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DOWNSLINK GROUP

## *Roundtable discussion on* **Driving Positive Outcomes for Children and Young People** across Sussex and Surrey

- Impact evaluation in the youth sector 2023 – Professor Kaz Stuart, Centre for Youth Impact
- *Break*
- Case study: our Theory of Change and top tips – YMCA DownsLink
- Progressing your outcome measurement – Kaz Stuart
- *Lunch*

**YMCA** | Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

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Part of YMCA George Williams College

## **Driving Positive Outcomes for Children & Young People**

Professor Kaz Stuart  
Director of Strategy and Learning  
YMCA George Williams College

YMCA Downslink Group,  
27<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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## What outcomes can you expect today?

### Understanding:

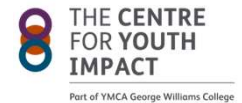
- What evaluation and evidence are
- Where did outcome evaluation come from
- Past, current and future outcome evaluation practices

### Reflection:

- Your areas of outcome evaluation strength and development.

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## YMCA George Williams College




We believe all young people should have access to high-quality spaces and opportunities to learn, grow and explore their relationships with the world around them.




Courses, workshops, tools, measures, research and evaluation as transformational support for practitioners working with young people.

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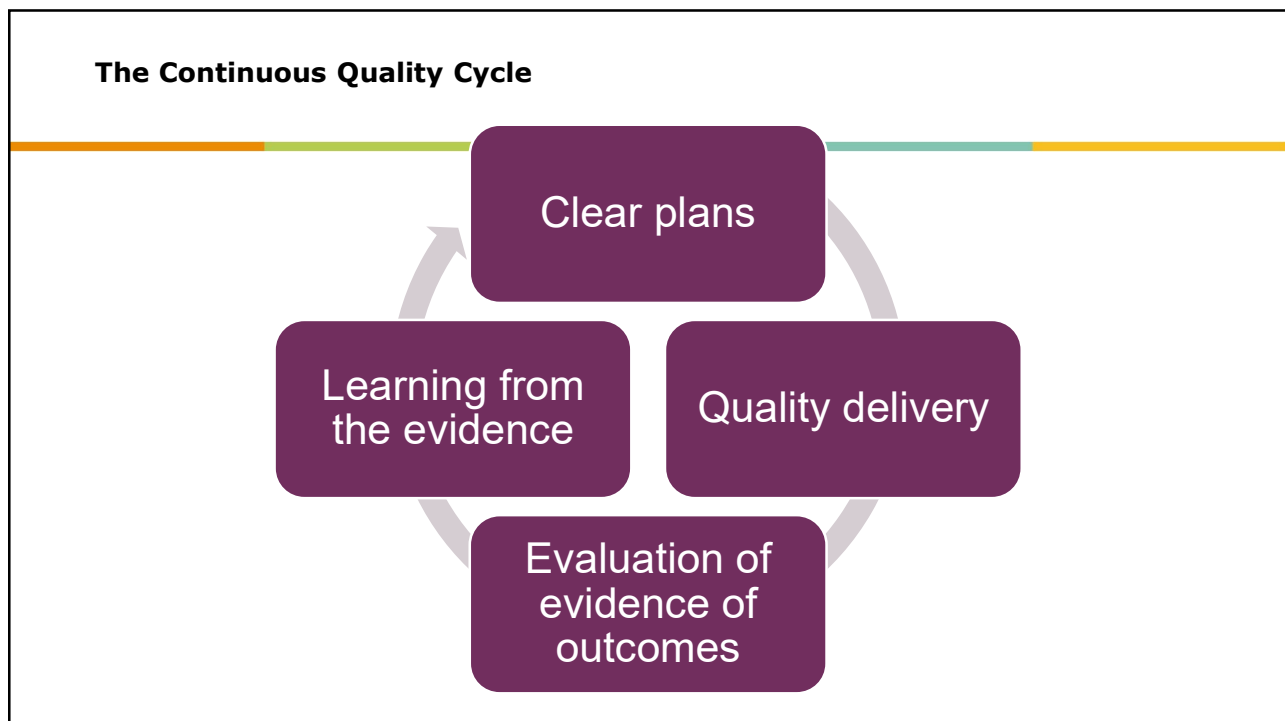
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# Driving Positive Outcomes



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## Setting our context – what is evaluation?

