25 years old with a disability or special educational needs.

<sup>9</sup> The exclusion criterion relating to attendance was added after the June grant holder webinar and therefore the beneficiary and engagement data presented in this report has been updated.

reported in section 3. Where age or attendance data are missing within this sample, we have worked on the assumption that the beneficiaries meet the inclusion criteria (see Appendix A: Table 1 for a breakdown of the excluded and missing beneficiary data within the sample).

- **Challenges with collecting outcomes data**—Outcomes data has been the most challenging type of data to collect, which has impacted both the quantity and quality of our data. We are investigating this further with grant holders, but early findings suggest that reasons for this include:
  - Provision is predominantly attended on a ‘drop-in’ basis so there is no guarantee that young people will attend provision more than once within the timeframe, meaning that young people did not complete questionnaires at more than one timepoint.
  - Tracking young people over time is administratively challenging. Inconsistent or missing ‘user IDs’ meant that, in some instances, it was not possible to link survey data to an individual and therefore track their journey over time.
  - Young people experience questionnaire fatigue, with feedback from grant holders suggesting that young people do not like completing the same questionnaires in close succession.
  - The more personal nature of the outcomes questionnaire (e.g. asking about life satisfaction and self-confidence) means that young people are less willing to complete it compared to, for example, the anonymous feedback questionnaire.

These challenges, and the implications they have for the learning project, will be explored further in the full analyses and reporting of the YIF findings in Spring 2021.

## 3. Beneficiary and engagement data for the YIF provision

Understanding how different groups of young people engage with different types of activities improves understanding of the nature of open access youth provision: what it comprises, who is accessing it, and in what ways. The findings presented in this section demonstrate that there is great variety in the experiences of youth provision, which supports the need to track user journeys, as set out in section 2.3. Furthermore, it is reasonable to hypothesise that different types and levels of engagement will affect outcomes. For example, it would be rational to assume that regular attendance over a longer period of time is more likely to lead to a change in outcomes for a young person than infrequent attendance over a short period of time. By collecting data on beneficiaries (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity and postcode) and engagement (i.e. what activities young people are engaging in and how often), we will be able to take account of these factors when investigating impact in the full analysis.

Section 3.1 provides a summary of the YIF funded provision, representing 82 out of 90 funded organisations, between May 2018 and February 2020.<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that this is an incomplete and emerging picture as, at the time of writing, we did not have a complete beneficiary and engagement dataset for the 24-month data collection period.<sup>11</sup> We have been working with the YIF funded organisations over the final stages of the data collection and we are now in the process of cleaning and analysing the full dataset.

### 3.1 Who is attending YIF provision?

The YIF learning project set out to collect beneficiary data about as many young people taking part in funded provision as possible. However, in reality, based on feedback from grant holders, the data collected represents a sub-set of young people attending provision (see section 2.3.2 for further information).

As outlined in section 2.3.2, conversations with YIF funded organisations so far indicate that some intentionally submitted partial beneficiary and engagement data (either for a sub-set of activities or participants) due to limited time and capacity and seven organisations did not submit any beneficiary data at all. We are currently interviewing grant holders to understand more about the missing data, which will be reported on in Autumn 2020.

In summary, between May 2018 and February 2020, the total number of young people for which eligible beneficiary data was submitted was 56,491 across 82 organisations. The maximum number of young people recorded as attending per organisation was 5,862 and the median number of young people recorded as attending per organisation was 305 (see Appendix A: Table 2 for a summary of the number of young people attending YIF provision per organisation). The minimum number of young people recorded per organisation was 1, which illustrates that some of the data submitted by the organisations is incomplete (see section 2.3.2 for further detail on partial data submissions and missing data). The following sections provide further information about the young people attending the YIF provision, according to the available data, which is summarised in Figure 4. For this early findings report, we present simple demographic data but we will explore intersections between these demographics in the final report.

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<sup>10</sup> One organisation withdrew from the YIF and seven organisations did not submit any beneficiary or engagement data.

<sup>11</sup> The final two months of the data collection period were during the Covid-19 lockdown. The impact of this will be considered in the full and final analysis.



### 3.1.1 Gender

Our data suggests that young women may be underrepresented amongst those attending youth provision. We received gender data for 81% of young people (n=45,513; 2% of data was recorded as ‘don’t know’ and 18% was missing). Based on the available data, there was a bias towards males, with 57% of beneficiaries recorded as male compared to 42% recorded as female and 0.19% recorded as ‘other’ (see Chart 1). For comparison, population estimates report that 51% of young people aged 10-25 are male and 49% are female (see Chart 2).<sup>12</sup> We were unable to find any data representing the typical gender split of those attending youth provision, but a recent APPG inquiry into youth work cites a small scale study that found that young females felt, ‘the current choice of activities seem to be more in line with what males may choose to do.’<sup>13</sup> Whilst many activities are open to young people of any gender, it appears that young women are more likely to perceive that some activities are ‘not for them’. This was also reflected in the YIF Learning and Insight Paper Five: Process Evaluation (due for publication in Autumn 2020), which found that there is sometimes a tendency for activities to become dominated by male young people, particularly in outdoor sporting activities.

Chart 1: Gender of young people taking part in the YIF provision

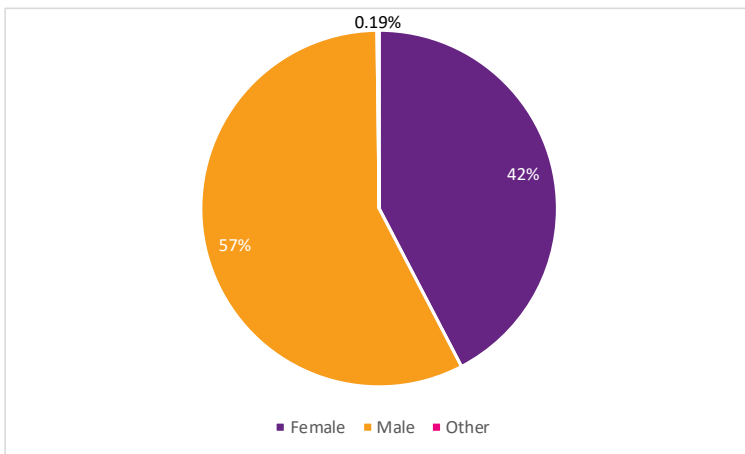
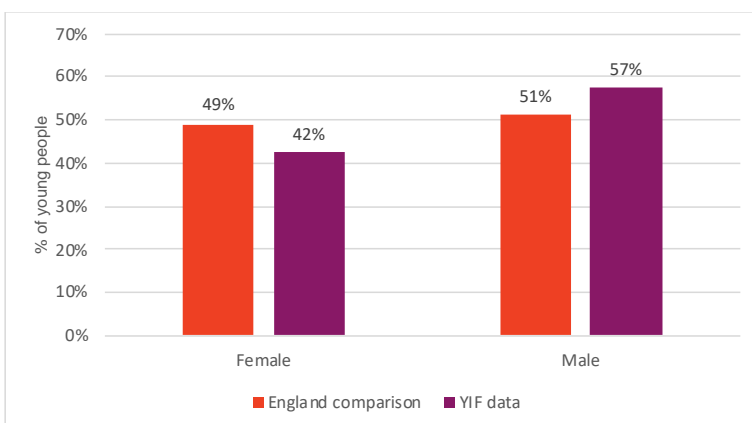


Chart 2: Gender of young people attending the YIF provision compared to population estimates for 10-25 year olds in England (mid-2019)



<sup>12</sup> Based on population estimates for 10-25 year olds in England (mid-2019). Source: ONS (2020), Analysis of population estimates tool. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/analysisofpopulationestimates>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nya.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/APPG-Youth-Work-Inquiry-Final-Report-April-2019-ONLINE.pdf>.

