



INSPIRING IMPACT

The JET Pack

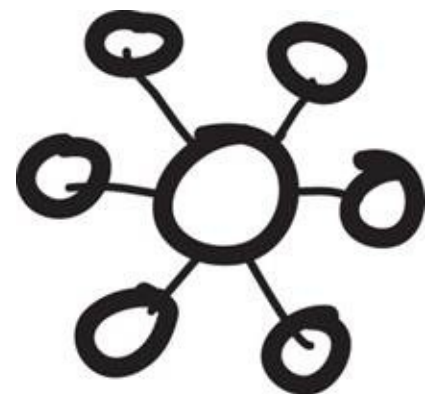
A guide to measuring and improving your impact based on the Journey to Employment (JET) framework

Eibhlín Ní Ógáin, Dawn Plimmer, Ellen Harries and Angela Kail

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Introduction

In May 2013 we published the Journey to Employment (JET) report which identified factors that influence young peoples' transition into work, presenting the evidence base for these and suggesting potential evaluation tools. The report acts as an introductory guide to help organisations working with young people to understand how their work contributes to employability, and think through their evaluation approach. As well as saving organisations time and money, JET aims to support the youth employability sector to become more effective as a whole by promoting a common understanding of what and how to measure. This will, in turn, make it easier for organisations to learn from each other, and build the evidence base for what works.

While JET provides a comprehensive bank of information and tools for organisations to draw on, the specific evaluation approach of each organisation will differ depending on how it supports young people, and what outcomes its services aim to achieve. This document, *The JET Pack*, provides detailed practical guidance to support organisations using JET to develop their own evaluation approach. It is a step-by-step guide to identifying what to measure, deciding how and when to measure, and using the resulting data to learn and improve.

The JET framework

Tackling youth unemployment is a priority. Nearly 1.07 million¹ young people are not in employment, full-time education or training—almost 1 in 5 of all young people in the UK. Transitions to adulthood have become increasingly difficult as a result of the economic outlook and the breakdown of traditional pathways into work. Based on evidence from the literature and insights from consultation with experts, we identified seven groups of factors that contribute to successful job outcomes: (1) Personal circumstances; (2) Emotional capabilities; (3) Attitudes to work; (4) Employability skills; (5) Qualifications, education and training; (6) Experience and involvement; (7) Career management skills.

