

Welcome!



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Here for communities
Here for you

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Five types of data – an approach to evaluation in youth work

Monday 23 March 2026, 13:30 – 14:30

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Aims of the session



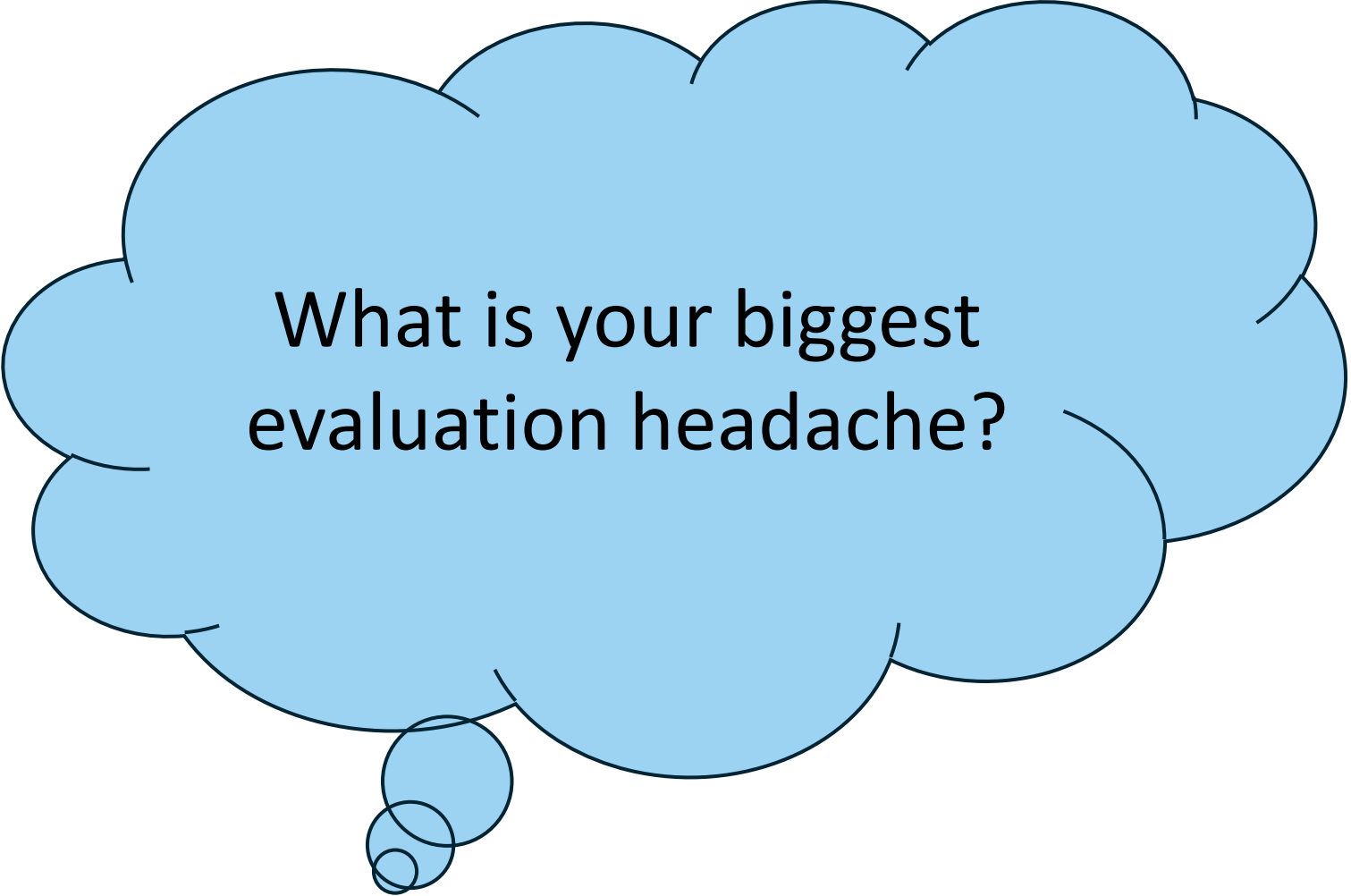
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- Reflect on some common challenges with evaluation in youth work (particularly open access)
- Share an approach that intends to respond to these challenges
- Give you some time to talk to each other about how you work now, and maybe in the future
- Offer you some practical tips, tools and support
- Listen to what you might want and/or need in the future

Evaluation is using information you collect to make a judgement about....

- Whether it 'works'
 - How it works
- Whether it creates economic benefit

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What is your biggest
evaluation headache?

Some youth work evaluation headaches



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- Open-access youth work often doesn't have *pre-determined* outcomes
- Outcomes often focus on transition, so would need longitudinal research to measure
- Some elements of youth work (for example, trusting relationships) are harder to measure
- Engagement might be irregular and unpredictable
- Research ethics and youth work ethics don't always align
- Low resourcing in youth work settings can make data gathering difficult
- Youth workers (particularly volunteers and/or part-time) are unlikely to be trained in evaluation
- Evaluation is often viewed with skepticism by youth workers
- Evaluation is disconnected from practice

Or... why you might be feeling sceptical!

- A focus on proving at the expense of improving
- Numbers (quantitative data) are perceived to have more value than stories (qualitative data)
- Feels high stakes, so it's often 'gamed'
- Data isn't shared, and the same types of outcomes for the same group of young people are tracked multiple times
- Competition, 'uniqueness' and protection is promoted
- Data isn't comparable

So what can we do?



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Appropriate and proportionate

Led by the questions youth workers might want to answer, rather than the method

Offers different approaches for different types of provision and age groups, to make it more manageable and meaningful

Embedded and actionable

Focus on improving, both through the act of evaluation and through interpreting the data

Goes with the grain and provides actionable insight – in your sphere of influence

Shared and collective

Robust data that's comparable across time, provision type and organisations

Co-designed

Intended to contribute to a shared evidence base

The approach: five types of data

User (or 'beneficiary') data

The characteristics of the people who access our activities / provision

Engagement data

The extent to which people use our provision / take part in our activities over time, and how

Quality data

The quality of environment and staff practices

Feedback data

Whether the people who engage with us have the experiences and feelings that we intend; how they feel about their experience

Outcomes data

Whether people have developed specific and malleable skills, traits, and states while engaging with us

Five types of data in action – YIF (2017-20)