### 3.1.2 Ethnicity

Ethnicity was recorded for 53% of young people in our sample (n=30,193; 11% was recorded as ‘don’t know’ and 36% was missing data). We are currently investigating why the amount of missing data is so high for ethnicity, but potential reasons include youth organisations finding it less appropriate to ask young people about their ethnicity and young people being less willing to provide data about their ethnicity. In our sample (excluding missing data and ‘don’t know’ responses), 68% of young people were White (n=20,590) and 32% (9,603) were from minority ethnic groups (see Chart 3). When compared to ethnicity data for England, White and Asian / Asian British young people were slightly underrepresented whilst Black young people and young people from mixed / multiple ethnic groups were slightly overrepresented among the YIF participants (see Chart 4).<sup>14</sup> This variation may be a result of the regional focus of the YIF, which will be explored further in the full analysis.

Chart 3: Ethnicity of young people taking part in the YIF provision

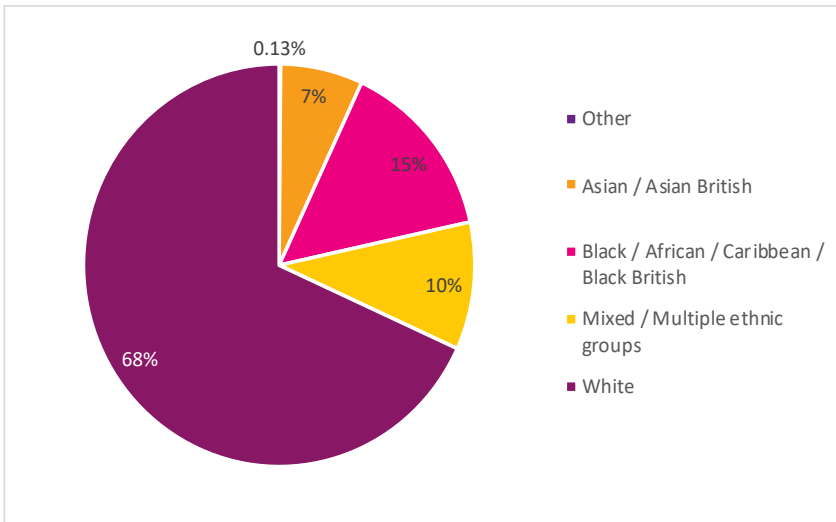
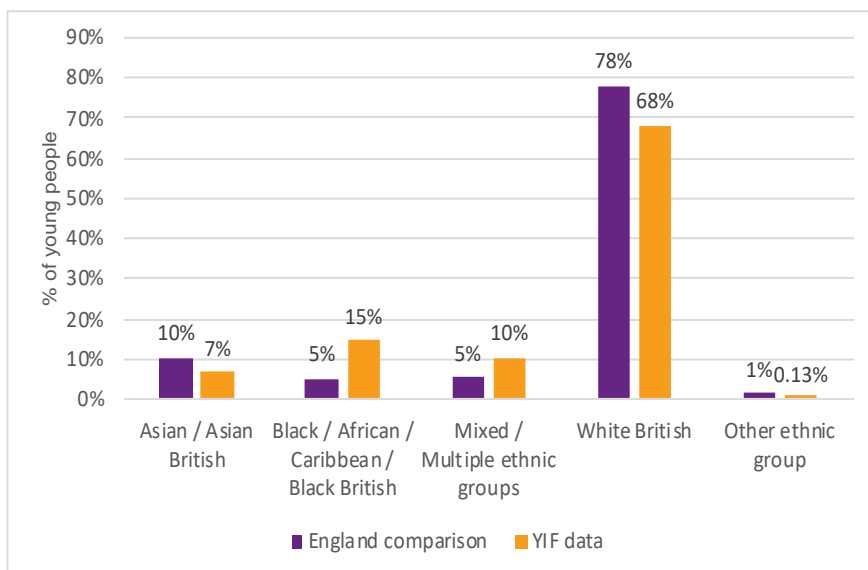


Chart 4: Ethnicity of young people taking part in the YIF provision against a comparison dataset for England

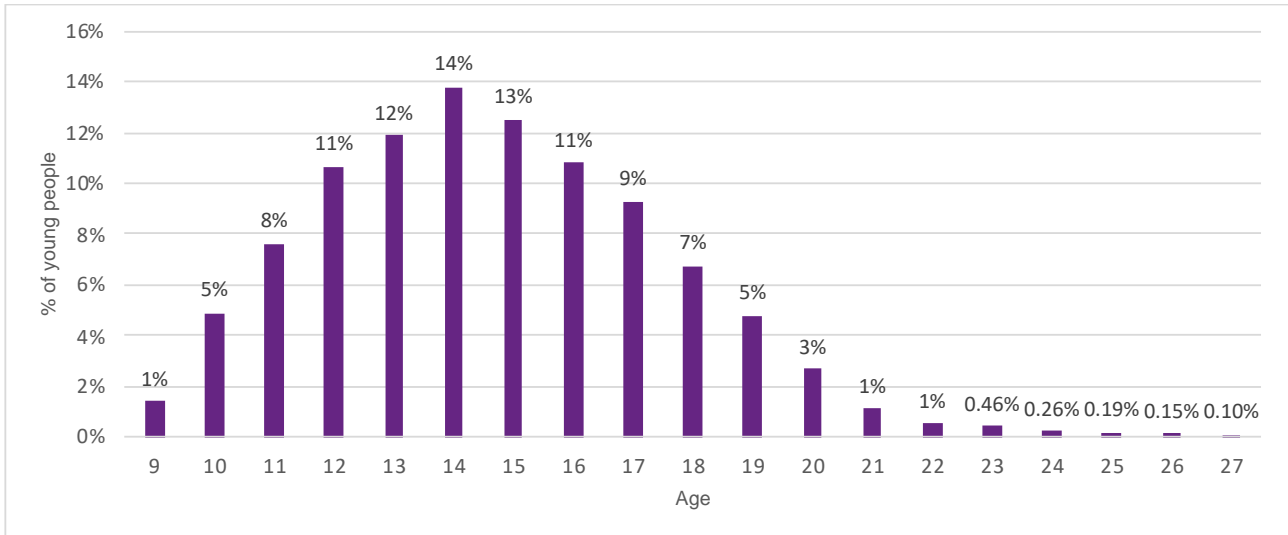


<sup>14</sup> Source: Office for National Statistics 2011, Census data on children in England aged 1-15 in 2011. More recent ethnicity data by age is not available so this age group has been used as a proxy for young people who were aged 10-25 during the YIF learning project. Data table can be accessed at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/dc2101ew>.

### 3.1.3 Age

The YIF defines ‘young people’ as those who are 10 to 18 years old or 10 to 25 years with a disability or special educational needs.<sup>15</sup> Whilst some the YIF organisations work with young people outside of this age range, we have excluded any data for young people who fall outside of the 10 to 25 years age range.<sup>16</sup> According to our sample, the YIF provision peaks at age 14 to 15, with high numbers recorded between the ages of 12 and 17 years old (see Chart 5). Age was recorded for 73% of young people attending the YIF provision (n=40,995).

Chart 5: The age profile of young people taking part in YIF provision



<sup>15</sup> Data was not collected about disabilities or special educational needs of the young people attending the YIF provision.

<sup>16</sup> Young people taking part in the YIF provision who fell within the age range of 10-25 at some point during the YIF learning project were included in the dataset. As a result, the age range shown in Chart 5 extends from 9 to 27.

Figure 4: Summary of the YIF beneficiary data

## Who takes part in activities funded by the Youth Investment Fund?

Based on data collected through the YIF Learning project from May 2018 to Feb 2020.

