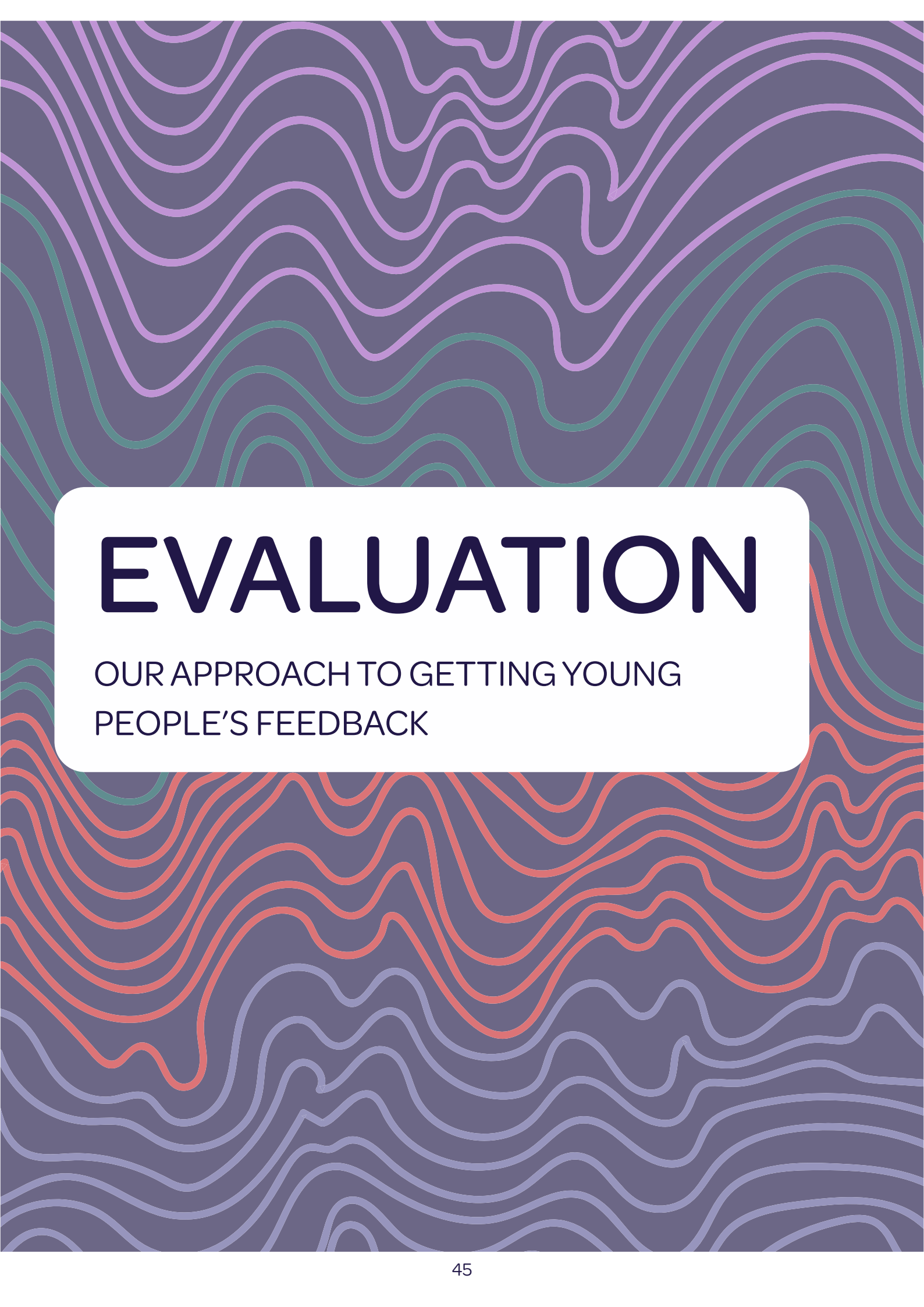




EVALUATION

OUR APPROACH TO GETTING YOUNG
PEOPLE'S FEEDBACK

Why Evaluate?

EVALUATING YOUR PROJECT OR SERVICE HELPS YOU TO:

1.

Get direct feedback from young people

2.

Be more effective and efficient

3.

Provide high quality services for young people

7.

Report to the Board and report back to young people

4.

Measure how well you are doing

6.

Report back to your funder

5.

Demonstrate the difference you are making

Asking Young People for Feedback

The Moira Anderson Foundation Listening Fund project aimed to develop an evaluation process. They worked with the MAF CHAMPS to build their strategy, and the following two pages set out their recommendations based on this experience.

CONSIDERATIONS

Start by considering how you will collect the feedback, what sort of information you would like to collect and how you will ask for it.