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### Evaluation is activity that helps us to understand your delivery and its 'worth'

- Evaluation is a form of research – “increasing knowledge”
- It is ideological – making a judgement
- It has stakeholders
- It involves asking questions with a purpose; ascertaining value through an assessment of evidence



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## Evaluation should -

- Tell us stuff we don't already know
- Be disruptive
- Align well with what you're doing
- Provide timely, actionable insights
- Be embedded into practice
- Be likely to change everything it 'touches'.

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## What is evidence?

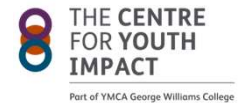
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## Evidence is the data we gather to support assertions

- Contextual rather than neutral
- Purposeful - created for stakeholders who consume it, or are exposed to it
- Employed to secure confidence in the statements made in evaluation.

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## A simple approach to making evaluation 'work'



Think of the question(s) and criteria for success in answering well



Gather evidence in an appropriate and proportionate way




Analyse the evidence to see what it says




Apply the learning



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# Where did the evaluation of outcomes come from?



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1900's measurement movement in education – DOES IT WORK?

1950's social science methods – HOW DOES IT WORK?

1990's evidence-based practice – PROVE IT WORKS!

1995's Osted School Inspections – WE WILL RATE YOU ON HOW WELL YOU DO

2000's medical science methods – USE TESTS TO PROVE IT WORKS

2022's 60% cuts to youth service funding since 2010 – NO EVIDENCE = NO MONEY

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## Where does that leave us?

### Consequences

- Focus on two questions – “does it achieve outcomes?” and “is it value for money?”
- An explosion of outcome measures and the evaluation industry
- Evaluation imposed on practice rather than being embedded in it
- Adoption of the medical measurement model rather than social science approaches to evidence
- Practitioner fears of new managerialism
- Increased competition in the sector
- Kick back e.g. In Defense of Youth Work

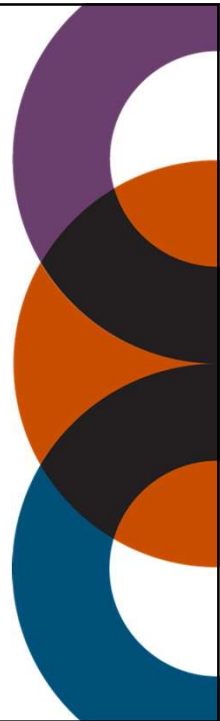
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## Past, current and future evaluation practices



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- **What's wrong with just measuring outputs?**

"We delivered our programme to 3251 young people last year"

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- **What's wrong with a focus on measuring outcomes?**

"We delivered our programme to 3251 young people last year and 51% of them had increased levels of self-confidence"

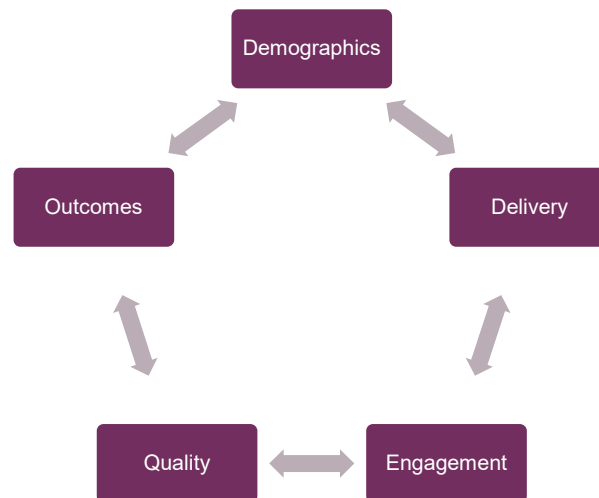
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- **New focus on causality and quality**