**56,491** young people attended YIF-funded youth provision, based on data from 82 organisations



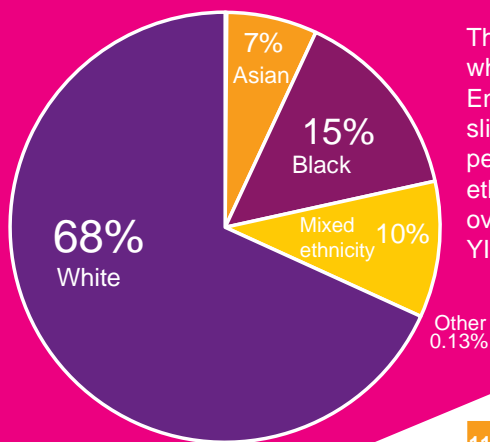
The median attendance was **305**, but the size of YIF-funded projects varies hugely...



...the largest had **5,862!**

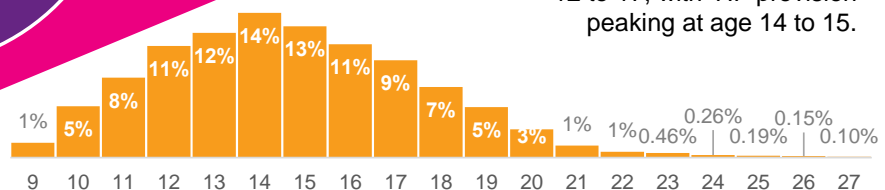


**Boys** were slightly more likely to take part than **girls** (57% compared to 42%, with 0.2% identified as 'other').



The majority of young people attending YIF provision were white. However, when compared to ethnicity data for England, White and Asian young people were slightly underrepresented whilst Black young people and young people from mixed/multiple ethnic groups were slightly overrepresented among YIF participants.

In our sample, there were high numbers of young people aged 12 to 17, with YIF provision peaking at age 14 to 15.

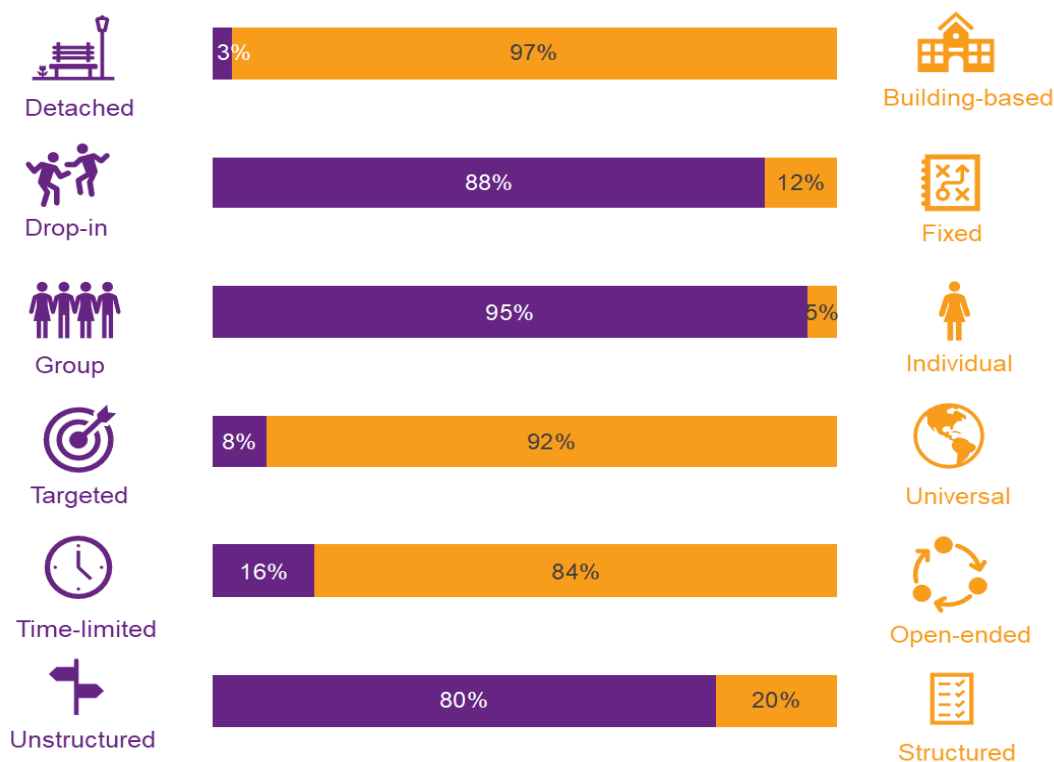


## 3.2. What types of activities are young people attending?

The YIF organisations recorded their YIF funded activity sessions that were delivered between May 2018 and February 2020 alongside details of the young people who participated in these activities. Through linking the attendance data with a unique beneficiary user ID, organisations can understand which groups of young people are taking part in the different activities offered, and how often they are attending. The nature and type of activities delivered across the 90 YIF grant holders varied enormously and so, to help understand key common features, we developed a set of six characteristic groupings of open access youth provision (as outlined in section 2.3.1), against which each organisation was asked to classify their activities (see [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#) for further information about these characteristic groupings).

To date, we have classification data on one or more of the six characteristic groupings, recorded for 673 activities which, in total, were attended 139,313 times (see Appendix A: Table 3 for further information).<sup>17</sup> When considering attendances at the classified activities, there is a clear pattern, with the majority of attendances being at activities that are building-based, drop-in, group, universal and open-ended. This reflects what we would perhaps expect to see from traditional open access youth provision. However, there is a notable difference between the types of activities that were most attended and the types of activities that were most commonly provided, based on this data (see Appendix A: Table 3). This is likely to be because some types of activities, for example universal, open-ended and drop-in activities, are attended by greater numbers of young people than their counterpart activity types. Chart 6 shows the percentage split of attendances across each activity pairing. Activities can be understood by each of these six discrete category pairings and we will explore ‘typologies’ (i.e. combinations of these categories) in the final findings.

Chart 6: Percentage split of attendances across each activity pairing



<sup>17</sup> 673 activities were categorised on at least one of the above pairings. The number of activities coded for each pairing can be found in Appendix 1: Table 3.

## 4. Eight things we've learnt so far from the YIF evaluation

As outlined earlier, this report presents emerging findings based on the partial data collected and shared by the YIF grant holders up to February 2020. Therefore, these findings should be treated with caution until the full analysis is published in Spring 2021. However, we feel it is valuable to share the patterns and insights that we are observing at this stage.

### 1. Youth provision is highly valued by young people

Figure 5: Top rated feedback questions



How young people experience youth provision is a fundamental component of how it contributes to change in their lives.

Through the theory of change co-production process (see [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#) for further information), the key 'mechanisms' that are hypothesised to lead to or influence change in outcomes for young people were identified. These mechanisms of change are subjective reactions and feelings experienced by young people in response to the provision and are captured through young people's feedback. Consequently, it is vital that attention is paid to mechanisms of change in evaluation to develop stronger explanations of how a particular programme works. The feedback data collection process used in the YIF evaluation appears to be a practical and insightful way of understanding these mechanisms.

The YIF feedback process used a set of 17 'core questions', from which organisations could select questions to include in their bespoke survey.<sup>18</sup> Organisations could also add their own questions. Emergent findings presented here are based on responses to the 17 core questions only.<sup>19</sup> Figure 5 shows the top-rated feedback questions from young people (that is the questions that received the most positive responses) across all timepoints of the feedback data collection. The percentage represents the number of young people who responded 'a great deal' to each feedback question (see Appendix A: Table 4a for full responses).