Digital
vs.
Analogue
process

Qualitative
vs.
Quantitative
data

Open
or
Closed
Questions

HOW WILL THE DATA BE USED?

Feedback could be used to support funding applications. Quotes from young people can be published on social media to tell a story about their experience of the service or support they have received.



How to Develop an Evaluation Process for Young People

INVOLVE AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE

If the organisation has a youth group, ask them how they would like to give feedback

Ask staff and management how they will use the feedback, as this will inform how the process develops

DEFINE THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Decide if respondents will be identified or anonymous

Explore different apps and forms available online to support the process

Find an owner for the process who will be responsible for maintaining the form and pulling reports

Decide how often you want to obtain feedback and how you will ask young people

DEVELOP THE EVALUATION

Work with young people and staff to define a list of questions

Consider how the form looks and whether it reflects the organisation's branding

TEST THE PROCESS

Ask young people to test the process by filling out the form and be prepared to tweak it based on any feedback

Pull a report of the test data to ensure everything is working correctly, and it is in the required format

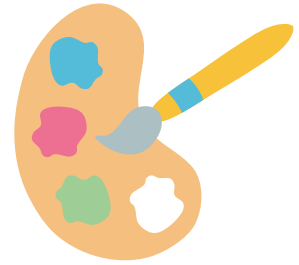
AUTOMATE THE PROCESS

Consider if you could connect the evaluation with an existing database of clients to gain deeper insights into how the service is performing?



What Makes a Good Youth Feedback Form

Here are the key considerations when collecting feedback for the Celebrate Art Project run by Access to Industry, in partnership with the Fruitmarket Gallery



MAKE IT FUN

Use emojis or graphics rather than text where possible

Try a simple creative activity to gain feedback as sometimes young people find it hard to put their feelings into words

KEEP IT SHORT

Ask young people what they liked about the service

Ask what they didn't like - so that you can take this on board and make changes to the service or programme

Offer plenty of space for responses

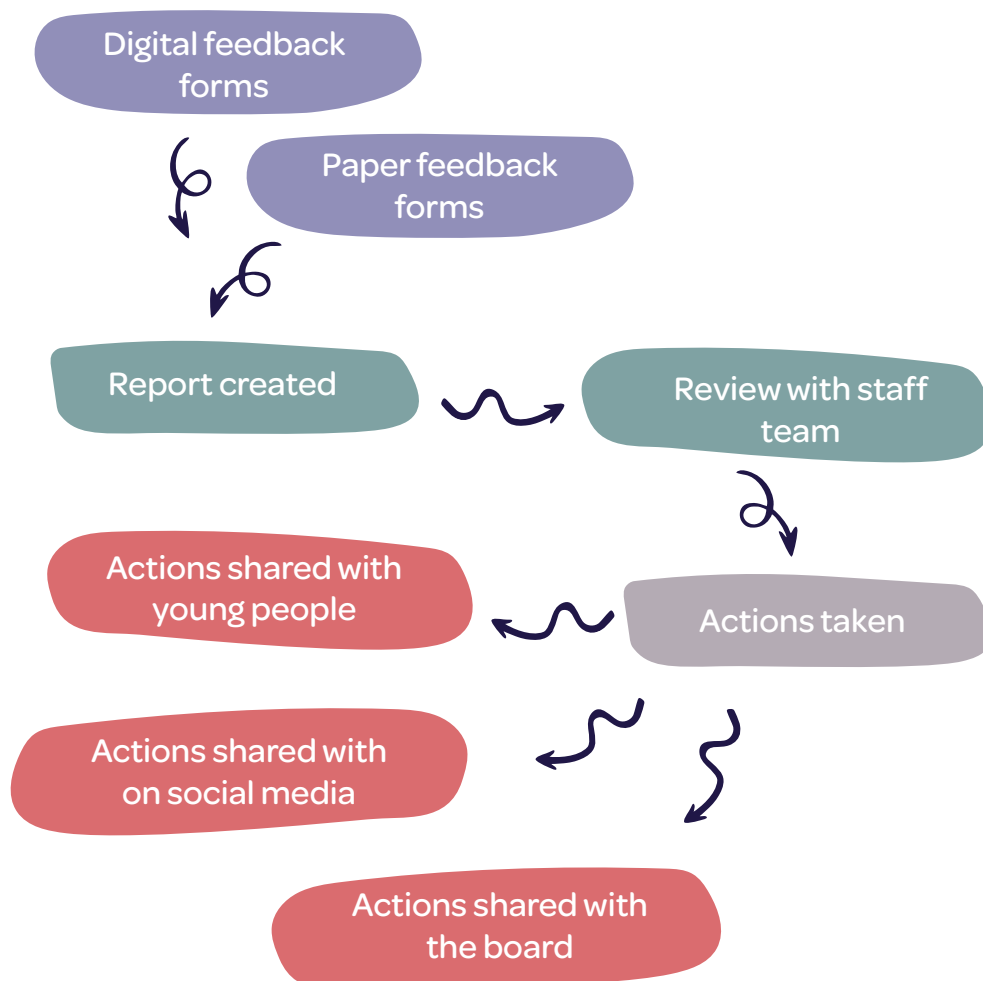
MAKE TIME

Set time aside to discuss feedback as a group, as this will give young people an opportunity to think about their answers



What Happens to Feedback?