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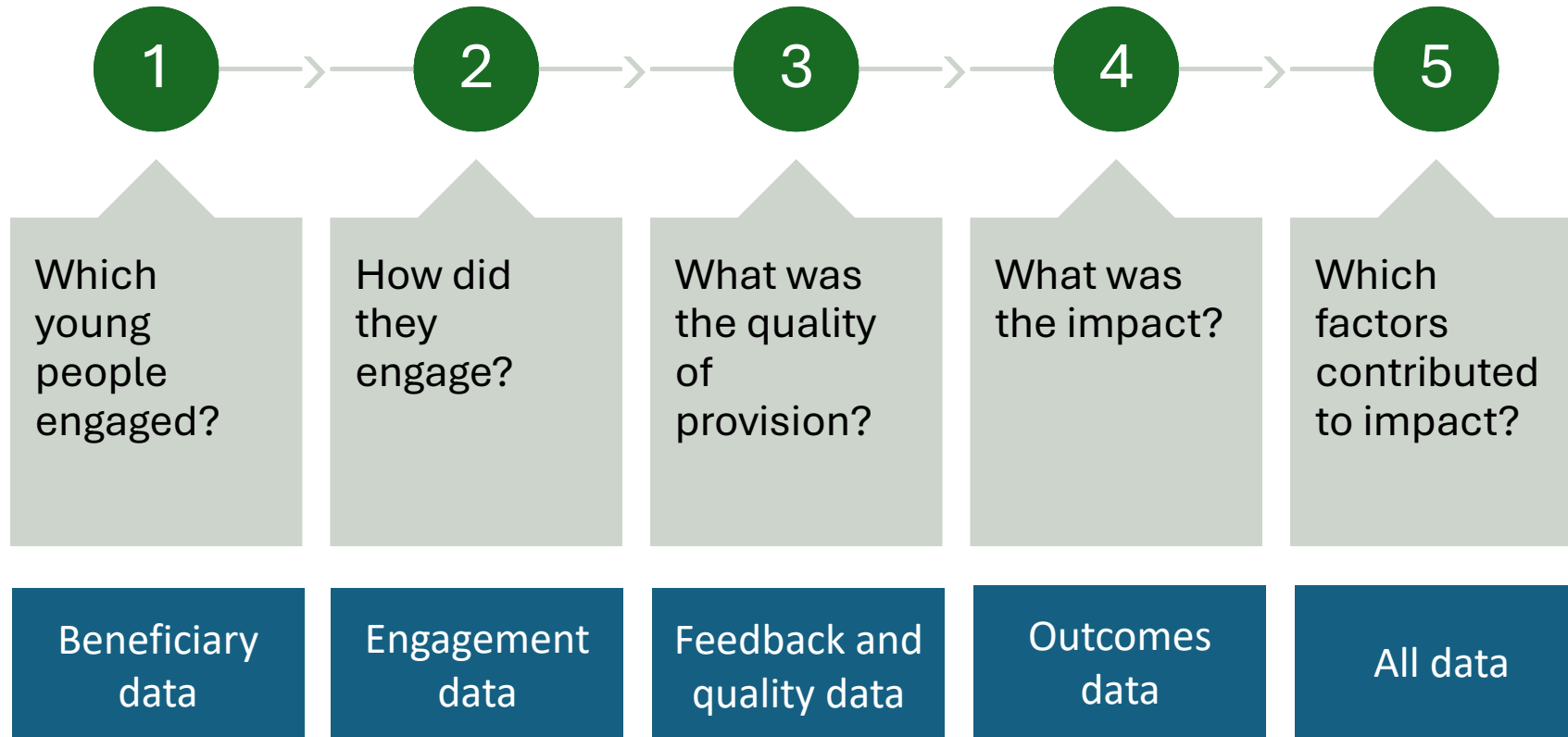
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Table 1: The YIF five types of data

	Type of data	What is it?	Element of ToC it addresses
Appropriate for all grantees	User	Administrative data on exactly which type of young people are engaging.	Activities
	Engagement	Administrative data on exactly what activities young people are engaging in and how often.	Activities
	Feedback	Systematic feedback from young people participating in provision.	Mechanisms of Change —evidence from young people
	Quality	Self and external assessment data on the quality of provision, gathered by peer and external observation.	Mechanisms of Change —evidence from adults/practitioners
Appropriate for some grantees	Outcomes	Pre-post questionnaires to understand whether short-term outcomes have changed for young people.	Intermediate outcomes

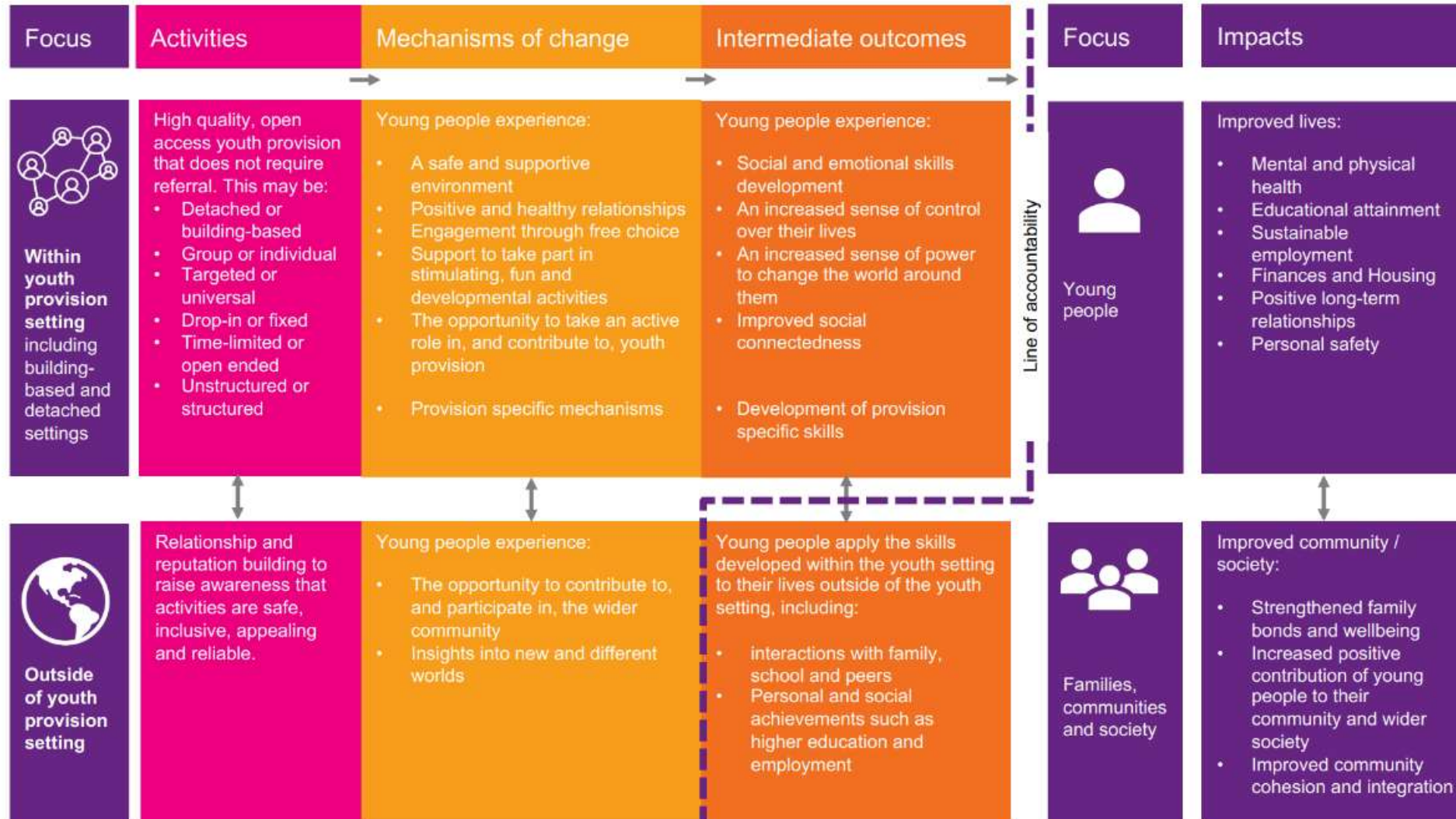
1. To understand **which young people** engaged with YIF funded open access youth provision
2. To understand the **types of activities** experienced by young people and the **ways in which young people engaged** with these different activities
3. To understand the **quality** of youth provision funded by the YIF
4. To assess the **impact** of YIF funded youth provision on young people's outcomes
5. To understand **what factors contribute to the impact** of youth provision and **in what ways**