<sup>18</sup> Plus, an additional open question which is not included in this report: 'Are there any other services that [organisations / project] could offer that you would value?'.  
<sup>19</sup> As a result of the bespoke survey design process, the sample size for each of the 17 core questions is different, depending on the number of times it was included in an organisation's survey. Response rates are included in Appendix A: Table 4a, and missing data in Table 4b. Organisations also had the option to use either a 3-point response scale or a simplified 2-point response scale. Findings in this report are based on questions that used the 3-point scale. Responses using both response scales will be included in the full analysis.

Feedback scores were generally positive across the board, suggesting that youth provision is highly valued by young people. There were especially high ratings for safety, enjoyment, trust, valuing the service, provision quality, and for feeling that taking part in the provision is worth time and effort.

As outlined in section 2.3.1, feedback data was collected over four consecutive 'rounds' during the learning project. Aggregate feedback data collected by the overall cohort of the YIF organisations shows a mixed picture of change over time (see Appendix A: Table 5 for further information). Changes in scores between the first and third rounds of data collection range from a drop of 9.4 percentage points for young people who responded 'a great deal' to 'how much do you value the organisation?' to an increase of 22.5 percentage points for young people who responded 'very likely' to 'how likely do you think it is that [organisation / project] will make changes as a result of your feedback?'.<sup>20</sup> This requires further investigation, but may reflect the varied levels of engagement with the evaluation across the YIF grant holders, with some using the data to learn and improve provision (thus one might expect to see a positive feedback increase) and others collecting it purely for the purposes of the YIF learning project (something that we are currently exploring with grant holders). It should be noted that, because high scores were achieved on many of the feedback questions during our first round of data collection, there is little room for improvement, which may account for the limited change in these questions over time (known as a 'ceiling effect'). Furthermore, not all participating organisations provided data for each of the three rounds of data collection as they collected data at times that best fitted with their activities and capacity, so comparisons across rounds are not like for like (20 organisations provided data for all three rounds. See Appendix A: Table 6 for further information).

We anticipate that these findings will be replicated in the full analysis as the feedback data collected and shared by YIF grant holders was relatively high quality and complete, particularly in comparison to the outcomes data. This suggests that collection of feedback data is both feasible and aligns well with YIF providers' interests and therefore has potential for wider application in future learning and evaluation practice in youth provision

## 2. There is room for improvement in the co-production of youth provision with young people

Youth organisations care deeply about working in partnership with young people, rather than making decisions on their behalf. This is a fundamental part of youth work. However, our data suggests it is not always easy, and young people's experiences of co-production are not rated as positively as other mechanisms of change, as measured through the YIF feedback process. This is perhaps unsurprising as areas of focus that are high in the Programme Quality Assessment Pyramid (see Box 1) are more challenging, and this includes those related to co-production. This was also reflected in the YIF process evaluation (to be published in Autumn 2020), which found that youth voice was an important part of the YIF provision but mainly happened at a 'basic' level, for example through input into activities or designing the space, rather than at a more strategic level, for example through a youth board.

The positive news is that, as outlined above, there was an improvement in scores for the question 'how likely will changes be made as a result of your feedback?' from 49% of young people responding that this was 'very likely' in round one (n=176) to 72% in round three (n=153).

## 3. Young people place high levels of trust in staff but feel relatively less trusted

Mutual trust is an important basis for healthy relationships and a foundation of youth provision. Whilst young people show high levels of trust in staff (see above), relatively, they do not feel that as much trust is placed in them: 64% of young

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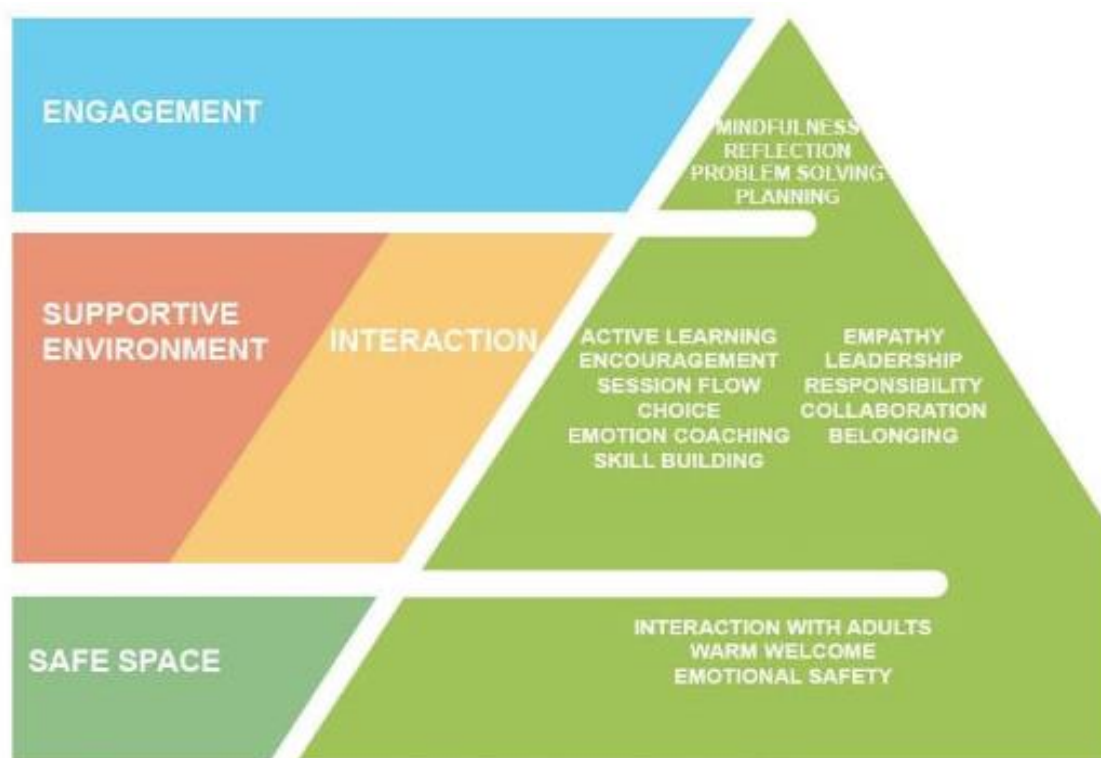
<sup>20</sup> Round four was partially complete at the time of analysis and therefore not included in this report.

people felt that staff trusted them 'a great deal' compared to 82% who stated that they trusted the staff 'a great deal' (see Appendix A: Table 4a).

It's possible that this is linked to the above findings in point two, as empowering young people to influence how provision is run demonstrates trust and, conversely, the absence of this may be perceived by young people as a lack of trust.

Box 1: About the Programme Quality Assessment Pyramid

The [Youth Programme Quality Intervention \(YPQI\)](#), developed by the [David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#), and led by the [Centre for Youth Impact](#) in the UK, gives a clear and evidenced picture of what makes a high quality environment for youth development. The Programme Quality Assessment Pyramid, which underpins the YPQI, sets out four domains of quality environments, the foundation being 'creating safe spaces'. The Programme Quality Assessment (PQA), based on the pyramid, was used to measure quality in the YIF learning project. You can read more about the process in [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#).



