

Just One Question Insights – February 2025

This month we asked: How often do you collect data on the impact of your work?

If users were happy to share we also asked, what tools or methods you use to measure the impact of your work.

We had: 244 responses

Key Messages:

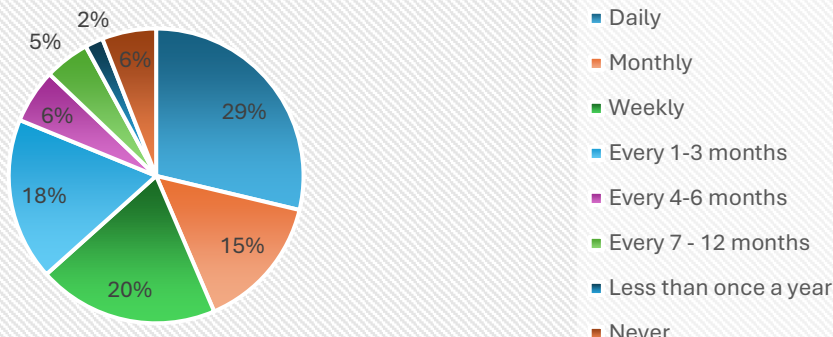
- Majority of practitioners collect impact data on a regular basis, stating daily and weekly collection.
- Daily impact data collection activities are focused on monitoring, gathering feedback and immediate reporting.
- Whereas weekly activities primarily involved short-term impact and evaluation reporting.
- Monthly data collection activities are used for impact assessment, formal evaluation, and structured reporting.
- 56% of organisations use a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative methods (e.g. surveys) with qualitative methods (e.g. observations or interviews.)
- Only 18% of respondents said they used standardised survey tools but there is a lot of scope to increase common use of tools across the sector

Key Findings

- While most respondents collect data regularly - daily (29%), weekly (20%), or monthly (15%), see table 1 for a breakdown. Our network survey last year found that 44% still find managing and demonstrating impact challenging. This suggests that, despite a strong focus on data collection, many organisations need further support to effectively analyse and communicate their impact, likely reflecting the complex nature of youth work.

Table 1

How often do you collect the data on the impact of your work? n=244



- Quarterly data collection is relatively common with almost a fifth (18%) collecting data every 1 – 3 months. This suggests that data collecting operates more on a strategic review cycle or structured performance cycles rather than continuous monitoring.
- Longer data collection intervals are less common with only 11% collecting data every 4 -12 months and 2% collecting data less than once a year. This suggests some youth practitioners/ organisations rely more on long-term evaluation cycles.
- Only 2% stated they never collect impact data.
- 71% respondents shared what methods or tools they use to collect data these ranged from measurement tools, evaluation / data platforms and surveys to qualitative data gathering methods such observations and interviews. Respondents also mentioned using validated. external assessments tools such as the Skills Builder Framework, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) and the Youth Impact Measurement tool.

Insight into tools and methods used to measure impact

- Surveys are the most common approach (29%) for feedback. Organisations rely heavily on direct input from stakeholders, beneficiaries or customers to assess impact. *“We used a triangulated approach getting feedback from young people, staff and external organisations / people based on our outcomes.”*
- The role of technology in collecting data for impact purposes is increasing, with a fifth (20%) of responses referencing online and CRM-based tools. This reflects a growing reliance on technology for monitoring interactions and measuring impact in real time. *“We record every conversation action the young people take and then we add the information to the UPSHOT system.” / We use an online database, Lamplight, to record all of our information.”*
- A further 18% used validated external measurement tools but as this method is only used by a notable minority, it suggests room for further standardization in impact evaluation across the sector.
 - The ace for Youth Impact POT, YPQ, YES and QPT tools
 - Clinical tools as part of funding for the Early Help Support Hub from the Department of Health and Social Care. RCADS, SWEMBS, WASAS, CSQ, SFQ
 - Outcome Star

- Only a small percentage stated that they do not use any impact measurement tools (4%). This could reflect a lack of resources, awareness of importance of impact measurement for the organisation or using informal measures or the nature of their funding doesn't require it.
- A mixed-method approach is common with 56% organisations integrating both quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (observational) methods.
- The respondents indicated funders preference for quantitative data to demonstrate performance against their funded-related programmes outcomes. *"Funders or commissioners seem to value direct figures and tick boxes."*

There are also a range of alternative and creative methods that are being used across organisations to measure impact across different workstreams such as emoji-based feedback forms, photos and visual media and key worker journals. *"We do it in a wide range of ways through games, questionnaires, observations & testimonials. Tools we use include pizza evaluations, chuff charts, graffiti walls, before & after tick box forms and much more."*

Insights into regular impact measurement for organisations

Daily is about monitoring, feedback and reporting

- It tends to focus on attendance, safeguarding, casual feedback and session-level reflections *"Reflective feedback online forms for staff team to complete end of every session."* Daily practices are fundamental for immediate feedback, and operational oversight
- It enables real-time tracking of engagement and supports responsive and adaptive practice
- It is often used for operational data and 'soft feedback' required. (e.g. casual conversations, observations)
"We gather satisfaction data at the end of every session... to measure the success of the sessions."