Matching data to questions



Theory of change – YIF

Figure 1: A shared theory of change for open access youth provision



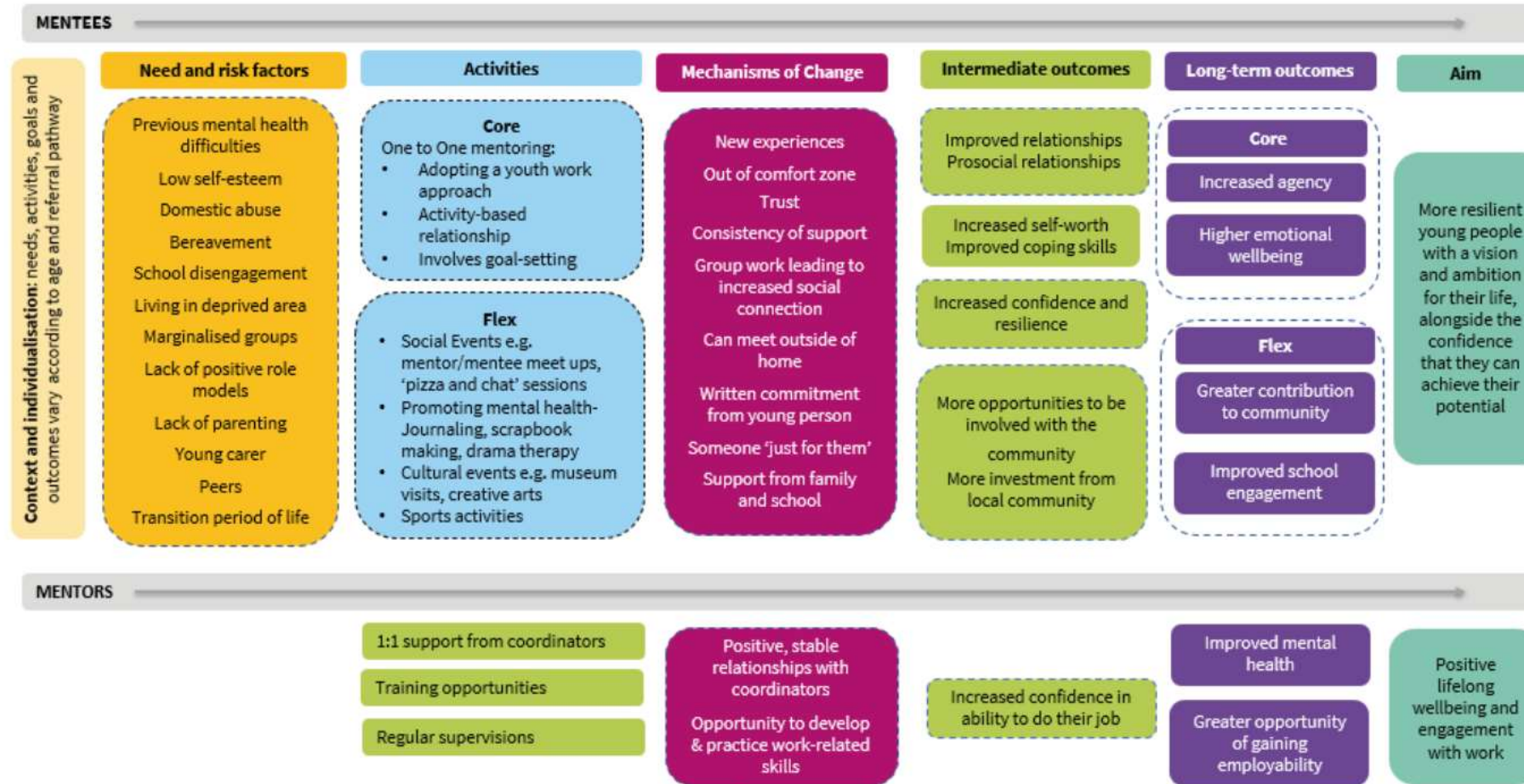
Theory of change – Y's Girls



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Y's Girls Theory of Change v1.