#### 4. Organisations that took part in the quality process generally received better feedback from young people

Early indications suggest that organisations that pay focused attention to the quality of the environment they provide for young people, through the quality process, receive on average higher feedback scores from young people.<sup>21</sup> Whilst further analysis is needed to test this relationship, it is noticeable that organisations that took part in at least one cycle of the quality process reported higher scores on almost all feedback questions, when compared to organisations that did not take part in the quality process (see Chart 7 and the full data in Appendix A: Table 8).<sup>22</sup> This is a potential indicator that those organisations that invested time in the quality process (including embracing a continuous learning culture) may

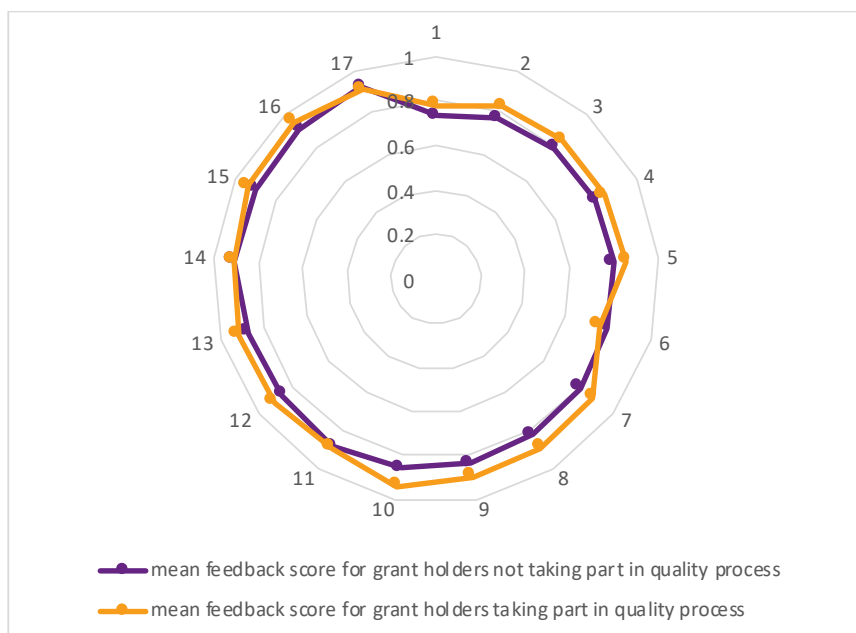
<sup>21</sup> Quality scores are based on the average of observation scores (where more than one observation took place) within an organisation over successive data collection intervals.

<sup>22</sup> Feedback and quality data collection was an ongoing process (within successive data collection intervals) so times at which organisations conducted data collection varied.



be more attentive to the needs of young people and more aware of the impact the youth provision environment has on them. The notable exceptions to the pattern were the questions 'how likely do you think it is that [organisation] will make changes as a result of your feedback?' and 'how much do you value [organisation]', for which those participating in the quality process achieved a lower mean feedback score. We do not currently know the reason for this anomaly but will investigate this further. This tentative finding suggests that the act of attending to quality correlates with perceptions of a better quality experience amongst young people. This will be explored further in the full and final analysis.

Chart 7: Comparison of feedback scores achieved by organisations taking part in the quality process (n=33) and organisations that did not take part in the quality process (n= 58<sup>23</sup>)



Key for Chart 7

Feedback Question	
1	How much do you influence how the services are run at [organisation]?
2	When you are at [organisation], how empowered do you feel to make a positive change in your life?
3	How much do you feel the staff and volunteers at [organisation] trust you?
4	How much do you feel positively challenged by the activities at [organisation]?
5	How much do you feel a sense of purpose and achievement through the activities at [organisation]?
6	How likely do you think it is that [organisation] will make changes as a result of your feedback?
7	To what extent do you receive the support you need from [organisation]?
8	When you are at [organisation], how much do you feel a sense of community?
9	How much do you feel valued as an individual while at [organisation]?
10	How much do you trust the staff and volunteers at [organisation]?
11	How included do you feel whilst at [organisation]?
12	How respected do you feel whilst at [organisation]?
13	To what extent do you think the services you receive from [organisation] are good quality?
14	To what extent do you feel it is worth your time and effort to come to [organisation]?
15	How safe do you feel whilst at [organisation]?
16	How much do you enjoy your time at [organisation]?
17	How much do you value [organisation]?

<sup>23</sup> The total number of organisations is 91, which is higher than our overall sample. This is due to consortia being counted as one organisation in the total sample of 90 but treated individually in the quality process.

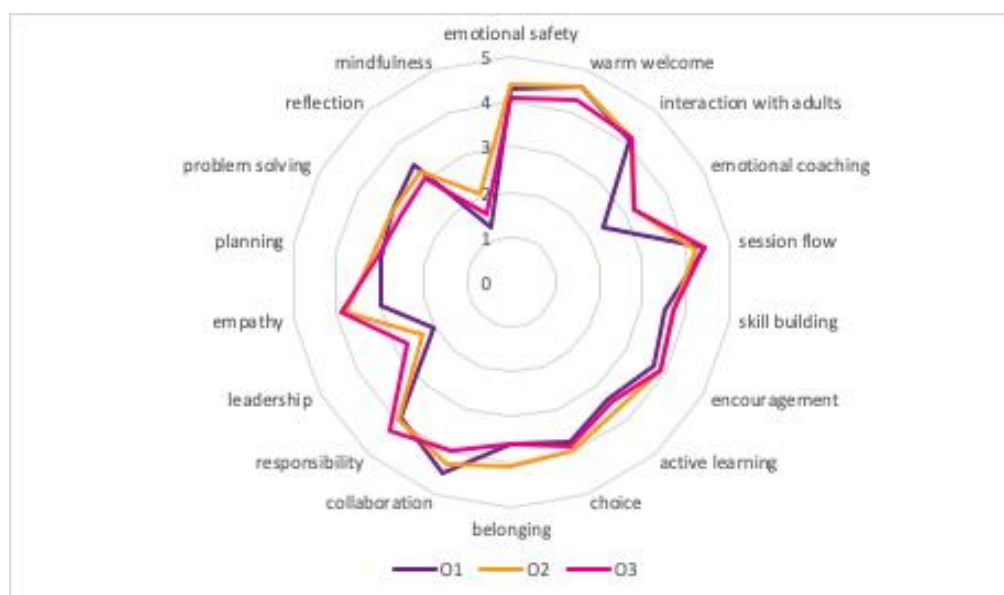
## 5. The quality assessment process makes a valuable contribution to evaluation and learning

In total, 33 organisations took part in at least one round of the quality process. This involved peer observations of activities, followed by collaborative scoring of the provision using a standardised measure known as the Social and Emotional Learning Programme Quality Assessment (SEL PQA. See Box 1 and [YIF Learning and Insight Paper One: A shared evaluation framework for open access youth provision](#) for further information). Based on these results, improvement plans were set and implemented as part of a continuous 'assess-plan-improve' cycle (see Appendix B). This process has provided new insights into the relative strengths and weaknesses of youth provision against a set of evidence-informed indicators of quality.

Scale means are reported, where each scale is made up of one or more items, which organisations could score on a 3-point scale with options 1,3 and 5. Higher scores indicate a greater frequency of observed target behaviours. Overall (across all rounds of data collection), providers rated their provision highly for: providing a warm welcome (4.7), session flow (4.5), emotional safety (4.4), interaction with adults (4.4), and collaboration (4). There were relatively lower scores for mindfulness (1.5), promoting leadership (2.3), emotional coaching (2.8), cultivating empathy (3), and problem solving (3.1) (see Appendix A: Table 7a).

For those organisations that took part in three cycles of the quality process (n=12, see Chart 8 and Appendix A: Table 7c), greater improvements were observed in empathy (+0.9), emotional coaching (+0.8), and leadership (+0.7), compared to other PQA scales, although the scores for emotional coaching and leadership remained relatively low despite this improvement. This indicates that the reflective process of conducting the quality reviews enabled providers to identify their relative weak areas, and to focus on improving those aspects of their service over time. The number of organisations participating in three cycles of the process is relatively low. Based on interviews with grant holders, this is likely to be because, although the process was seen as high value, they felt it required significant resource.

