



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Youth Work Quality Mark Observational Assessment Guide



Introduction. One of the processes of the Youth Work Quality Mark is an on observational recording to ensure that the Youth Work practice is delivered in a practical and intentional manor and is meeting the criteria set out within the Quality Mark Framework. The following guide will enable assessors to make brief notes on observations and to record noteworthy practice.

Key points to remember: Assessors should record the time and date of the recording, what is happening in the session and what the purpose of the activities are. We would encourage Assessors to note any quotes from young people, staff and volunteers which are relevant to the session and are helpful in meeting the assessment criteria.

Tips for effective notes:-

- **Be factual and objective in your recording**
- **Report in detailed but snapshot form**
- **Focus on the interactions between staff or volunteers and young people**
- **Include quotes from staff or volunteers and young people**
- **Make reference to the environment and atmosphere at the time**

Describe the session who, what, when, where and why it was planned.

Suggested content of visit report.

- Include any feedback from young people about how they feel about their 'Youth Worker' their experiences with this youth work organisation or impact it has had on their personal social development.
- Also include observation on the environment, information and advice available to young people, if young people are acting as mentors, young leaders and or active volunteers.
- Capture the aim and objectives of any sessions, universal setting or targeted or if it's a drop-in illustrate activities which are open to young people or if they are in social groups and or seeking Information Advice and Guidance or generally in discussions with youth
- Does the provision provide placements for students in training and provide a supervised learning experience, if so how are they interacting with young people

Observational recordings can be used to verify several Quality Mark key indicators and good practice statements. These can be applied across the 3 levels of the Youth Work Quality Mark.

Bronze

- Young people engage in youth work and are able to learn achieve and progress
- Staff or volunteers and young people can demonstrate improvements in personal and social development
- Young people are able to negotiate and set goals, plans, take the lead and organise activities.
- Young people are able to take part in evaluating their own learning and progress.

Silver

- Young people have the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding
- Young people are able to develop their social skills
- There are extensive examples how engaging in youth work positively contributes to other aspects of their lives.

Gold

- Young people understand the value of having their learning recorded or accredited
- The organisation ensures young people take up opportunities to have their learning recorded or accredited
- There is an organisational culture of celebrating young people's learning and achievements, no matter how big or small.

Youth Work Quality Mark celebrating excellence in Youth Work practice.

INTENTIONAL PRACTICE

Assessors should seek to report on the good practice of youth workers intentional practices. This is the professional skills and the purposeful intent, being used to engage with young people

Intentional practice is the use of various approaches to engage with young people in a planned and methodical manner.

Intentional practice is developed over time by gaining experience and the use of reflective practice to improve professional development. The intentional practice must result in benefits to young people, be positive experiences via a flexible range or activities in a broad curriculum which includes young people in its design.

The development of trusted relationships, providing a safe environment both physical and emotional are a key outcomes to intentional practice. If there are additional learning outcomes which are non-formal or informal please record them.

It is important to record good practice and celebrate this with peers in the final assessment report.

The following form is to be used as an aide memoir. Please do not forget to include any noteworthy quotes from young people which helps to illustrate the impact and outcomes of the Youth Work on their lives and or community.

Observational recording for(insert name of provision)	Activity, group or session	Date of observation	Name of Assessor/Assessors
Assessment criteria	Youth Workers build relationships	Youth workers demonstrate values and principles	Youth Workers facilitate learning and development of young people
The workforce establishes and maintains positive relationships with young people			
The workforce uses a variety of approaches to develop trust and engage with young people			
Young people are routinely involved in negotiating ground rules and codes of conduct			
Inappropriate behaviour is consistently addressed.			
The youth workers provide a safe physical			

and emotional environment for young people.			
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Quotes

- Assessors can capture examples of good practice which can later be used in the formal assessment report.
- Comments or quotes from young people can also be recorded and used later with consent in feedback and in the final report.
- Assessors should consider the methods, approach and engagement techniques (face to face, digital) of Youth Workers and make reference to any initiatives and noteworthy methods deployed to ensure young people are able to thrive.
- Assessors should also make reference to any informal or non-formal learning outcomes of planned activities.
- The environment provided by Youth Workers is also a factor for consideration, do young people feel safe and secure and feel they are able to be included.
- Do youth workers ensure young people are kind and respectful of each other views and life choices?
- Do young people actively participate in observed sessions?
- Are young people given the opportunity to express themselves?

The following is an example of a completed aide memoir. Please follow the **EXAMPLE** guide and use the key indicator statements to support your notes and observations. The grid below gives examples of the expectations of any observation.

Example only. For reference use.