Some questions for you



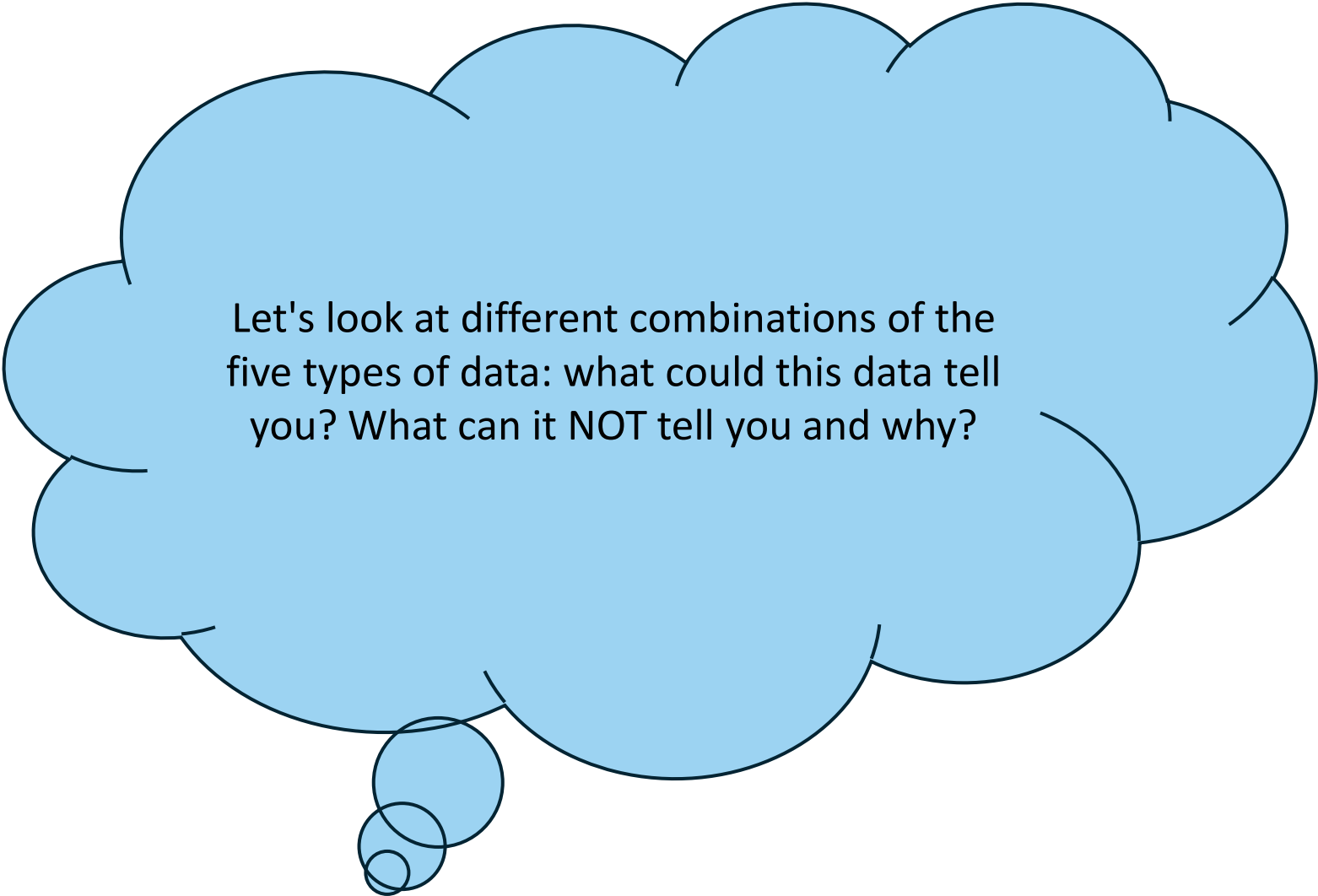
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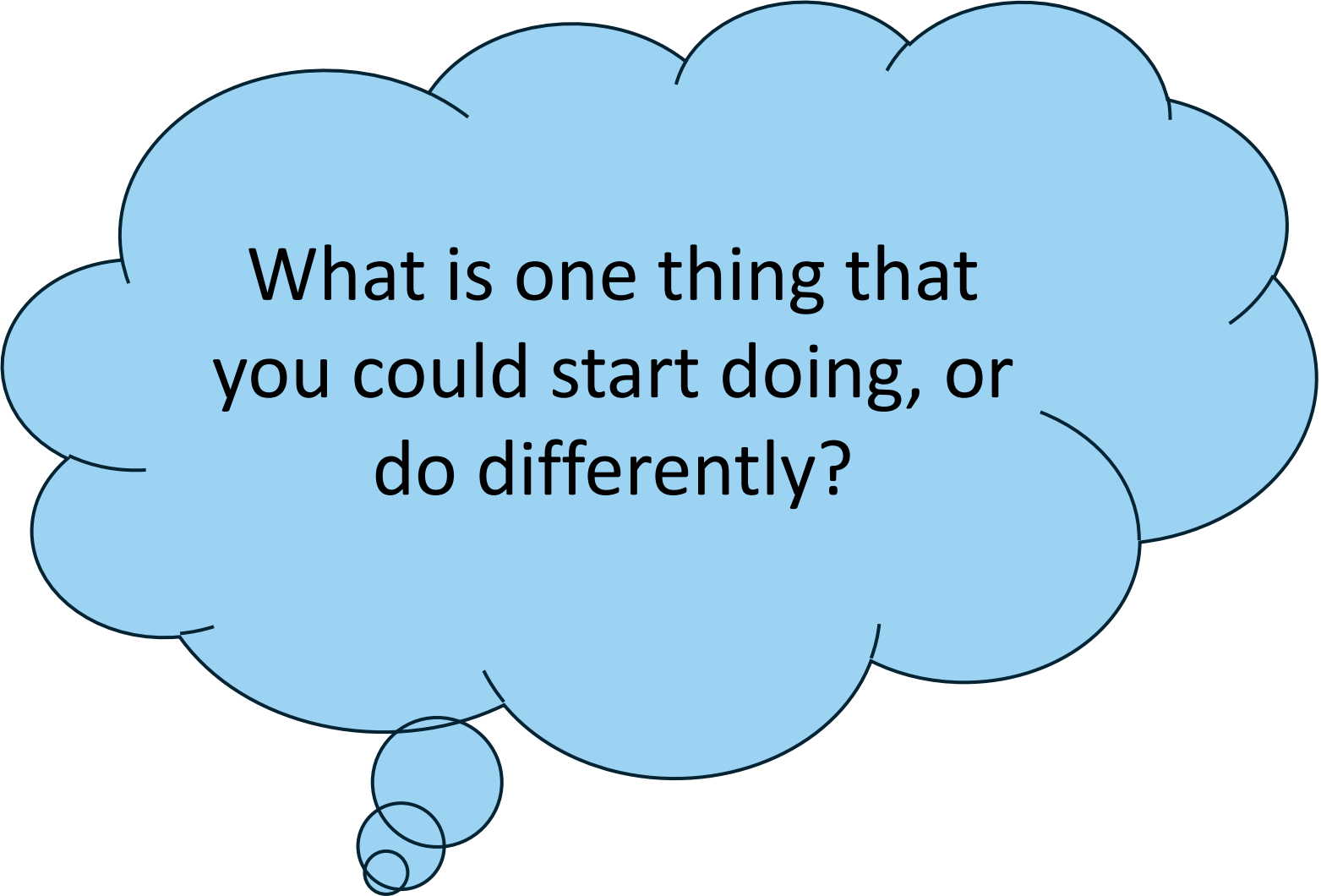
What are the opportunities
and challenges for getting
these different types of data?

A question for you



Let's look at different combinations of the five types of data: what could this data tell you? What can it NOT tell you and why?

- Typology for provision
- Demographic data standard
- Tools for measuring quality of practice, outcomes, and young people's engagement
- Office hours – have a chat with us about your evaluation headaches (or ideas) :)
- An invitation – task and finish group

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What is one thing that
you could start doing, or
do differently?