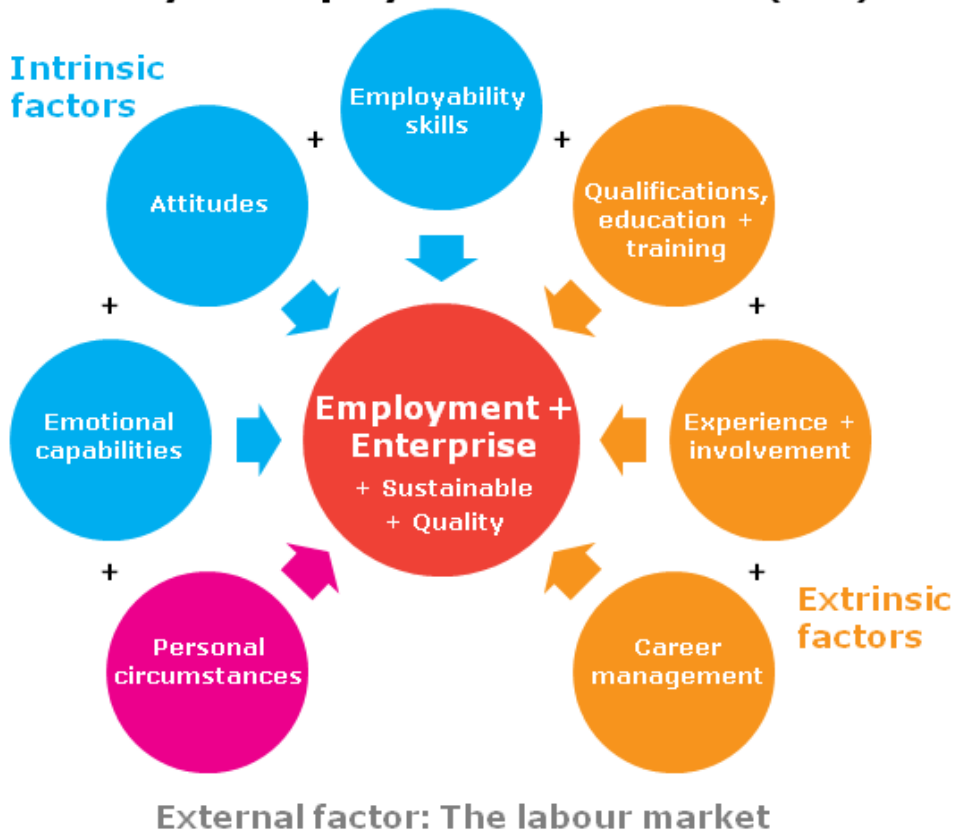
The diagram on the next page represents a young person's Journey to Employment—the **JET framework**². In the centre of the diagram is the job outcome. We recognise that a job outcome is not just about getting and sustaining employment; it is also about the quality of the work, and the satisfaction gained from it. Surrounding the central job outcome are the factors that contribute to this. For each of these areas a number of indicators are listed in the Journey to Employment (JET) report, reflecting what our research shows is most important in the journey to employment. However, this list of indicators is not comprehensive and more could be added to if required. The complexity of job outcomes is reflected in the structure of the framework. The journey is not linear and many of the factors interact with each other to contribute to employability. We know that everyone's journey is different and there is not a single factor that guarantees success in the labour market. Individual young people may need support with all, some, or none of these areas.

The framework also recognises that there are external factors that affect a young person's ability to get and sustain a job. Perhaps the most significant of these is the state of the economy and the labour market.

¹ ONS statistical bulletin: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), November 2013

² Updated following consultation with funders and charities in summer and Autumn 2013

Journey to Employment framework (JET)



Emotional capabilities

- Self-esteem
- Grit and determination
- Autonomy and control
- Empathy

Attitudes

- Aspirations for education
- Attitudes to work
- Aspirations for work
- Aspirations for the future

Employability skills

- Teamwork
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Self-management
- Leadership

Personal circumstances

- Access to transport
- Access to the internet
- Access to childcare
- Access to support for young carers
- Reduced substance abuse
- Reduced offending/anti-social behaviour
- Access to support for young people with physical and mental health problems

Qualifications, education + training

- Basic skills
- Achieving qualifications
- Attendance and behaviour

Experiences + involvement

- Work experience
- Perception of value of work experience
- Networks
- Community involvement

Career management

- Career direction
- Job search skills
- Presentation to employers
- Confidence in finding employment
- Entrepreneurship

Employment + enterprise

- Entry into employment
- Sustaining employment
- Quality of employment
- Satisfaction with employment

The evidence for employment

Supporting young people to find and sustain a quality, fulfilling job it is the ultimate objective of all organisations working to improve the employability of young people. But sometimes organisations do not directly seek to get someone into work through their activities. Many charities support young people on the journey to employment—helping to develop the capabilities, knowledge and skills needed as a basis for finding work. Some young people may need support with overcoming barriers such as engagement in anti-social behaviour, others may need to develop their self-esteem and team work skills, and others may need to improve their attitude to work.

For organisations working to support young people in these areas, getting a job is too narrow a definition of employability. It tells us nothing about how young people reach this point and the journey they have to make to get there.