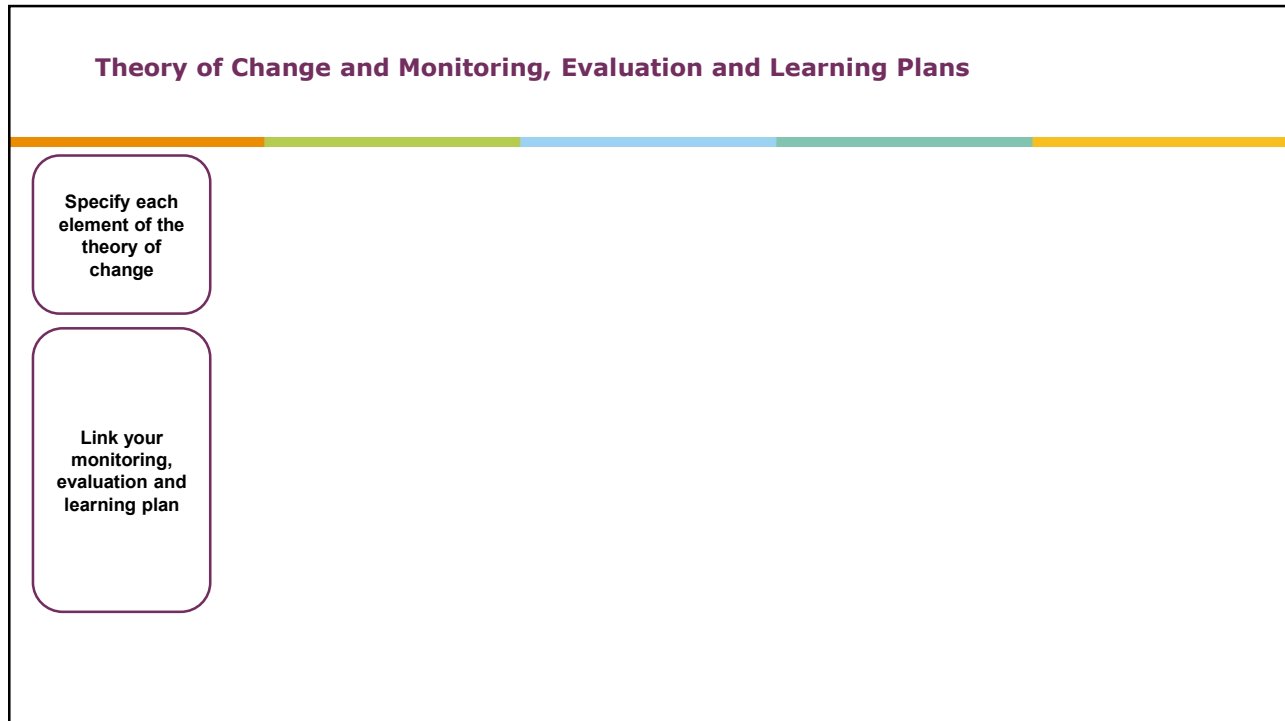
- We delivered our programme to 3251 young people with complex needs last year
- They each received between 50 and 75 contact hours
- 94% reported they were very engaged in the activities
- 86% of sessions were delivered to a high-quality standard
- As a result, 51% of the young people had increased levels of self-confidence.

