

9. Evaluating work with young researchers

While the references below indicate the growing body of knowledge about work with young researchers, there is still a lack of evidence on the practice and effectiveness of research led by CYP (Cuevas-Parrá, 2020; Kelly et al., 2020).

When planning a project with young researchers, think about how you will evaluate that part of the project, document the processes, impacts and outcomes and share the learning from the start. This is important to help develop and improve work with young researchers in Barnardo's and more widely.

This could include:

- **Getting feedback from young researchers as you go along**

Evaluation activities at key points such as the end of training sessions can help to improve the training and support provided to young researchers and improve the ways in which the group and project are working. It can also contribute to the next stage. See examples in the Toolkit (Evaluating young researcher projects). The following also have some really helpful tools and resources:

- Evaluating Participation Work: [The Toolkit and The Guide](#) (Mainey, 2008a, b)
- [Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation](#) (Lansdown and O'Kane, 2014)
- The checklists and feedback forms in the [Hub na nÓg Participation Framework](#)
- The National Youth Agency [Hear by Right Framework](#)

- **Formally evaluating the project**

An evaluation of the processes and outcomes of the young researcher work could be another 'project' in itself. Ideally, this would be conducted by an external, independent evaluator, with some young evaluators also involved. This would link to the initial recruitment process too, for example where you find out what the young researchers hope to gain and their baseline skills and confidence on certain measures. If it is a small project and commissioning formal external evaluator is not possible, you can still do a small evaluation as part of the project.

9. Evaluating work with young researchers

Formally evaluating the project (continued)

- Collecting data at the start of the project on young researchers (and supporting adults) motivations and expectations. At the end, explore what transpired and how well these expectations were met.
- Use session evaluation and monitoring data as above
- Collect primary data from young researchers and adult stakeholders such as project staff. Use focus groups, interviews or a survey in which the group/stakeholders critically reflect on the research process, impact and outcomes.

Share any learning from the evaluation within your organisation to improve future work with young researchers. You could also write a journal article, a blog or similar about the project, with CYP as co-authors, and/or share learning at a conference or other event.