Thank you!



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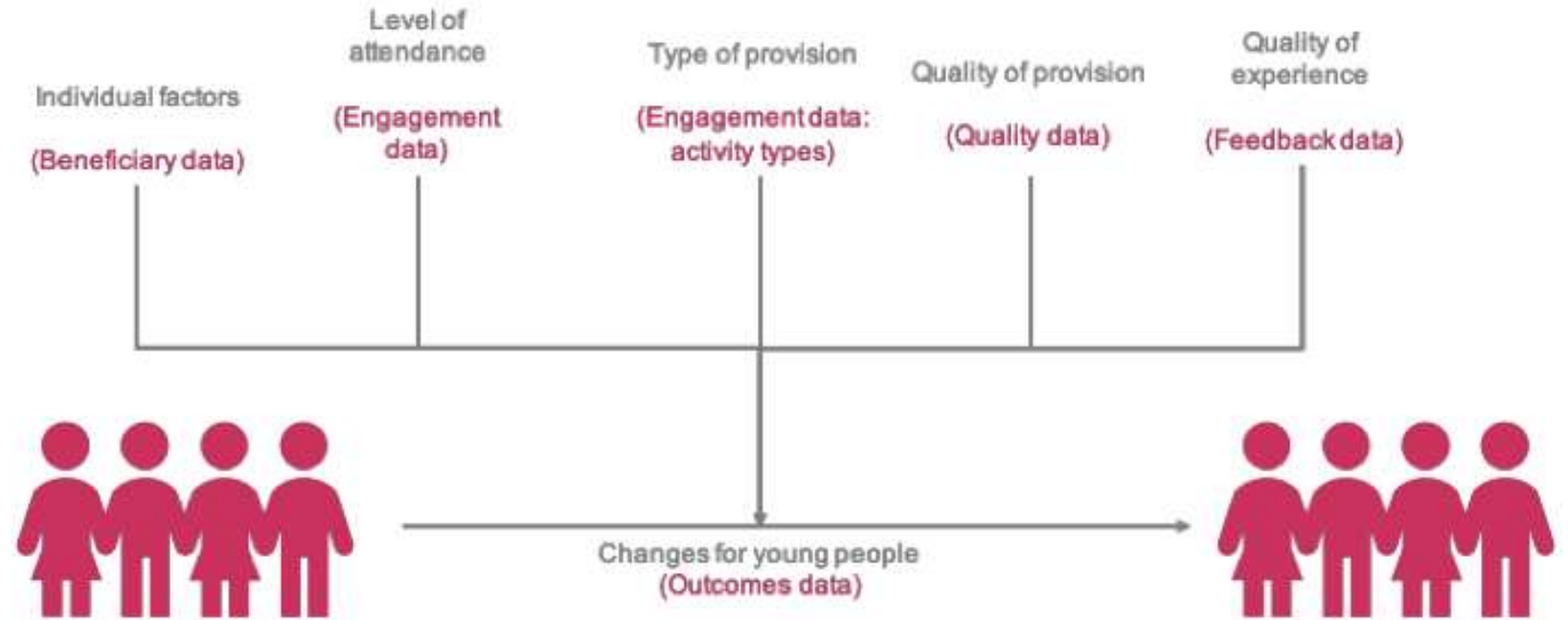
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Five types of data:

1. Beneficiary
2. Engagement
3. Feedback
4. Quality
5. Outcomes



60,000 young people

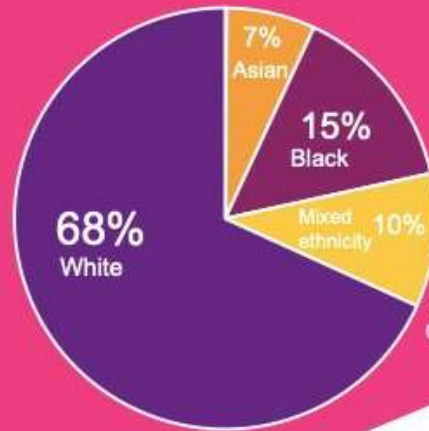


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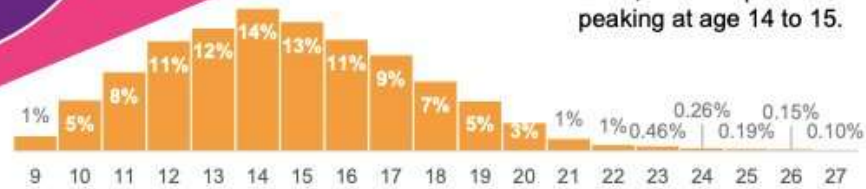


Boys were slightly more likely to take part than girls (57% compared to 42%, with 0.2% identified as 'other').



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.



Scale of data collected

Type of data	Number of grant holder organisations collecting data	Total number of young people or responses	Notes
Beneficiary	83	56,783	
Engagement			We have classification data on one or more of the six characteristic groupings, recorded for 673 activities which, in total, reached 124,562 young people
Feedback	62	7,411 responses	Feedback questionnaires were completed anonymously by young people over the course of the data collection process. Individual young people may have completed more than one questionnaire and therefore be counted more than once in the total number of responses
Quality	54	NA	Quality data was collected at an organisational level
Outcomes	27	Baseline = 1,140 Baseline plus one follow up survey = 414 Baseline plus 2 or more follow up surveys = 84	For young people already attending the YIF provision, the baseline is the first questionnaire completed. It is not necessarily a baseline relative to registration. Note the sample size for data that was eligible for the impact analysis is cited in the impact section. Only young people whose data was collected in a timeframe similar to the comparison group was included in the impact analysis (i.e. 3 month and 6 month follow up)

