

# Getting the balance right



This case study is about the benefits of involving young people in evaluation and may be of interest to any third sector organisation keen to encourage service users to take the lead in the evaluation process.

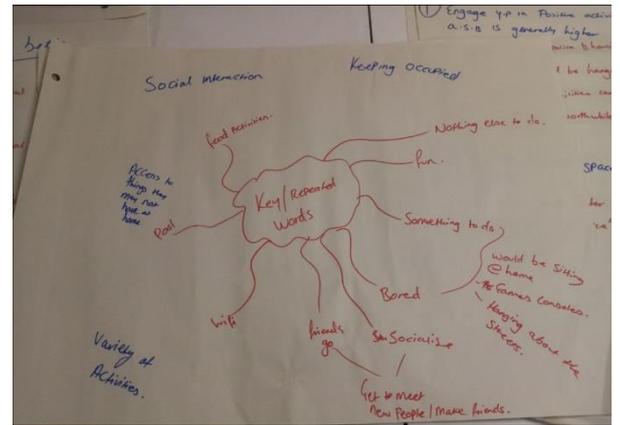
The **Springhall and Whitlawburn Youth Development Team** (SWYDT) is a team of young people who consult with and represent the views of young people to develop youth provision in the local community. SWYDT have been supporting young people to take the lead on evaluation since 2018, with the ambition that they will be able to run the whole project in the future. Evaluation Support Scotland supported SWYDT and other organisations to involve young people in evaluation through a learning set and tailored support sessions. This work was funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.

## The Spectrum of Involvement

In 2018 SWYDT involved young people to develop their own methods for collecting evidence. In 2019 they aimed to build on this by asking young people to take a role in analysing evidence they had collected.



**What we did:** "Last year young people chose the format of materials to gather feedback from the wider group on the impact of the summer programme. This went really well, and the group were keen to do more. This year we thought we would try the same approach, which was to collect feedback on the summer programme at the end of the summer. Young people said they didn't want to collect information on every trip, they thought that was too much."



**How we did it:** We involved the same group of young people as last time, because they were keen to stay on board.

Initially, the staff team analysed the evidence and then asked young people to look at it with fresh eyes – this worked well, but we want it to be even more young people led in future. We asked the young people "what are you noticing? Have we missed something? What could we do better?". The young people looked at all the feedback, identified key words and matched it to the outcomes.

### Successes

- Having a fresh pair of eyes helped us as an organisation. The young people noticed different themes when they were analysing
- When we involved young people in analysing the feedback they realized they had missed some information along the way, like comments people had made. Analysis showed us where the gaps are in what evidence we collected. We need to find that sweet spot of evaluating enough but constantly!

### Challenges

- With analysis, we found that not everyone was interested. A smaller sub-group of young people who are interested works well for us

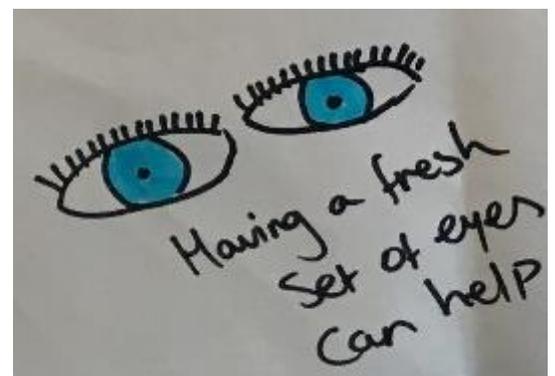
### The difference this made:

One of the young people involved over the two years said:

"Being involved has helped me understand evaluation more"

For the organisation:

"When doing analysis, the young people noticed different themes. Their input also showed us where the gaps are in what evidence we collected. This has helped us think about how we can improve our evaluation systems".



## Our learning:

We found that it help to:

- Relate evaluation to familiar topics. For example, students need to gather and use evidence to back up a point in a Modern Studies project
- Be flexible, what works one year might not work so well the next!

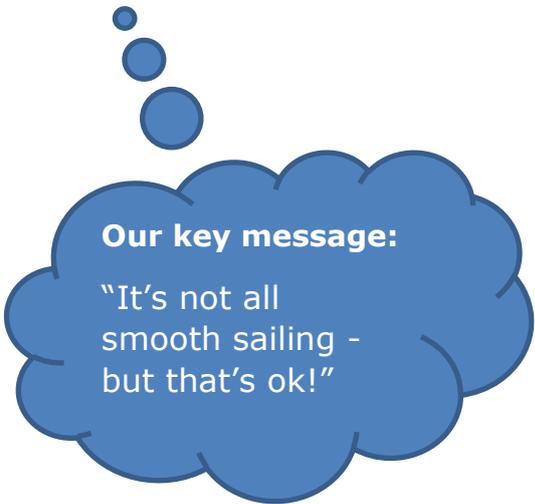
We are definitely going to keep finding ways to involve young people to take the lead. I am planning to incorporate evaluation into the youth work training by running a session on evaluation methods, why it's important, how to make it fun and engaging as this is another way of sharing our learning from this experience. We haven't quite worked out what that might look like yet!

## Tips for you:

For tips on planning how you can support your service users or participants to take the lead in evaluation check out ESS's [\*Why bother involving people in evaluation? Beyond Feedback\*](#)

Pages 20-25 guide you through the **planning** stage of involving service users or participants in evaluation. ESS suggest you:

- Set out clearly why you are asking the people you support to become involved in evaluation
- Define clear, meaningful roles for those involved
- Allow plenty of time



### Our key message:

"It's not all smooth sailing - but that's ok!"

## February 2020

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