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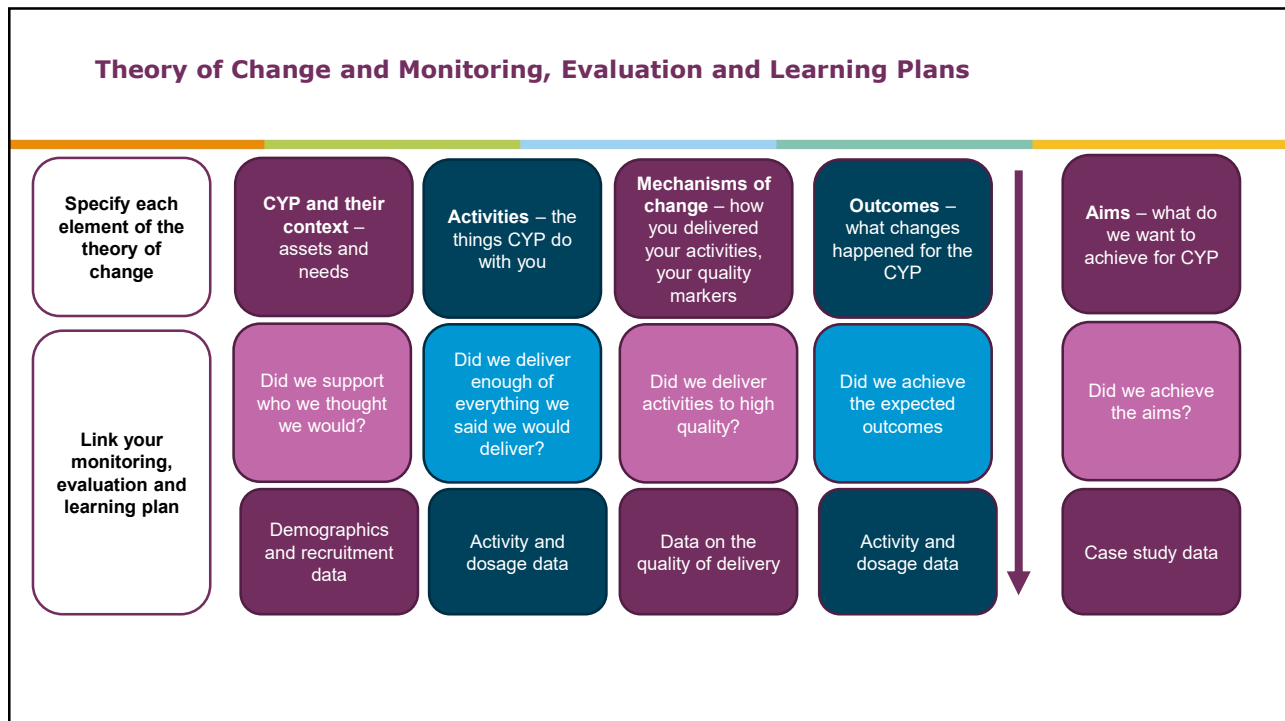
## Enables you to tell your story of impact



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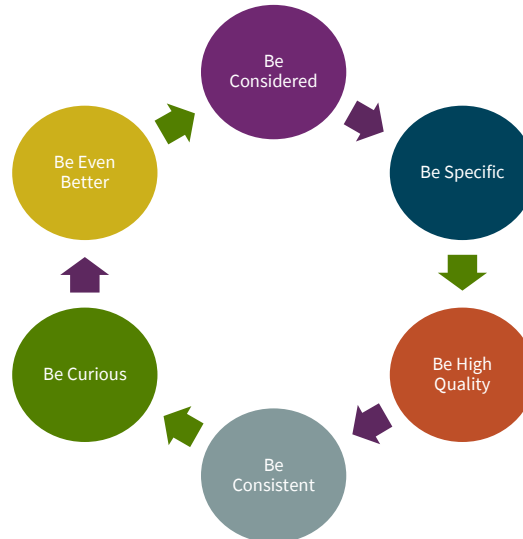
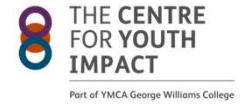


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## YMCA George Williams College Impact and Improvement Standards