Assessment criteria	Youth Workers build relationships	Youth workers demonstrate values and principles	Youth Workers facilitate learning and development of young people
The workforce establishes and maintains positive relationships with young people	e.g. Young people are welcomed, first names and nicknames used positive reinforcement is evident	e.g. Staff and volunteers are empathic, understanding and inclusive	E.g. informal and non-formal learning techniques used, young people evaluate what they learn.
The workforce uses a variety of approaches to develop trust and engage with young people	e.g. Youth workers used a variety of resources and communication tools to engage with young people ?	E.g. activities are inclusive and are designed with the input of young people.	E.g. Young people recognise they have improved their understanding and social skills.
Young people are routinely involved in negotiating ground rules and codes of conduct	e.g. On questioning young people are able to explain club or project rules when questioned	e.g. Youth worker are led by the needs of young people and empower them to play an active role	e.g. Young people are aware of their responsibilities to others and to be empathic
Inappropriate behaviour is consistently addressed.	E.g. poor behaviour is challenged by staff volunteers and young people.	e.g. staff and volunteers challenge oppressive and bullying behaviour	E.g. Staff are able to ensure young people understand their emotions and responses.

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<p>The youth workers provide a safe physical and emotional environment for young people.</p>	<p>E.g. staff and volunteers demonstrate empathy and non-threatening behaviours leading to a safe environment be available for young people.</p>	<p>e.g. staff and volunteers allow young people to express themselves in a safe environment</p>	<p>e.g. Young people are made aware of personal differences and are supportive of others.</p>
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Appendix A

Hints and tips for Quality Mark Practice Assessment Visits

During an assessment visit there will be opportunity to view information for all aspects of the Quality Mark framework. When an opportunity arises to conduct an observational visit you will already have a premise about what is working well in the organisation and any areas where the standards may not yet be met. The observational visit should be used to triangulate information about your view of the organisation, with a particular emphasis on the views of young people, the relationships with youth workers, and the extent to which what the organisation has described is actually happening in practice.

Observation visits require you to use visual and oral skills and if there is sufficient time you can also look at the paperwork in the setting – but this is not a priority.

The list below suggests some areas to consider on the visit – but it is unlikely you can cover all of them. A visit is typically 45 minutes to an hour, so you will need to prioritise what you need to know from the suggestions below.

1. Assessors should make themselves known to young people and put them at their ease. Assessors will observe sessions of **youth work** and will be looking for the following key things during the youth work observed:
 - What is the purpose of this session – what do workers plan to achieve, by their intentional practice?
 - How well are young people engaged in the session?
 - Have young people been involved in planning and any of the delivery of the session?
 - Are young people 'learning' anything from the session – this might be about their attitudes and values; an area of knowledge or some kind of skill development. Is it a part of a series of sessions or a one off?
 - Are young people involved in any evaluation of their learning or the session as a whole? How is evaluation captured?
 - How do the workers operate as a team?
 - How do workers relate to young people?

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- How do workers respond to any kind of discipline or behavioural problems that arise?
 - How do workers promote inclusive practice
 - Is the session adequately resourced?
 - Do any other factors influence the session ~ how do the workers respond to this? (So its not just about the negative).
2. Assessors should also consider the **environment** in which the session is taking place for example:
- Are there any current photos or displays that show what young people have been doing with the project?
 - Is there any information about ground rules or expectations of behaviour?
 - Is there anything to show celebrations of young people's achievement – certificates, trophies, newspaper cuttings, photos?
 - Is there good attention to Health & Safety – suitable notices, signing-in procedures, safety briefings
 - Is there evidence of safeguarding in practice – information on sharing information, anti-bullying, creating a safe space?
 - Venue owned by the organisation? Hired? This could have an impact on what you are able to see?
3. Assessors should talk to **young people** and consider things such as:
- How long the young people have been coming to the provision
 - Why young people come and what they feel they get out of it
 - How decisions are made in the provision and how young people are involved
 - Whether young people can describe any particular events/ programmes they have been involved in and what they gained from their involvement
 - Whether young people feel that the youth work has had an impact on any other areas of their lives e.g. relationships /confidence/ alcohol/ school attendance/ decision making etc...
 - Any examples of work by young people
 - Any examples of certificates, awards, scrapbooks, diaries or similar

Youth Work Quality Mark celebrating excellence in Youth Work practice.

4. Assessors need to talk to **youth workers** or youth work managers involved in the delivery of a session. They might want to discuss:

- The overall programme plan for the work observed
- The session plan
- Examples of previous session plans with the evaluations
- How this project or session fits in with the curriculum framework for the Organisation
- How workers measure and report on outcomes for young people
- Any partnership work with other workers in the area or locality
- Whether workers have an annual appraisal
- Whether workers have a DBS check and their process if there is a safeguarding issue in the session
- Who has responsibility for H&S for this sessions

At the end of the visit you should record your key judgments, using the observational visit-recording template. This is not a description of everything you have seen, but your judgments on the extent to which the 'good' standard has been demonstrated at the visit. Staff to young people ratio?

Age range of young people?