Feedback from young people

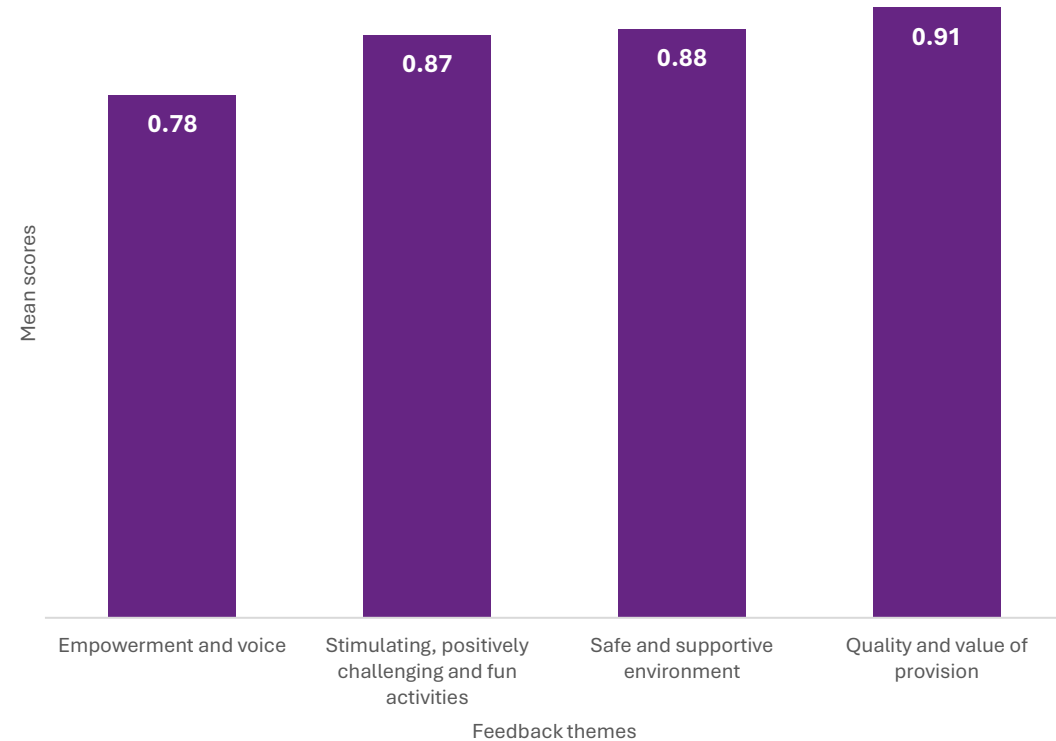


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Overall feedback from young people by theme

- Feedback is overall very positive
- Feedback scores are lower for 'empowerment and voice'
- Young people's belief that staff trust them is lower (0.81) than their trust in staff (0.90)



Bases: 5,187 Empowerment and voice; 8,082 Stimulating activities; 17,964 Safe and supportive environment; 4,460 Quality and value of provision

Feedback from young people



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Overall feedback from young people



Quality of youth provision



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Quality scores by domain



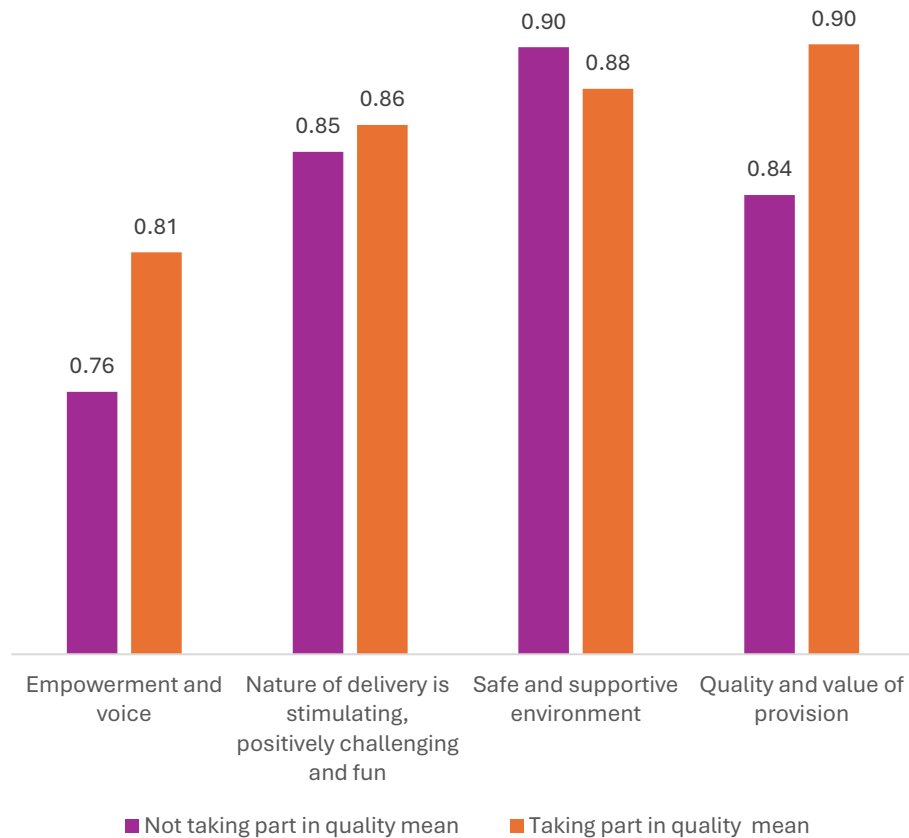
Base: 54 organisations

What is the relationship between quality of setting and quality of experience?



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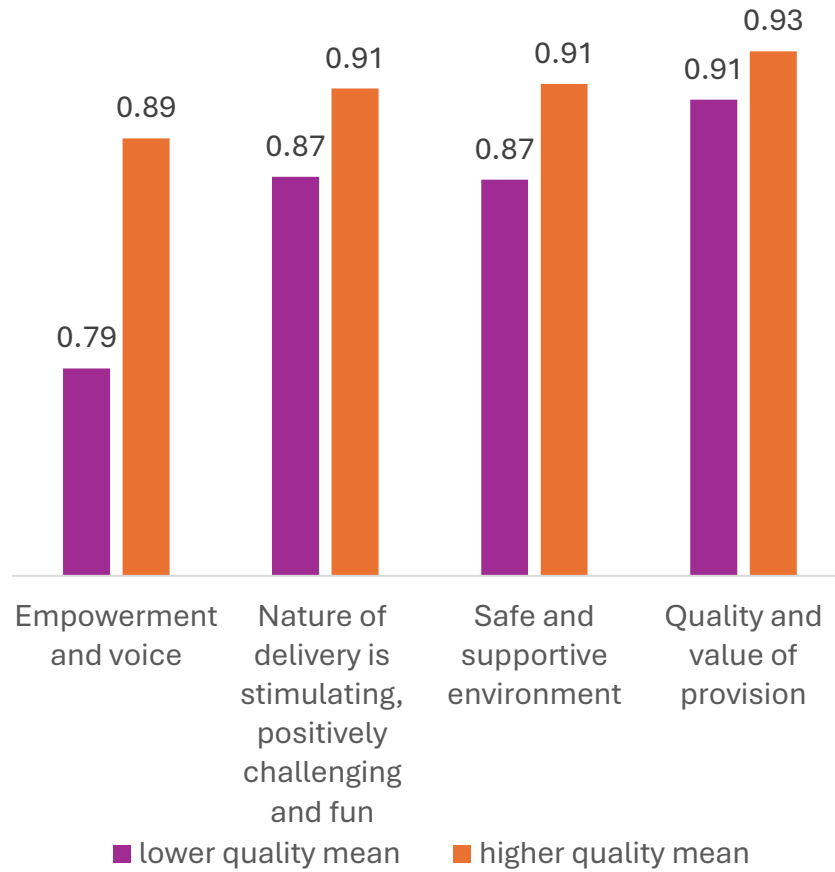
Themes of “Empowerment and voice” and “Quality and value of provision” emerge statistically as more positive ($P = 0.0014$ and $P = 0.0028$ respectively) from grant holders taking part in quality process.