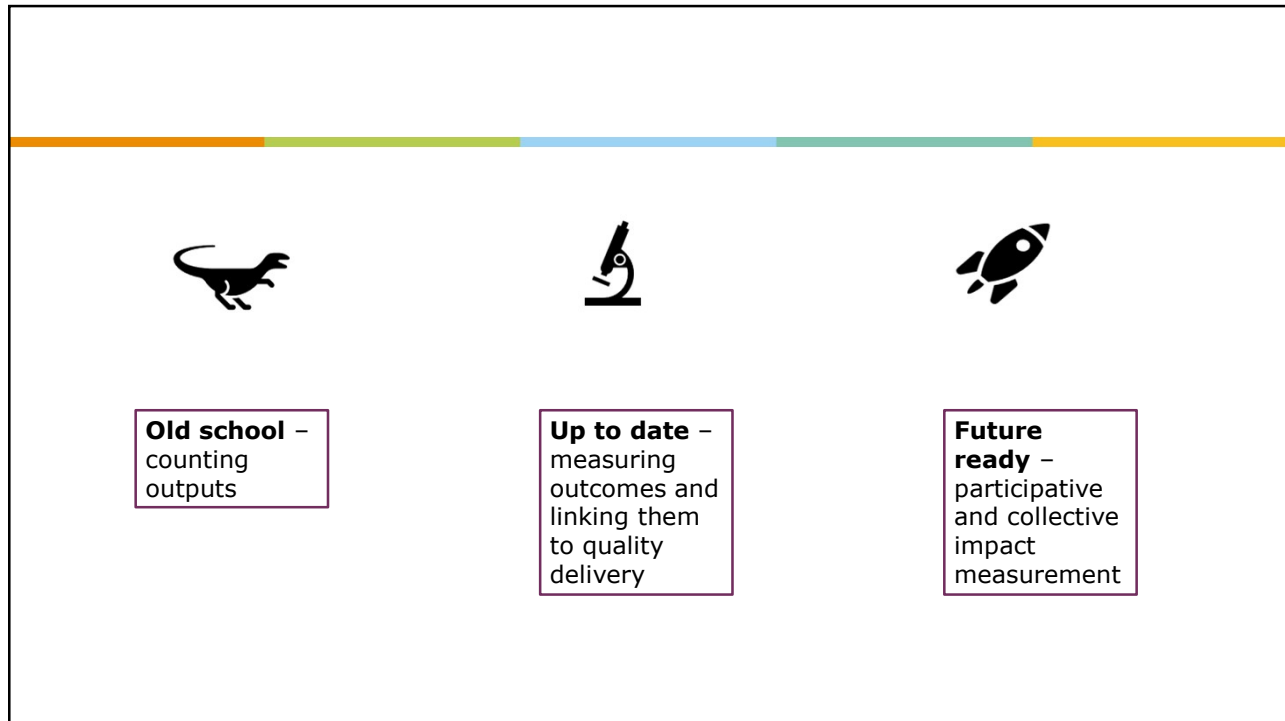


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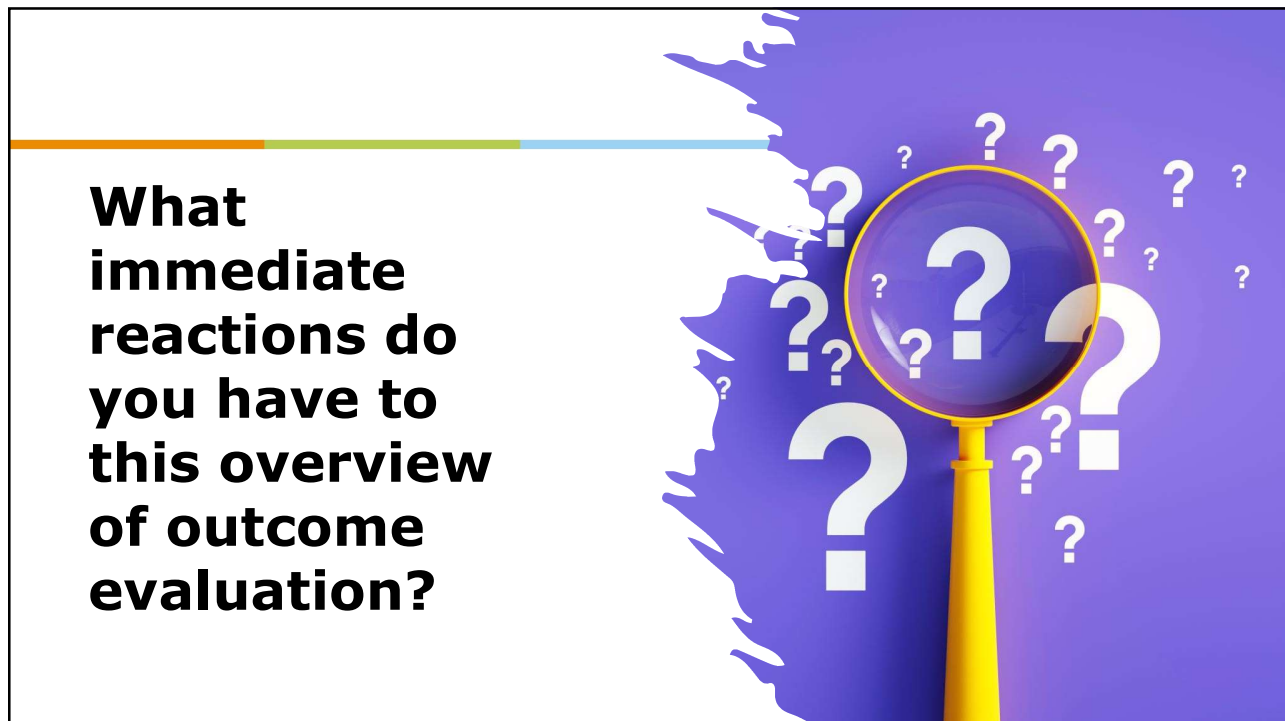
## Future Practice