Evidence from the literature demonstrates the link between the factors included in the JET framework and successful employment outcomes. For example, grit and determination is linked to successful educational and career outcomes, and studies have shown that employability skills like team work and communication skills are highly valued by employers, often far more than educational qualifications.³

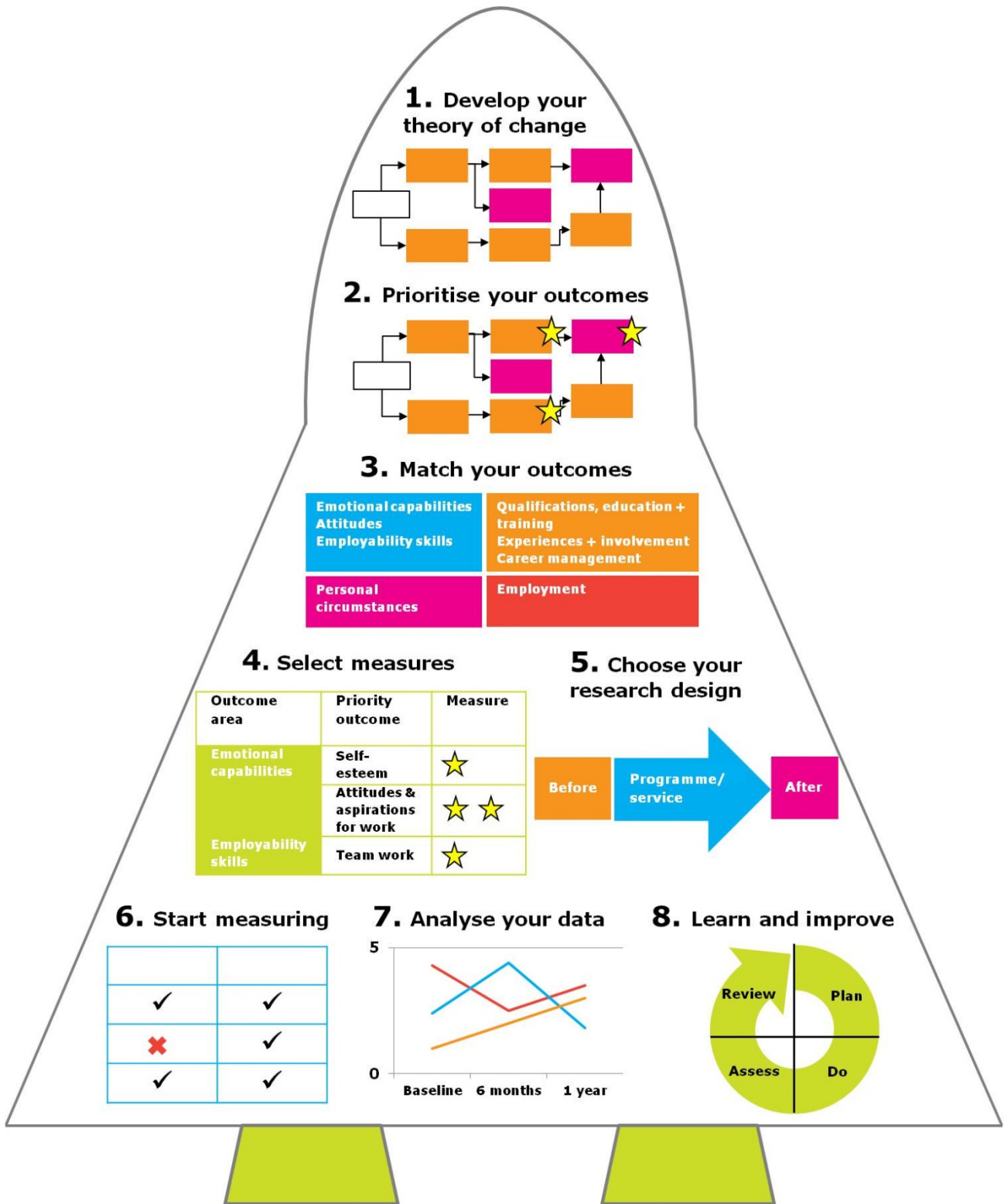
This demonstrates the importance of measuring intermediate outcomes like social and emotional skills, team work and communication. It also means that organisations working toward these outcomes can demonstrate the link between improvements on these intermediate outcomes and improved employment prospects.