Chart 8: Quality scores for organisations that took part in 3 rounds of the quality process



## 6. Approximately 15% of young people accessing the YIF provision are 'high need'

The YIF learning project measured outcomes for young people over time. These outcomes, identified through the co-production of the [YIF theory of change](#), are measured through the following domains: 1) self-awareness and self-reflection, 2) attitudes and non-cognitive skills (e.g. self-confidence and locus of control), 3) knowledge and skills (e.g.

confidence in communication skills and self-expression), 4) behaviours (e.g. emotion management) and 5) mental health and emotional well-being. At this stage in the learning project, we are reporting on findings from the baseline survey data and will look at changes in these domains over time in the final report. Overall, the findings present a positive picture for young people, but a noteworthy minority are, at baseline, reporting low scores on these domains. For example, approximately 15% of young people never or rarely feel able to: make up their mind about things (10%); feel close to other people (12%); think clearly (15%); deal well with problems (16%); feel relaxed (16%); feel useful (15%); and feel optimistic about the future (15%).

This suggests that open access youth provision is important in reaching and supporting these young people. Possible ways in which the YIF grant holders do this include:

- Providing accessible and safe spaces where young people are able to recognise and acknowledge their strengths and areas for support, and access this support, on their own terms without stigmatisation.
- Signposting to (and very directly connecting young people into) further and more intensive support.
- Providing free and low-cost provision, which may be more accessible than more targeted support, which is often only available when need becomes critical.
- Supporting young people to develop positive peer relationships with a broader group of young people.

We will explore this further in the full analysis by looking at change in outcomes over time for this sub-group of young people compared to young people who are achieving higher scores on outcomes at the baseline measure.

Early findings also indicate that young people who are relatively new to the youth provision (have attended for less than six months) generally score themselves less positively on outcomes compared to young people who have been attending for longer. This requires further investigation but may be an early indication of a relationship between the length of time spent at youth provision and positive outcomes for young people.

## 7. Collecting shared data with and about young people is challenging and new approaches are required

We set out to collect five types of data as part of the YIF learning project, with the aim of collecting the most data about who is attending (e.g. age, ethnicity and gender) and how they are engaging with provision (e.g. what activities they are attending and how often). We knew that some types of data, such as self-reported outcomes from young people, would be more challenging and that it would not be appropriate or proportionate for all providers to collect this. However, as section 2.3.2 shows, even the most basic data can be challenging to collect at a shared level, which is reflected in the amount of missing data in the YIF sample. The causes of these challenges are explored more in [YIF Learning and Insight Paper Three: A shared outcomes framework for open access youth provision](#), and in the forthcoming *YIF Learning and Insight Paper Six*, which will focus on learning about the process of shared evaluation in the Youth Sector. However, early findings indicate that in addition to the data quality issues outlined in section 2.3.2, some YIF organisations experienced problems exporting data from their existing data management system(s) to the YIF Impact system and had limited staff time and resource to collect data alongside delivery. We believe it is important that these limitations are not met with an instinctive rejection of evaluation in open access settings, or—conversely—a doubling-down on more traditional impact evaluation approaches, particularly as the most challenging part of the data collection process has been collecting good quality outcomes data, which is a requirement of these approaches. The YIF learning project has progressed understanding about what works in evaluating open access youth provision and it is vital that this is reflected and built upon in future evaluations.

## 8. There is value in the YIF approach to evaluating open access youth provision and this should be developed further

Whilst it has not been without its challenges (as outlined above), the YIF evaluation approach is starting to provide new insights into the quality and impact of open access youth provision beyond that which would have been gained from a traditional impact evaluation with a narrow focus on outcomes. Emerging findings suggest that the key strengths of the approach include:

- **Progress towards a shared understanding of the impact of open access youth provision**—A particular strength of the design has been the co-production of a shared theory of change alongside an evaluation framework, and associated data collection tools, for open access youth provision. This is a significant step forward in understanding quality and impact in open access youth provision, a field that has typically been challenging to understand at a sector level. Feedback from grant holders suggests that, through the process of developing the theory of change, there has been a recognition that there are common elements across youth provision—despite variation in the nature of activities—which lend themselves to a shared approach, such as the mechanisms of change that were measured through the YIF feedback process.
- **A better understanding of the variety of activities delivered as part of open access youth provision**—Whilst there are, unsurprisingly, dominant types of activities within the YIF provision (e.g. building-based activities), there is also a notable minority of activities attended by young people that are delivered in different ways to traditional open access youth provision. For example, one fifth of attendances were at structured activities and 16% were at time limited activities (see Chart 6). The YIF grant holders have described the benefits of providing a variety of activities, building on the foundations of open access provision, in attracting and engaging young people. Furthermore, at the time of writing, the youth sector is adapting to a global pandemic and the resulting social distancing measures that are, inevitably, shaping the nature of activities that can be delivered. For example, there has been a move to virtual and detached work that can be delivered whilst keeping young people safe. This variety, both before and as a result of the pandemic, highlights the need to collect information about activities when evaluating open access youth provision (and youth provision more generally), so that data can be disaggregated to understand how different types of provision affect engagement, experiences of provision, and outcomes for young people. This can inform ongoing adaptation and innovation. The variety of activities also highlights the need to further explore shared definitions of youth provision.
- **The five types of data approach provides new insights into open access youth provision**—Linked to the above point, emerging findings suggest that, by collecting the five types of data, we are better able to understand how open access youth provision is supporting young people. For example, early indications suggest that duration of attendance may play a role in young people's outcomes, and that quality plays a role in young people's experiences of youth provision. Looking at the relationships between the five types of data, as part of the full data analysis, will allow a detailed investigation of these questions.

## 4.1 Next steps

We have now completed the YIF data collection process and are assembling our full and final dataset. This data is being analysed in the Summer / Autumn of 2020 and the final findings will be shared in Spring 2021. This will explore the questions described in section 2.3 and will build on the emerging findings presented in this report. In particular, and subject to gathering sufficient high quality data, we will focus our analysis across the five types of data to understand more about what works, for whom, and in what conditions, in open access youth provision.

Additionally, we will be sharing further learning about the process of evaluating open access youth provision (in *YIF Learning and Insight Paper Six* towards the end of 2020) and will share reviewed and revised versions of the data collection tools developed as part of the YIF learning project through the Centre for Youth Impact's website in the Autumn.

In the meantime, we welcome your thoughts or reflections on the emerging findings presented in this report. We are especially interested in what grant holders would like to know more about from the full analysis and how they would like to contribute in the remaining stages of the learning project. If you have any feedback or questions, or would like to be involved, please get in touch with us at [yiflearning@thinknpc.org](mailto:yiflearning@thinknpc.org).

## Appendix A: Additional data tables

**Table 1: Breakdown of beneficiary data by inclusion and exclusion criteria**

Young people’s data was excluded from the beneficiary and engagement dataset if, based on the information available, they were outside of the YIF age range or were registered as taking part in activities prior to the learning project data collection timeframe, but not during it.<sup>8</sup>

	Meet attendance selection criterion	Do not meet attendance selection criterion	Missing attendance data	Total
Missing date of birth	10,238	3,776	5,258	19,272
Not eligible based on age (born before 1993 or after 2010)	1,206	742	1,533	3,481
Eligible based on age (born between 1993 -2010)	24,971	15,934	16,024	56,929
<b>Total excluded from sample</b>	<b>1,206</b>	<b>20,452</b>	<b>1,533</b>	<b>23,191</b>
<b>Total included in sample</b>	<b>35,209</b>		<b>21,282</b>	<b>56,491</b>
<b>Total (excluded plus included data)</b>	<b>36415</b>	<b>20452</b>	<b>22815</b>	<b>79682</b>

**Table 2: Summary of the number of young people attending the YIF provision per organisation based on the YIF beneficiary data**

Number of young people attending per organisation	Number of organisations
1-500	55
501-1000	11
1001-1500	6
1501-2000	2
2001-2500	4
2501-3000	1
3501-4000	1
5501-6000	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>82</b>

**Table 3: Percentage split of activities and attendances by activity classification**

Activities were coded on one or more of the following characteristic groupings (e.g. detached or building-based).