Once we have collected our feedback from young people, it's just as important to make sure we have a process in place to analyse, review and report back on any actions taken. Young people want to know what has happened as a result of what they've said. This process reflects what many of the partners do with their feedback, although the regularity and ownership differs between organisations.



Listening Evaluation Questions



The following questions are examples which could be used to gather feedback from young people about the services that you offer and to find out if they feel listened to:

- If there was one thing you could change about [organisation name] services, what would it be?
- Do you feel included in your decisions by [organisation name]?
- What would it look like to you if young people were included in the running of [organisation name]?
- What would you like to happen in meetings with your support worker, groups or events you attend?
- What sort of support would you like from [organisation name]? E.g. more group activities and chances to meet young people, better mental health support, mental health classes, etc.
- What would it take for you to become more involved in [organisation name] activities (e.g. classes/courses if not already enrolled, youth groups, group activities, etc).
- What makes you feel listened to? How do you know you are being listened to?
- Can you think of an example of when your feedback made a difference to [organisation name]?

Organisational Learning

The Listening Fund (Scotland) was a special fund which allowed dedicated time to be spent on listening activities and resulted in positive change to organisational delivery and strategy for the twelve partners involved. This learning summary is taken from the Final Learning Report, which was conducted using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Impact

Partners involved have observed that utilising time and resources to focus on listening allowed space for reflection and to consider different ways of working with young people in more creative and collaborative ways.

Partners said that throughout the fund, they were:

- using a more comprehensive range of tools to enable listening with young people
- putting the focus on listening across all its groups of young people
- encouraging co-design with young people to influence service changes and overall strategy

Young people reported positive changes during the fund, such as:

- having more influence and decision-making abilities
- improvements to youth services
- feeling better supported through having their voices heard when they need it most



What Changed?

What Changed for Partners

The fundamental changes that partners reported happened as a result of the fund were that they placed value on an intentional focus on listening, shared a range of listening practices internally and with other partners, and started to engage young people in the whole listening process.

What Changed for Young People

Acting on listening was noted by young people as a significant development which occurred during the fund, as well as more opportunities for co-design and partner organisations to close the feedback loop (i.e. explaining what actions were taken in response to listening to young people).

Specifically, young people mentioned the following with regards to acting on listening:

- changes were made based on suggestions put forward by the youth board
- the organisation's website was improved based on specific feedback
- staff bios were added to information boards



Challenges

The COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic presented many challenges to partners' listening projects, not all young people had devices or a steady internet connection, and organisations had to navigate the constantly changing lockdown restrictions.

As partners developed their remote provision, they also had to consider safeguarding online spaces, for example, social media. When the pandemic disrupted the normal services on offer so significantly, it was challenging for partners to work with young people to build confidence around listening. Youth boards or steering groups became challenging to maintain online, particularly where no face-to-face relationship with young people had formed first.

Listening to Inform Strategic Development

Partners noted that young people might not be in a position to contribute strategically to their organisation due to personal challenges, and the learning was that organisations need to offer pastoral care or space for relationship building before or in parallel to the strategic work. Attending board meetings can be quite 'dry' for young people - so it's good to consider how we can make it fun and engaging and what we are offering back to the young people?

Key Learning

If organisations help to develop hard skills in young people, such as using email or understanding the language of funding bids, they are both upskilling young people and supporting them to become confident at participating in strategic discussions.



Conclusion

The fund enabled partners to identify the needs of the young people that they support, allowing them to listen and respond to them with a person-centred approach. Partner organisations have been challenged to look at how youth-led their practices actually are, and this provided a starting point on which to improve.

Understanding how to create the right conditions for listening has been a big part of the learning process, by asking young people what they think and exploring best practices externally.

Establishing a youth board is a great way to gather more in-depth feedback and involve young people in decision-making across the organisation. A youth board or steering group partnered with the use of feedback tools co-designed by young people help to gather inputs from a broad range of clients accessing the service.

Many of the partner organisations involved with the Listening Fund recognised that dedicated resources are needed to listen to young people at a deeper level as this work is based on relationships forming, and that takes time.

Change happens within youth organisations as a result of building positive relationships with staff members and by providing safe spaces for young people to connect.