Take a sports project for 16-18 year olds, for example, that uses football-based activities to increase self-esteem. The evidence base shows that young people with low self-esteem are less likely to attain post-secondary education and to be employed 14 years later, and tend to have lower average earnings. If the charity demonstrates a statistically significant increase in self-esteem among the young people it works with (using a robust, tested psychometric tool such as the Rosenberg self esteem scale), this would help it to show its contribution to youth employability. It could also help identify areas for improvement such as any specific demographic groups for which the intervention is less successful at increasing self-esteem.

³ For the full evidence base and relevant citations see the first JET report: *The journey to employment—A guide to understanding and measuring what matters for young people.*

How to use the JET Pack

This resource pack takes you through eight simple steps to measuring your impact with the JET framework. Use the eight steps below to navigate your way through this pack.



Step 1: Think about your theory of change

A theory of change describes the change you want to make and the steps involved in making that happen. It involves mapping how an organisation or project aims to deliver its intended outcomes, and the assumptions that underpin this. It is by gathering evidence on these assumptions that you can test whether your approach works.

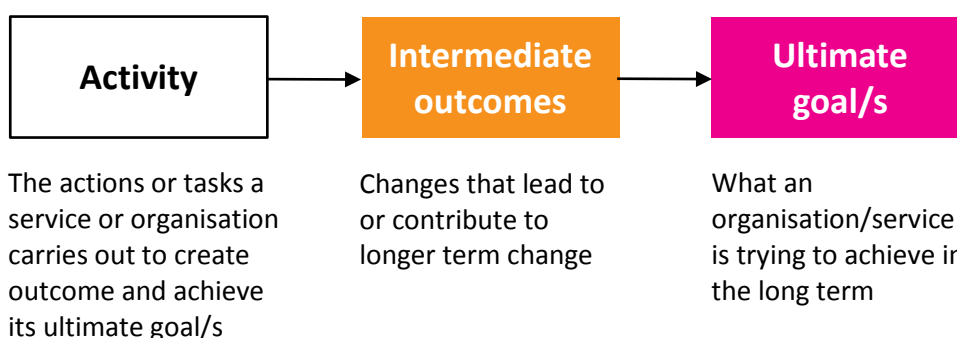
Theory of change has a number of benefits. It can help you to understand:

- whether your activities make sense, given your goals;
- what is working well and what is not;
- which activities and outcomes you can achieve alone and where you need to work with others;
- how to measure your impact; and
- how to communicate the rationale and impact of your work.

Key features of theory of change

The first step to developing your evaluation approach is to map out how your project or organisation leads to change for young people. This will help you to select what outcomes to measure, and identify the data you need to collect.

Below we identify the basic features of a theory of change. The arrows represent the causal assumptions linking activities to outcomes to ultimate goals.