Out of a total of 933 recorded activities, there are 260 unique activities for which no classification has been provided or logged by youth organisations, which represents 28% of all activities on record. The overall number of attendances at these 260 unclassified activities is 23,389. This equates to 14% of all attendances on record, which totals 162,702.

Please note that totals in Table 3 include activities and attendances that are counted multiple times and therefore are higher than the totals outlined above. For example, an activity may have been classified as ‘Building-based’ and ‘Drop-in’ and ‘Group’ so would therefore be counted in each of these rows.

Activity Classification	Activities		Attendances	
	Total number of activity sessions run	Paired %	Total number of attendances	Paired %
Detached	77	9%	2,521	3%
Building-based	804	91%	86,325	97%
Drop-in	462	53%	79,425	88%
Fixed	409	47%	10,451	12%
Group	849	90%	87,444	95%
Individual	96	10%	4,373	5%
Targeted	262	32%	7,391	8%
Universal	564	68%	80,006	92%
Time-limited	453	53%	14,625	16%
Open-ended	401	47%	74,770	84%
Unstructured	330	39%	72,298	80%
Structured	508	61%	17,523	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,215</b>		<b>537,152</b>	

**Table 4a: Feedback scores across all three rounds**

**Sample size:** The YIF organisations were able to build their own feedback questionnaire using a bank of 17 core questions.- In the table below, we report on the number of times the individual questions were asked as part of the grant holders’ surveys. For this reason, the response rate varies across the core questions. The number of responses in Table 5 below is slightly lower than those in Table 4a, as Table 4a includes a small number of responses from round four of data collection (up to the end of February 2020), which was still in progress when the analysis was conducted.

	Number of responses (excluding missing data)	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all
How much do you trust the staff and volunteers at [organisation]?	2,855	81.5%	17.3%	1.2%
How safe do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	2,785	85.1%	14.3%	0.6%
To what extent do you receive the support you need from [organisation]?	2,534	74.4%	23.2%	2.4%
How much do you enjoy your time at [organisation]?	2,316	85.0%	14.5%	0.5%
How much do you influence how the services are run at [organisation]?	1,937	59.2%	35.3%	5.5%
To what extent do you think the services you receive from [organisation] are good quality?	1,862	82.3%	17.1%	0.6%
How much do you feel valued as an individual while at [organisation]?	1,659	77.8%	20.9%	1.0%
When you are at [organisation], how empowered do you feel to make a positive change in your life?	1,536	65.2%	30.7%	4.1%
How respected do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	1,521	79.7%	19.0%	1.3%
How much do you feel positively challenged by the activities at [organisation]?	1,513	68.8%	28.4%	2.8%
How included do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	1,297	78.8%	20.2%	1.0%
When you are at [organisation], how much do you feel a sense of community?	1,261	74.7%	23.6%	1.7%
How much do you feel a sense of purpose and achievement through the activities at [organisation]?	2,628	71.4%	26.6%	2.1%
How much do you value [organisation]?	1,083	84.3%	15.1%	0.7%
How much do you feel the staff and volunteers at [organisation] trust you?	890	63.8%	32.1%	4.0%
to what extent do you feel it is worth your time and effort	765	82.6%	16.1%	1.3%
	Number of responses	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely
how likely will changes be made as a result of your feedback*	513	60.4%	34.9%	4.7%



**Table 4b: Feedback—Missing data**

Question	Total number of times question was included in a survey	Total number of responses	Missing data	% of data missing
How much do you trust the staff and volunteers at [organisation]?	2,986	2,855	131	4.4%
How safe do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	2,892	2,785	107	3.7%
To what extent do you receive the support you need from [organisation]?	2,707	2,534	173	6.4%
How much do you enjoy your time at [organisation]?	2,347	2,316	31	1.3%
How much do you influence how the services are run at [organisation]?	2,042	1,937	105	5.1%
To what extent do you think the services you receive from [organisation] are good quality?	1,990	1,862	128	6.4%
How much do you feel valued as an individual while at [organisation]?	1,688	1,659	29	1.7%
When you are at [organisation], how empowered do you feel to make a positive change in your life?	1,640	1,536	104	6.3%
How respected do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	1,627	1,521	106	6.5%
How much do you feel positively challenged by the activities at [organisation]?	1,618	1,513	105	6.5%
How included do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	1,409	1,297	112	7.9%
When you are at [organisation], how much do you feel a sense of community?	1,367	1,261	106	7.8%
How much do you feel a sense of purpose and achievement through the activities at [organisation]?	2,742	2,628	114	4.2%
How much do you value [organisation]?	1,210	1,083	127	10.5%
How much do you feel the staff and volunteers at [organisation] trust you?	1,000	890	110	11.0%
To what extent do you feel it is worth your time and effort to come to [organisation]?	892	765	127	14.2%
How likely do you think it is that [organisation] will make changes as a result of your feedback?	638	513	125	19.6%

**Table 5: Feedback scores by data collection round**

**Sample size:** The YIF organisations were able to build their own questionnaire using a bank of core questions. In the table below, we report on the number of times the individual questions were asked as part of the grant holders’ surveys. For this reason, the response rate varies across the core questions. The number of responses in Table 5 is slightly lower than those in Table 4 as Table 4 includes a small number of responses from round 4 of data collection (up to the end of February 2020), which was still in progress when the analysis was conducted.

	Round 1				Round 2				Round 3				Overall change from Round 1 to Round 3		
	Number of responses	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all	Number of responses	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all	Number of responses	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all
How empowered do you feel to make a positive change in your life?	409	58.2%	36.7%	5.1%	673	70.3%	26.2%	3.6%	454	63.9%	32.2%	4.0%	5.7%	-4.5%	-1.2%
How included do you feel?	340	80.6%	19.1%	0.3%	559	78.5%	20.4%	1.1%	386	77.2%	21.2%	1.6%	-3.4%	2.1%	1.3%
How much do you enjoy your time?	697	82.8%	16.5%	0.7%	1109	84.9%	14.6%	0.5%	488	88.5%	11.3%	0.2%	5.7%	-5.2%	-0.5%
How much do you feel a sense of community?	445	72.4%	25.4%	2.3%	516	73.8%	25.4%	0.8%	288	79.2%	18.1%	2.8%	6.8%	-7.3%	0.5%
How much do you feel a sense of purpose and achievement?	693	70.4%	27.9%	1.7%	1207	71.3%	26.4%	2.3%	706	72.2%	25.8%	2.0%	1.8%	-2.1%	0.3%
How much do you feel positively challenged by the activities?	418	66.0%	30.4%	3.6%	676	74.9%	23.4%	1.8%	397	61.5%	35.3%	3.3%	-4.6%	4.9%	-0.3%
How much do you feel the staff trust you?	90	63.3%	32.2%	4.4%	534	61.2%	34.5%	4.3%	254	68.9%	27.6%	3.5%	5.6%	-4.7%	-0.9%
How much do you feel valued as an individual?	664	75.9%	22.7%	1.4%	629	80.0%	18.4%	0.6%	344	77.3%	21.8%	0.9%	1.4%	-0.9%	-0.5%
How much do you influence how the services are run?	599	56.8%	37.6%	5.7%	744	63.4%	30.9%	5.7%	572	55.6%	39.0%	5.4%	-1.2%	1.4%	-0.3%
How much do you trust the staff?	819	78.3%	20.0%	1.7%	1418	83.2%	15.7%	1.2%	596	81.5%	17.8%	0.7%	3.3%	-2.2%	-1.0%