“

“ it provided a great opportunity to engage with the young people we support, and had sustainable benefits “

”

Organisational Listening Self-Assessment

The purpose of the self-assessment is to aid your own reflection on different aspects of your organisation's listening practice, to establish where your organisation is at with listening, and indicate areas for improvement.

The self assessment takes a broad definition of organisational listening, and explores different elements of how you listen to, and with young people, including questions on your listening practice, culture, skills, resources, communication and how you act on what you hear.

It is recommended that you complete the self-assessment with at least one other person in your organisation. This will likely include someone with a strategic overview of the organisation, and someone who plays an active role in your organisation's listening practice. The questions should take 30-60 minutes to complete.

It could be an exercise you do on a bi-annual basis, so that you are able to track your organisation's progress.

1. What forms of listening does your organisation undertake with young people?
Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Surveys – with closed questions
- ☐ Surveys – with open questions
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Case studies of individual young people (that involve listening)
- ☐ Youth forums
- ☐ Comment and suggestion boxes
- ☐ 'Open door' between staff/volunteers and young people
- ☐ Ongoing listening within practice (e.g. informally asking for feedback within a session with young people)
- ☐ External evaluation (that involves listening)

2. On average, how regularly does your organisation undertake any form of listening with young people? Please tick one.

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ 6-monthly
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ Less often

3. Do young people engage anonymously in any of your organisation's listening?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

4. Does your organisation undertake any outreach activities in order to engage those groups who you have found it difficult to engage in listening? Please specify

5. Does your organisation have an organisational listening policy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. What analysis does your organisation undertake on your forms of listening? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Compare responses between young people,
- ☐ Compare responses between services within our organisation
- ☐ Compare responses over time
- ☐ Compare to external source of data (e.g. schools data or government data sets)
- ☐ Check for any bias in who is responding to your listening
- ☐ Check for other biases

7. Approximately, what proportion of the young people you work with engage in at least one form of your listening?

- ☐ 0-25%
- ☐ 26-50%
- ☐ 51-75%
- ☐ 76-100%
- ☐ Don't know

8. To what extent does your organisation listen to a representative sample of the young people that it works with? (By representative we mean that the types of young people that engage in listening activity are the same types of young people who you engage more broadly in your organisation's work)

9. To what extent does the leadership in your organisation do the following? Please enter a value for each row between 5 -1, with 5 being the highest

- ☐ Talk about the importance of listening
- ☐ Building listening in to organisational strategy
- ☐ Refer to listening in organisational business plans
- ☐ Create structured time for listening

10. To what extent do staff/ volunteers who work directly with young people in your organisation do the following?

- ☐ Talk about the importance of listening
- ☐ Actively create opportunities for listening to young people
- ☐ Actively pass the insights gained from listening on to your organisation's leadership

11. To what extent are the young people you work with willing to engage in your organisation's listening?

- ☐ 5 – a great extent
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 1 - not at all

12. Overall, how skilled is your organisation around the following areas of listening? Please enter a value for each row between 5 -1, with 5 being the highest

- ☐ Surveys
- ☐ Focus groups
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Case studies of individual young people (that involve listening)
- ☐ Youth forums
- ☐ Analysing quantitative data
- ☐ Analysing qualitative data

14. Is listening explicitly included in the role description of any staff/volunteers in your organisation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, Please specify which staff/volunteers

15. Is there a specific budget line within the organisation for listening?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16. Does your organisation use any types of technology to support its listening?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please specify which types of technology

17. To what extent does your organisation evaluate its listening practice?

- ☐ 5 – a great extent
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 1 - not at all

18. To what extent do you undertake the following elements of communication around your listening? Please enter a value for each row between 5 -1, with 5 being the highest

- ☐ Communicate what you have heard to people who have engaged in your listening processes
- ☐ Communicate what you have heard to people who have not engaged in your listening processes
- ☐ Communicate your actions to people who have engaged in your listening processes
- ☐ Communicate your actions to people who have not engaged in your listening processes
- ☐ Include an explanation of why you have not acted on some of what you have heard

19. To what extent do you use listening for the following? Please enter a value for each row between 5 -1, with 5 being the highest

- ☐ To give young people an opportunity to express themselves
- ☐ To evaluate your services
- ☐ To influence how you develop your services
- ☐ To influence the fundamental strategic direction of your organisation
- ☐ Because it is young people's democratic right to shape the services they receive
- ☐ To support young people to influence external organisations and generate societal change

20. To what extent do you engage young people within your listening in the following ways? Please enter a value for each row between 5 -1, with 5 being the highest

- ☐ Discuss responses of your listening with young people
- ☐ Analyse the responses of your listening with young people
- ☐ Create actionable recommendations with young people

21. To what extent does listening practice vary across your organisation?

- ☐ 5 – a great extent
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 1 - not at all

Dr Jo Hickman Dunne