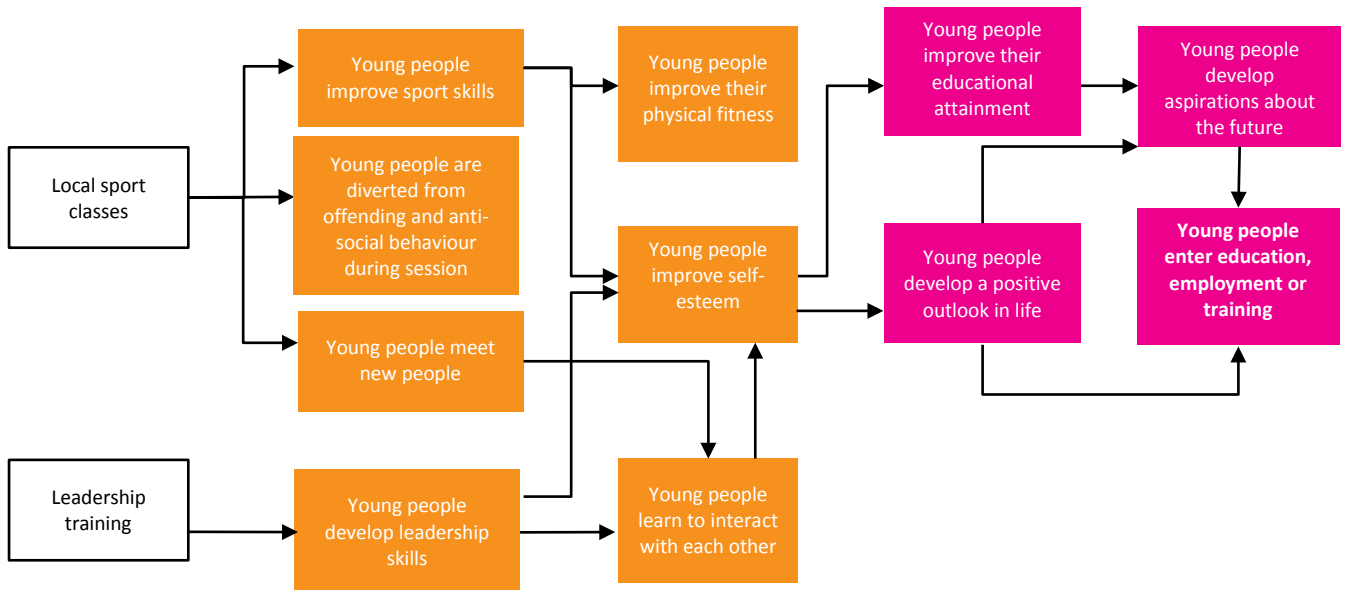


Example

The following project uses sport to engage 16-18 year old male teenagers. It also provides leadership training.

The project aims to get young people involved in positive activities (in this case, sport) and interact with one another in a positive, respectful environment. The overall goals of the project are to

promote young people’s self esteem, and improve their behaviour and teamwork skills to ultimately raise their aspirations and help them do better in school or employment.



This is just an example, and your theory of change may look very different depending on the complexity of your project or organisation—you may deliver more activities, or just have one ultimate goal.

As this example shows, there are often multiple layers of intermediate outcomes, moving from the immediate short-term opportunities or changes that result from the activities (eg, young people meet new people), to longer-term changes that result (eg, entering employment). If your theory of change is complex, you may want to use different colours to distinguish between the different levels of outcomes.

Developing your theory of change

In our experience, the best way to develop a theory of change is to involve a range of staff, trustees and possibly services users. It is not necessary or efficient to involve everyone; a group of between 3-10 people seems to work best depending on the size of the service. You can develop a theory of change either in a workshop or by talking to individuals or groups separately.

Backwards mapping is a key feature of developing a theory of change. It involves starting with your ultimate goal and mapping back to intermediate outcomes, and then finally to your activities. It can be helpful to ask ‘what has to happen for this to happen?’ By developing your theory of change in this way, it encourages you to think about what needs to be done to achieve your goal, rather than what you are currently doing.

Different people have different approaches to creating a theory of change, but the steps below outline an approach we have found works well.

- a. Agree the project you want your theory of change to describe and, if you are doing this for the first time, ensure it is sufficiently narrow, local, focussed etc.
- b. Agree **the ultimate goals** for the project in terms of long-term targets or aims.
- c. Start backwards mapping by identifying the **intermediate outcomes** that link to your goal. Think about the changes you are trying to achieve for your service users in terms of knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviours that might contribute to a longer term change. There may be several layers of intermediate outcomes if your intervention is complex.
- d. You can now move on to the **activities** section. Think about what services, tasks or products you provide and how these link to the outcomes you have identified.
- e. You now have a draft theory of change to **review and refine**. Ask for opinions and feedback on the model to eliminate duplication or anything that is not directly relevant. Make sure that the model is realistic—you may not yet have evidence for all of the assumptions, but there should be a logical link between different sections. Check that arrows show the causal assumptions linking activities to outcomes to ultimate goals.
- f. Finally, one group member should take the theory of change away, type it up and circulate it for further comment and refinement. You should expect a number of iterations until everyone is happy.