Weekly is about reporting & evaluation

- Most used for summarising session data, reviewing group progress and conducting check-ins
- Weekly reporting supports continuous improvement and team alignment.
- Some organisations use weekly cycles to evaluate well-being trends, activity summaries or discussed based feedback loops.
- It is being used by practitioners as a midpoint between daily operational insights and longer-term strategic analysis.
"Weekly forms are used on a graph to identify progress made and when sessions need to end."

Monthly impact assessment evaluation, and formal reporting

- This is often tied to funder requirements, board reporting and performance reviews
- It allows for more structured evaluation using collated data from previous weeks, which supports with offering more trend analysis and progress tracking
- Monthly cycles are frequently used for impact assessment tools, as well as different stakeholder requests
- Reporting monthly typically helps meet accountability demands and allows for outcome level tracking.

"We continuously monitor and record our work but we calculate our impact on a monthly basis using the 10 NYA outcomes."

"The data we collect on a daily basis... is reported back at monthly meetings to our Board of Trustees."

Digital – based CRM platforms for effective reporting used or mentioned by respondents

- [Lamplight](#) – a tailored, powerful CRM database to track their service delivery.
- [UPSHOT](#) – Provides a monitoring, evaluation & learning system to help you evidence your impact. It is a particularly appropriate platform for street-based and detached youth work as it provides good mobile optimisation which allows youth workers to easily record data on the go.
- [Substance Views](#) – A smart, intuitive platform which makes managing data and measuring impact easy
- [Teckle](#) – Manage your projects, clients, finances and teams.
- [Cinolla](#) – Online booking and management software for multi-activity centres
- [Writeupp](#) – Practice management software made for clinics and healthcare professionals.
- [IAPTUS](#) – the leading digital care record for psychological therapies

What UK Youth is doing around data collection to measure impact

- UK Youth have been supporting a number of data standardisation initiatives, led by YMCA GWC in recent years. Through a BYA Data Standardisation initiative, we've been encouraging ten of the UK's biggest youth organisations to adopt common measures and tools. Through the Youth Work Evidence Alliance, we've been encouraging funders to adopt a more standardised approach to measuring impact: <https://www.ukyouth.org/2024/04/uk-youth-delighted-to-join-new-youth-work-alliance/>
- UK Youth has standardised its approach to data collection in its own Impact Framework. Core tools that we are using and encouraging the youth sector to use are: ONS-4 ('personal wellbeing scale') and YMCA GWC's Socio-emotional skills measures (<https://www.ymcageorgewilliams.uk/what-we-do/socio-emotional-skills-measurement-hub>)

Recommendations for enhancing data collection practices to measure impact

- More support and training is needed to embed the most effective common tools within the youth sector.
- Offer staff training on data interpretation to ensure insights translate into actionable change. [The Social Research Association](#) promotes excellence in social research.
- Many youth organisations (incl smaller, local organisations) use really creative, participatory methods to understand their impact and capture learning - these sit really nicely alongside standardised quantitative measures and creating opportunities to share practice locally, regionally and nationally. This would enable organisations to learn from each others' approaches.
- Using standardized tools will enable better joined up working by improving efficiency within and across organisations with local authorities at a local/regional level.
- Leverage the use of digital tools or online platforms for reporting efficiency such as: using mobile-friendly reporting tools for session reflections and impact tracking.

- Combining hard data (quantitative) with real-world/ lived experience narratives to demonstrate impact.
- Encourage frontline staff to share regular qualitative insights alongside structured data collection.
- Hold quarterly reflection sessions to review evaluation practices and refine reporting approaches.

For organisations that rarely collect data the following templates, training or CRM based tools can be used to encourage at least quarterly or annual tracking:

- Consider voice-to text tools for faster data input (especially for field/on the ground youth practitioners)
- Tools like Microsoft Forms, Google Forms, Survey Monkey can be pre-filled with standard questions to reduce admin time.
- Use data visualization for quick insights: creating simple dashboards to track attendance trends, engagement levels and emerging issues.
- Tools like [Google Data Studio](#), [Power Bi](#) or simple excel charts can provide at-a-glance insights

[YMCA George Williams College](#), due to their saddened closure at the end of March, has archived a site that provides a range of valuable resources from their measurements and learning hubs. **Data standardisation and shared practice in evaluation has been at the heart of The Centre for Youth Impact's work for many years.** With the closure of GWC, it is crucial for government, funders, and other youth sector infrastructure organisations to come together to pick up and drive this essential work forward. This collaborative effort will benefit the whole sector, helping to prove and improve the impact of youth work.