Feedback groups split by higher quality and lower quality groups



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Grant holders in the higher quality group (n= 11) gain better feedback across all themes than those in the lower quality group (n= 8).

This suggests a relationship between the quality of setting as self-reported by staff and the feedback that young people give in relation to the quality of the setting.

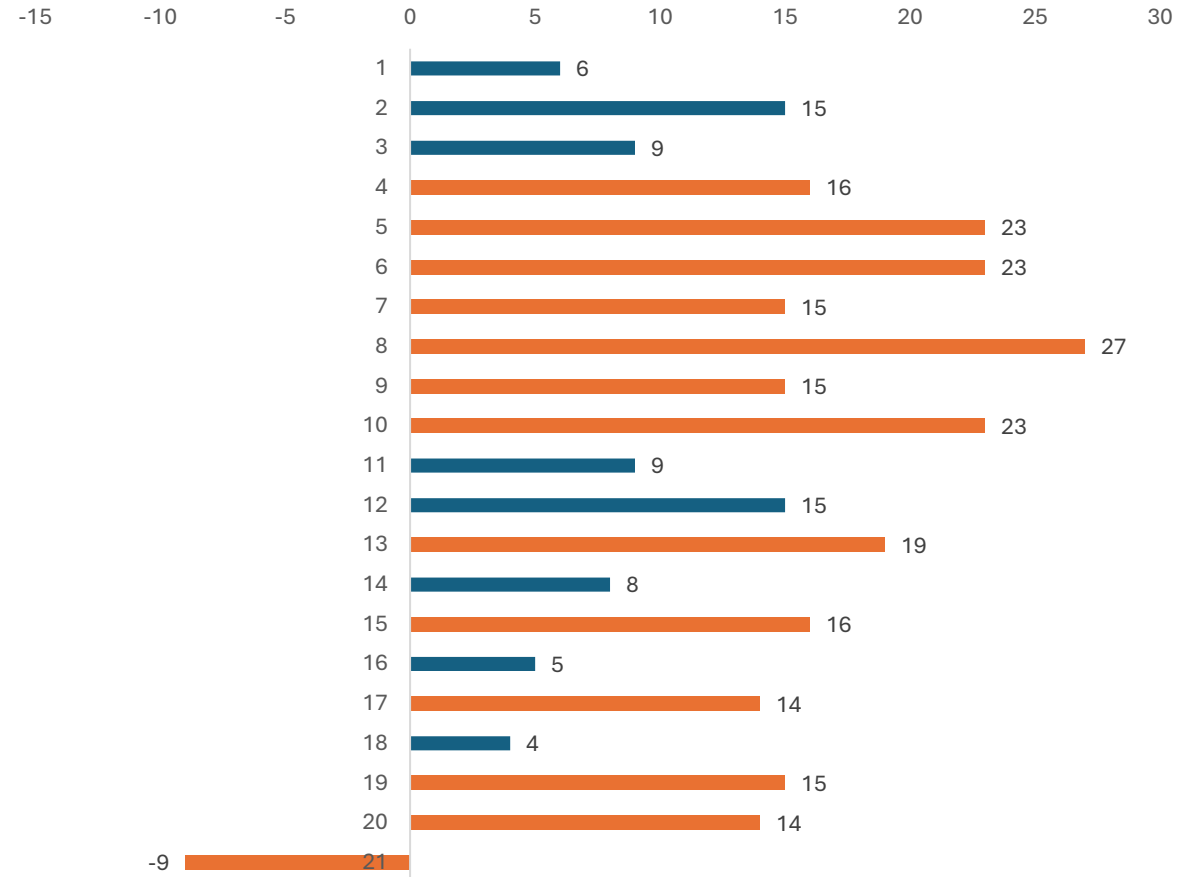
Findings: 3-month impacts



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Percentage point difference between YIF and Comparison group (3-months)



Bases: YIF Cohort = 181; Comparison group = 632

Findings: 3-month impacts



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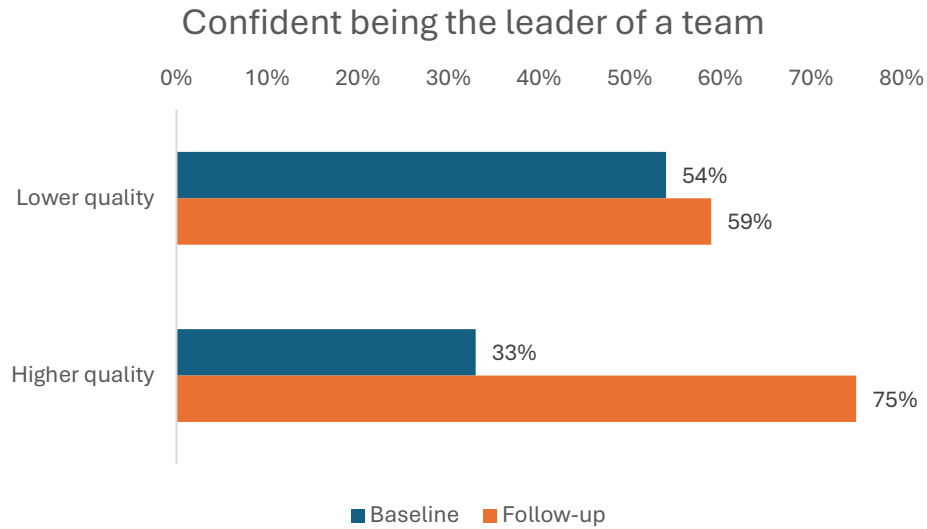
Self-confidence and personal locus of control	1	I am confident that I have the ability to succeed in anything I want to do
	2	I can handle things no matter what happens
	3	My own efforts and actions are what determine my future
	4	I have a lot to be proud of
Leadership	5	Being the leader of a team
	6	Having a go at things that are new to me
Social skills	7	Working with other people in a team
	8	Meeting new people
	9	Dealing with conflict between friends
	10	Being in large groups of people
Self-regulation	11	Getting things done on time
	12	I can stay calm in stressful situations
Communication and self-expression	13	Putting forward my ideas
	14	Explaining my ideas clearly
	15	Standing up for myself without putting others down
Social connectedness	16	I have family and friends who help me feel safe, secure and happy
	17	There is someone I trust who I would turn to for advice if I were having problems
	18	There is no one I feel close to (% not at all true)
Happiness and well-being	19	Being lonely hardly ever or never
	20	Happy with life
	21	High risk of psychological distress or risk of depression

Higher versus lower quality provision



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Increase in young people achieving positive outcomes in high quality provision over and above gains (or losses) made in lower quality provision.