JET and developing your theory of change

It is important that your theory of change is owned and understood by your key stakeholders. So when developing your theory of change, it is best to think about what you want to achieve in a language that is understood by all involved, rather than trying to align your theory of change with JET from the start.

It is at the stage when you are deciding how to measure (see Step 3) that we recommend you start to match your own outcomes with those included in JET.

Step 2: Prioritise your outcomes

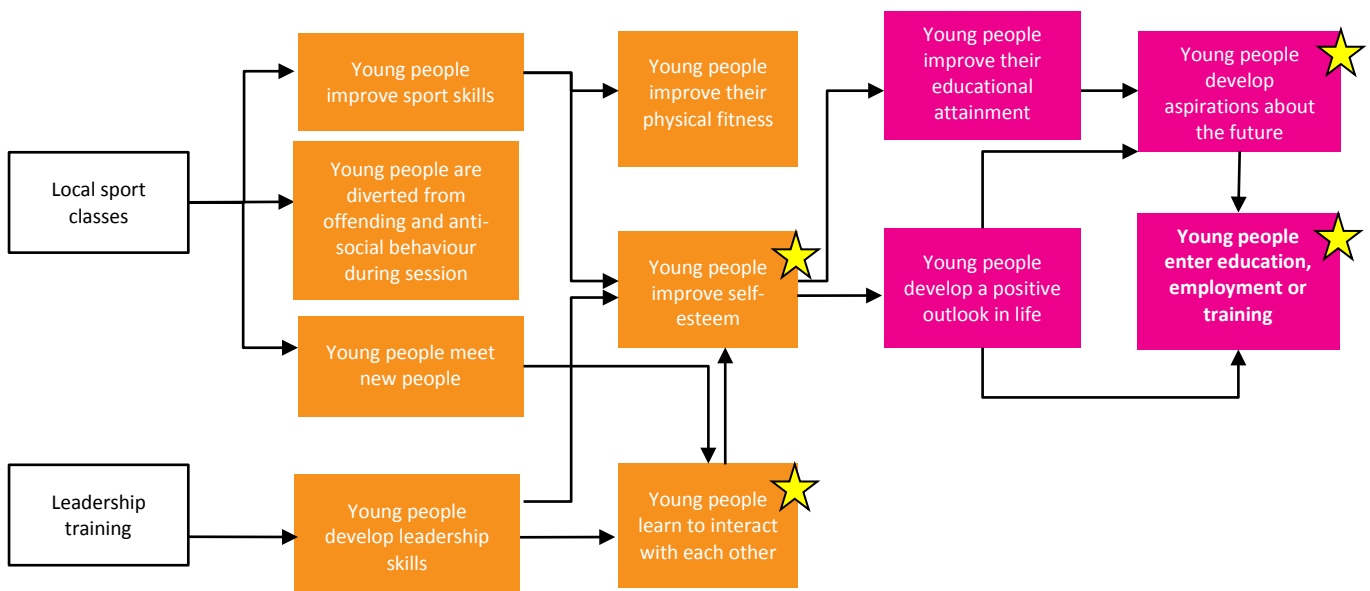
Once you have developed your theory of change, the next step is to decide what you are going to measure.

It is not normally possible or desirable to measure everything on your theory of change. Measurement should be proportional. It should provide you and your stakeholders with useful information. To achieve this, prioritisation is important—it is better to measure a few key outcomes well, rather than measuring lots of outcomes in a less robust and meaningful way.