- **Next steps and future directions**
  - A focus on quality alongside (or even more strongly than) outcomes
  - Promoting CQI and improvement above proof (improve not prove)
  - Participative and co-creative methods
  - Streamlining and proportionality of evidence
  - Collective impact by shared approaches or aggregating different data sets (Regional Impact Networks projects)
  - Knowledge democracy – enabling people with lived experience to create the knowledge of what works and why.

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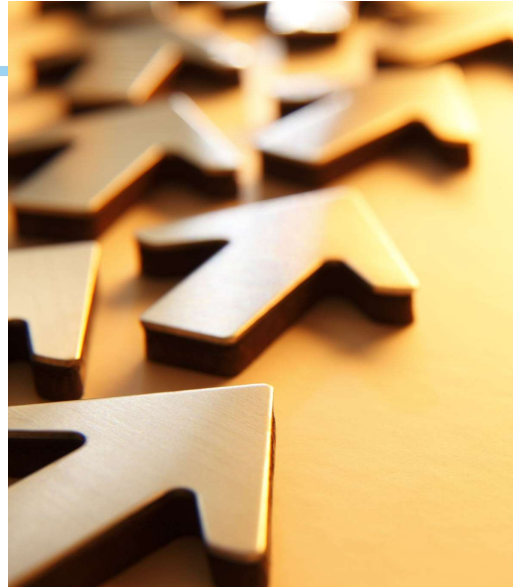
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**In terms of your  
practice evidencing  
outcomes, how up  
to date is your  
practice and why?**

**Old school?  
Up to date?  
Future ready?**



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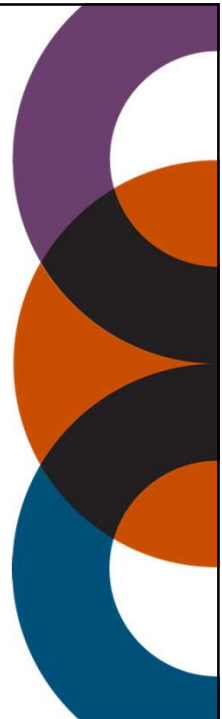


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## Peer Support – a three way conversation

- Where do you think you are now?
- Where would you like to be?
- How can you get to that next step?
- How can your peers help?

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Emergent				Developed
We know we need a theory of change and we would like it to be co-created, but we have not started work on it yet.	We have started to build a theory of change with input from beneficiaries, community members, staff and volunteers.	Our theory of change has been reviewed by our stakeholders but we have not yet acted on their feedback.	Our theory of change includes details of the: Context / community strengths and needs Activities we deliver Indicators of quality delivery Outcomes Aims These are regularly reviewed with stakeholder feedback.	Our theory of change is embedded in our organisational strategy, operational plans, delivery plans, and informs our monitoring, evaluation and learning plan.

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## Pledges

1. Name and email address
2. What will you do differently, or action, in your organisation as a result of what you have learned together today?
3. What will you do to support a colleague developing this work in another organisation?

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### YMCA George Williams College Impact and Improvement Support

 <p>Keep up to date – subscribe to our <a href="#">monthly newsletter</a>.</p>	 <p>Help yourself to our materials – <a href="#">Impact and Improvement Resource Hub</a></p>	 <p>Give us a call – <b>Funded office Hour support calls</b> <a href="mailto:hello@youthimpact.uk">hello@youthimpact.uk</a></p>	 <p>Get involved – join a <a href="#">Regional Impact Network</a>.</p>
 <p>Want practical support? <b>Funded Training Programmes</b></p>	 <p>Need validated measures of socio-emotional skills? <a href="#">Socio-emotional measurement hub</a></p>	 <p>Want to know how you're doing? <a href="#">Funded Impact and Improvement Standards and Coaching</a></p>	 <p>Want tailor made support? <b>Bespoke contracts.</b></p>

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