

2022

Report Writing guidance



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Youth Work Quality Mark
4/4/2022

Introduction to Youth Work Quality Mark Report Writing.

We have prepared this handy aide memoir to enable Youth Work Quality Mark Assessors to develop their reports in a format which is best suited to ensuring:

- organisations are meeting the assessment criteria
- the Assessment processes and robustness of the report are to the standards required by the awarding body
- good practice is celebrated and recognised

The aide memoir has been prepared by Assessors for Assessors. It has taken into account their experience of report writing, common faults made in previous reports and to assist Assessors to ensure the language and format of reports are consistent to provide effective and the best quality reports.

The aide memoir will be accompanied by training for Assessors which will include some practical resources and guidance from Lead Assessors.

The guide is laid out with helpful tips and hints on use of grammar and language. In our reports we wish to celebrate good practice and to recognise the impact Youth Work has on young people. It is therefore essential for Assessors to ensure we do justice to the work of our colleagues, demonstrate to the reader the impact, outcomes and benefits to young people of high quality Youth Work and Youth Work Services in Wales.

Our reports have and will be used on the future as useful evidence to organisations to use to help with:

- Service improvement planning
- ~~ESTYNEYSTN~~ Inspection
- Funding applications

Please take time to read the guide and reflect on the construction and preparation of your input into reports. Please treat the guide as a resource for reference and not as a set of strict rules.

1. Who is the audience for your report?

The organisation you are assessing could include:

- very skilled and experienced youth workers
- volunteers with limited knowledge of youth work
- councillors, strategic managers, trustees

The report will be shared externally with:

- The Youth Work Quality Mark co-ordinating Assessor working for EWC
- Welsh Government and associated ministers
- Estyn

There is a wide range of expectation and needs to be covered. Therefore assume your intended audience is a person with a general interest in Youth Work but with no knowledge of specialist terms and abbreviations. There needs to be a certain formality but remember it is a report not a research paper.

2. What is the purpose of the report?

The report is the final part of a Quality Mark journey for an organisation. It is therefore vital to ensure that the report can:

- link what you have learnt from the self-assessment and interviews with the areas of assessment
- identify areas that require improvement
- highlight good practice
- communicate your findings clearly and unambiguously

3. Where to collect information for the report

- The organisation's self-assessment
- The supporting evidence provided by the organisation including their social media sites
- The answers to questions posed during the assessment week
- Further evidence that you decide to request
- Any presentation provided (if this is a re-accreditation)

Remember. All information/evidence quoted should be less than 2 years old

4. Maintaining Focus

- Do not speculate on the organisation's past. Focus on what you see at the time of assessment.
- If information is lacking in the self-assessment, discuss this with your other assessors then identify the questions and areas for investigation/verification.
- Provide the Lead Contact with a list of what you need and check when you will receive it.

- The self-assessment review findings can immediately be dropped into the relevant section on the report template if you are happy you have seen enough evidence to back up the statements in the organisation's self-assessment.
- Communicate your thoughts with other assessors and keep on track to write the report as soon as possible after and interviews or observations. Keep findings fresh in your mind.

5. How to structure the report

- Use the report template. Some evidence, interviews and observations may straddle more than one indicator criteria or area of the template.
- Use specific information once only in the report. You should look for at least 3 examples of evidence in each standard to meet the criteria of the assessment.
- You may get evidence relevant to different sections of the report in one interview. Ensure you link the evidence clearly to each assessment criteria
- Include findings from across the assessment team.

6. When to draft the report

- As soon as you have completely verified any statements in the organisation's self-assessment. - good notes on the desk-based assessment make it easier to write the report
- Following a meeting with anyone involved with the organisation or an observation.
- Once the assessment has ended.

Ensure that you are including and sharing the views of all the assessors. Differences of opinions need to be discussed and may lead to requests for further clarification, evidence or interviews.

7. What the report must include

- The name of the organisation; the lead contact; the report date; the assessment status (assessment or renewal); the name of the assessors.
- The organisation's mission statement.
- How the mission statement relates to and involves the young people
- How the organisation links its work with Youth Work policy and regulatory procedures – e.g. safeguarding, Welsh language, equality and inclusive practice
- Quotes from young people or staff
- Examples of good practice

8. The style of the report

- Don't write from your point of view e.g. *I enjoyed the session.*
- Use a more impersonal style e.g. *Assessors found the session enjoyable/ This was an enjoyable session*

- Contributors may have different styles or voices but have one style throughout the report.
- Make sure verb tenses are consistent. You are likely to use the present tense.
- Check your placing of apostrophes. A common difficulty is its/it's. It is a possessive pronoun and doesn't need an apostrophe. Examples: *The minibus needs its tyre changing. It's a long way to the garage.*

9. Abbreviations

- Write the abbreviation followed by the full title in brackets the first time. e.g. *CWVYS (the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services)*. Use the abbreviation thereafter.
- You may be assessing a large organisation with its own specialised areas with unfamiliar acronyms that you will need to learn.
- Very commonly used abbreviations do not need to be written in full e.g. UK; S4C;
- Do not use full points (stops) in any abbreviations e.g. NVQ not N.V.Q.

10. Bullet points

If using bullet points, include a sentence or paragraph to give context for the bullet points that follow. Each bullet point should encapsulate one thought, fact, finding or idea. If a bullet point requires more than one sentence, it should probably be a short paragraph not a bullet point

11. Vocabulary

Use common, familiar words. Long words can sound pompous and may not be readily understood. Do not use jargon. Remember your audience does not have your specialised knowledge.

12. Sentences

Shorter sentences are easier to understand. Check to see if a long sentence can be broken down. Two or three shorter, clearer sentences are easier to understand than an over-long, complex one.

13. Quantities and proportions

It's helpful to have a shared vocabulary in all the reports. Terms like 'many' or 'few' are vague. The following guide helps with this:

Nearly all	= with very few exception
Most	= 90% or more
Many	= 70% or more
A majority	= over 60%
Half	= 50%
Around half	= close to 50%

A minority	= below 40%
Few	= below 20%
Very few	= less than 10%

14. Personalisation

Do not name individuals. Use job titles where appropriate and initials for young people.

15. Judgements

These are written in the third column of the report.

State clearly any shortcomings - areas for improvement

Note any good practices – recommendations to share or to celebrate

16. Quotations

In interviews note direct quotations from contributors that address any of the indicators in the assessment. Ensure the quotation you choose matches the judgement that you have made. Attribute quotations as outlined in **Personalisation**

17. Checking

Make sure you proof-read before sharing the draft – spelling and grammar check settings can be useful

Share the report with other assessors to check for errors and clarity

Ensure you have completed the Recommendations column where appropriate

18. Time frames

The draft report should be shared with and agreed by the all the assessment team and forwarded to the report quality assessor no later than a week after the assessment ended. Have a final read before submitting your completed report to correct typos.