Bases: Higher quality = 215 participants (5 grant holders); Lower quality = 156 participants (10 grant holders)

Impact summary



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Open access youth provision has the potential to significantly improve social and emotional learning skills, social connectedness, and wellbeing for young people, particularly those with most to gain



Pattern of large, positive impacts after three months



Still a pattern of positive results after six months, but smaller impacts with only a few statistically significant



YIF is having most benefit for those with low or mid-level SEL at baseline



Those in higher quality provision did statistically significantly better than those in lower quality provision



Those in at least some targeted provision progressed further than those in universal provision in some outcome domains

Theory of change – Y's Girls

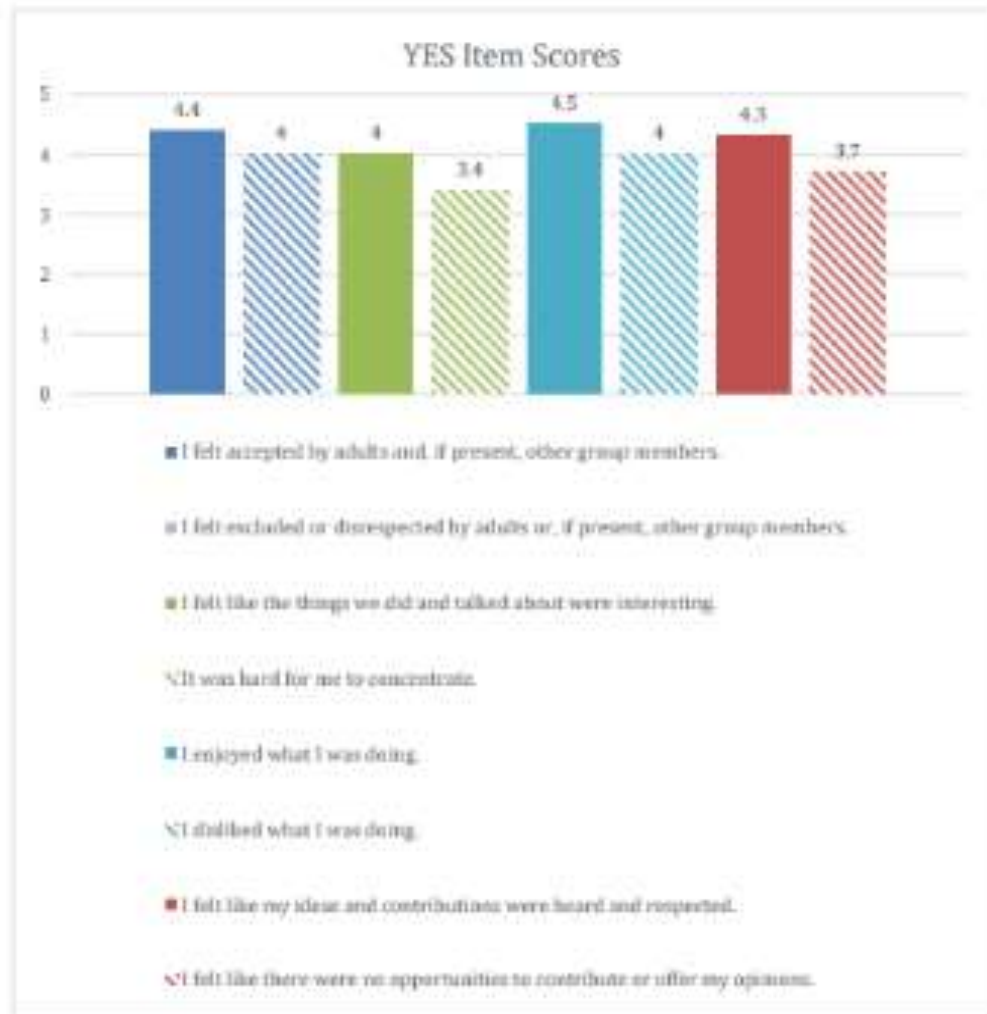


Figure 7 - YES Item scores at follow-up

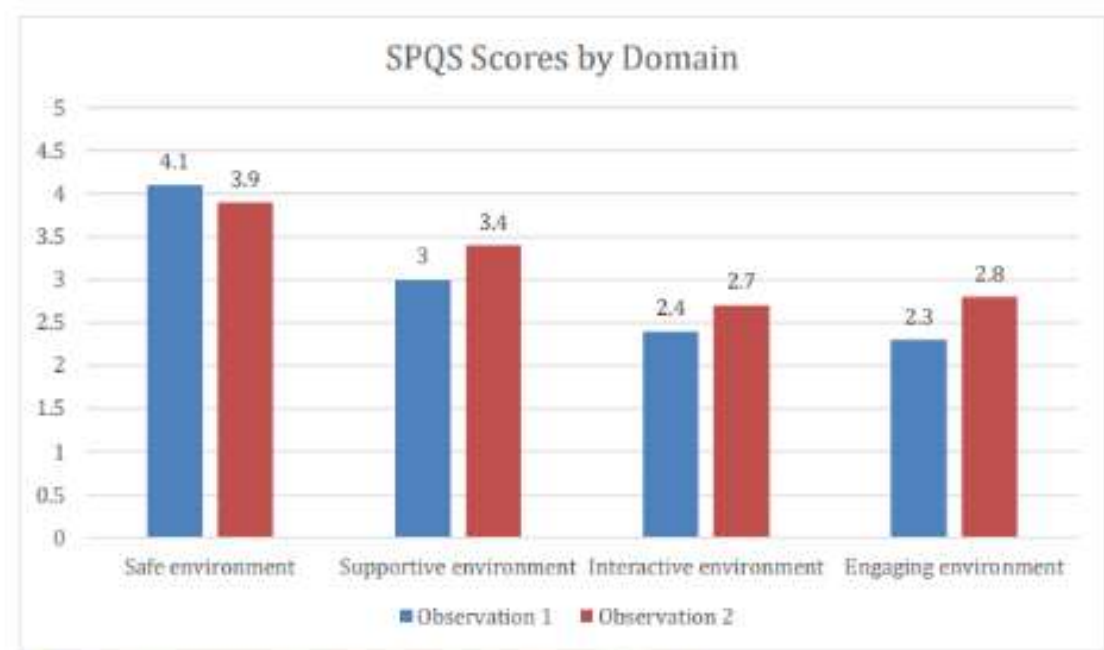


Figure 9 - SPQS Scores per SEL practice domain at baseline and follow-up



Figure 10 - Relationship between follow-up YES Scores by SPQS Instructional Quality Profiles