	Round 1				Round 2				Round 3				Overall change from Round 1 to Round 3		
	Number of responses	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all	Number of responses	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all	Number of responses	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all
How much do you value the organisation?	498	86.6%	12.9%	0.6%	280	87.1%	11.8%	1.1%	293	77.1%	22.5%	0.3%	-9.4%	9.7%	-0.3%
How respected do you feel?	434	79.3%	18.9%	1.8%	771	79.3%	19.3%	1.4%	294	80.6%	19.1%	0.3%	1.4%	0.2%	-1.5%
How safe do you feel?	889	84.0%	15.1%	0.9%	1234	84.3%	15.2%	0.5%	640	88.4%	11.3%	0.3%	4.4%	-3.8%	-0.6%
To what extent do you feel it is worth your time and effort?	186	86.6%	13.4%	0.0%	208	83.2%	15.4%	1.4%	359	79.9%	18.1%	2.0%	-6.6%	4.7%	2.0%
To what extent do you receive the support you need?	1025	74.7%	23.0%	2.2%	914	76.0%	22.3%	1.6%	573	70.9%	25.1%	4.0%	-3.9%	2.1%	1.8%
To what extent do you think the services are good quality?	676	82.1%	17.8%	0.2%	722	81.2%	17.7%	1.1%	442	83.7%	15.8%	0.5%	1.6%	-1.9%	0.3%
	Number of responses	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely	Number of responses	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely	Number of responses	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not at all likely	A great deal	Somewhat	Not at all
How likely will changes be made as a result of your feedback?	176	49.4%	43.8%	6.8%	174	61.5%	33.3%	5.2%	153	71.9%	26.1%	2.0%	22.5%	-17.6%	-4.9%

**Table 6: The number of organisations participating in the feedback process per round**

Number of rounds of data collection	Number of organisations participating
0	29
1	22
2	19
3	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>90</b>

**Tables 7a–7c**

The following tables show mean scores for each quality scale. These scores are based on the average of observation scores (where more than one observation took place) within an organisation, over successive data collection intervals (referred to as ‘rounds’). Each scale is made up of one or more item, which organisations could score on a 3-point scale with options 1,3 and 5. Higher scores indicate a greater frequency of observed target behaviours.

**Table 7a—Quality scores for organisations taking part in one round of the quality process (n=33)**

Quality scale	Round 1
	Mean score
emotional safety	4.4
warm welcome	4.7
interaction with adults	4.4
emotional coaching	2.8
session flow	4.5
skill building	3.8
encouragement	3.8
active learning	3.4
choice	3.9
belonging	3.7
collaboration	4
responsibility	3.7
leadership	2.3
empathy	3
planning	3.2
problem solving	3.1
reflection	3.2
mindfulness	1.5

**Table 7b: Organisations taking part in two rounds of the quality process (n=18)**

Quality scale	Round 1 (Mean score)	Round 2 (Mean score)
emotional safety	4.3	4.3
warm welcome	4.7	4.6
interaction with adults	4.4	4.4
emotional coaching	2.8	3.2
session flow	4.5	4.5
skill building	3.8	3.9
encouragement	3.9	4
active learning	3.5	3.8
choice	3.9	4.2
belonging	3.7	3.9
collaboration	4.1	4.1
responsibility	3.7	4
leadership	2.3	2.5
empathy	3.1	3.5
planning	3.2	3.1
problem solving	3.2	3.2
reflection	3.3	3.1
mindfulness	1.5	2.1

**Table 7c: Organisations taking part in 3 rounds of the quality process (n=12)**

Quality scale	Round 1 (Mean score)	Round 2 (Mean score)	Round 3 (Mean score)	Overall change from Round 1 to Round 3
emotional safety	4.3	4.4	4.1	-0.2
warm welcome	4.6	4.6	4.3	-0.3
interaction with adults	4.1	4.2	4.2	0.1
emotional coaching	2.4	3.2	3.2	0.8
session flow	4.4	4.2	4.4	0
skill building	3.5	3.7	3.7	0.2
encouragement	3.7	3.9	3.9	0.2
active learning	3.4	3.7	3.5	0.1
choice	3.8	4	3.9	0.1
belonging	3.6	4.1	3.6	0
collaboration	4.5	4.3	4	-0.5
responsibility	3.9	4	4.3	0.4
leadership	2	2.3	2.7	0.7
empathy	3	3.8	3.9	0.9
planning	3	3.2	3.1	0.1
problem solving	3.1	3.1	2.9	-0.2
reflection	3.4	3.2	3	-0.4
mindfulness	1.3	2.1	1.6	0.3

**Table 8: Comparison of feedback scores achieved by organisations taking part in the quality process and organisations that did not take part in the quality process**

	Organisations that have not taken part in the quality process		Organisations that have taken part in at least one round of the quality process		Difference
	Total number of responses across all rounds of data collection	Mean response across all rounds of data collection	Total number of responses across all rounds of data collection	Mean response across all rounds of data collection	
How much do you influence how the services are run at [organisation]?	1183	0.73	754	0.78	0.05
When you are at [organisation], how empowered do you feel to make a positive change in your life?	685	0.77	851	0.83	0.06
How much do you feel the staff and volunteers at [organisation] trust you?	649	0.79	241	0.84	0.05
How much do you feel positively challenged by the activities at [organisation]?	846	0.80	667	0.84	0.04
How much do you feel a sense of purpose and achievement through the activities at [organisation]?	1489	0.80	1139	0.86	0.06
How likely do you think it is that [organisation] will make changes as a result of your feedback?	374	0.80	139	0.76	-0.04
To what extent do you receive the support you need from [organisation]?	1800	0.81	733	0.88	0.07
When you are at [organisation], how much do you feel a sense of community?	692	0.82	569	0.89	0.07
How much do you feel valued as an individual while at [organisation]?	929	0.84	730	0.90	0.06
How much do you trust the staff and volunteers at [organisation]?	1962	0.86	893	0.94	0.08
How included do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	754	0.88	543	0.89	0.01
How respected do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	1225	0.86	296	0.91	0.05
To what extent do you think the services you receive from [organisation] are good quality?	1360	0.88	502	0.92	0.04
To what extent do you feel it is worth your time and effort to come to [organisation]?	386	0.91	379	0.91	0.00
How safe do you feel whilst at [organisation]?	1865	0.91	919	0.94	0.03
How much do you enjoy your time at [organisation]?	1536	0.91	780	0.95	0.04
How much do you value [organisation]?	805	0.92	278	0.91	-0.01

## Appendix B: The quality process

Participating grant holders conducted a self-assessment of their provision using the Social Emotional Learning Programme Quality Assessment (SEL PQA). The SEL PQA is an assessment tool which contains 70 'items', each of which focus on a specific element of observable practice when working with children and young people. Firstly, the YIF grantees conducted an observation of their provision, spanning multiple sessions and staff members, taking detailed and objective notes of what they observe. Secondly, the team members met to determine a score for their provision against the items in the SEL PQA tool, agreeing the supporting evidence and giving a score for each as high (5), medium (3), or low (1). These scores were entered into the 'Scores Reporter', an online platform hosted by the [David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality](#).

The quality process is based on an 'assess-plan-improve' sequence, as depicted in the image below. Once grant holders had completed an observation and uploaded their scores, they were instructed to interpret the results and decide which areas of improvement they planned to focus on developing. The intention was that they then put the improvement plan in to action and repeated the cycle of self-assessment, planning and improving. Each full cycle was intended to take six months.