When thinking about what to measure, prioritise outcomes that:

- you **directly** influence (rather than **indirectly** support)
- are **important/material** to your mission
- are important to your **funders** and other **key stakeholders**
- are not too **costly** to measure
- will produce **credible** data

It is often useful to start thinking about prioritisation when you are developing the theory of change. If you develop the theory of change in a workshop, you could get participants to vote on what they feel is most important. You can then highlight the priority outcomes for measurement on your theory of change. Stars have been used to indicate this on the example below.



As explained in the Evidence for employment section on page 5, while some organisations aim to help get young people into education, employment or training, this is not always directly achieved through their work. The example intervention shown above aims to promote young people's self esteem, and improve their behaviour and teamwork skills to raise their aspirations. So it is the outcomes that it directly influences that the organisation would measure, in the short term at least.

Step 3: Use the JET framework to match outcomes

Once you have prioritised outcomes in your theory of change, you can use the JET framework to select the JET outcomes that best match your organisation's. If you are unsure whether the match is correct, it is worth referring back to the evidence for each outcome. The table below outlines each JET outcome grouped under the seven factors that contribute to successful job outcomes: (1) Personal circumstances; (2) Emotional capabilities; (3) Attitudes to work; (4) Employability skills; (5) Qualifications, education and training; (6) Experience and involvement; (7) Career management skills.

<p>Emotional capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Grit and determination • Autonomy and control • Empathy <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirations for education • Attitudes to work • Aspirations for work • Aspirations for the future <p>Employability skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teamwork • Communication • Problem solving • Self-management • Leadership 	<p>Qualifications, education + training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic skills • Achieving qualifications • Attendance and behaviour <p>Experiences + involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience • Perception of value of work experience • Networks • Community involvement <p>Career management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career direction • Job search skills • Presentation to employers • Confidence in finding employment • Entrepreneurship
<p>Personal circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to transport • Access to the internet • Access to childcare • Access to support for young carers • Reduced substance abuse • Reduced offending/anti-social behaviour • Access to support for young people with physical and mental health problems 	<p>Employment + enterprise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry into employment • Sustaining employment • Quality of employment • Satisfaction with employment

Step 4: Use the JET framework to select measures

Understanding your intervention

The nature of the project you deliver affects the type of measure you should use. Interventions to improve youth employability differ a great deal. Organisations deliver projects that range from training, advice, practical workshops and work placements, through to mentoring and counselling. Some organisations work to improve the soft skills young people need to succeed in education and employment. Other organisations work to give young people the practical qualifications and harder skills necessary to enter the workforce. Therefore, understanding your intervention is the first step to selecting the right measure. Three main features of a project should influence the measure you choose:

- **Frequency:** how often you see someone—eg, every day, once every few weeks or as a one off.
- **Intensity:** how much you work with someone—is it for a number of hours every week for a year, or a full-time course for a month or more.
- **Duration:** how long you work with someone—did you see them just once, have you worked with them for a year or do you run short courses with them.

Of course, frequency, duration and intensity are all related—you can have an intense but short course or a project where you see someone infrequently but work with them for a long period of time. The table below gives some indication as to the type of design you should choose given the kind of intervention you deliver.

Type of project	Intensity	Frequency	Duration	Type of design
One off—eg, career guidance workshop, taster sessions, advice	Low	Low	Low	Measure once before and after the course/consider short before and after measures. Consider follow up after one month to understand if changes have been sustained.
Ongoing—drop in, eg, informal course, advice, group activities	Low	Low/Medium	Medium	Before and after measure—measure when someone starts in your service and follow up at regular intervals—eg, 3 months after you start seeing someone.

Ongoing—regular, eg, mentoring, counselling, structured training or course	Medium/High	High	Medium/High	Before measure taken at start of service. Follow up measure taken at regular intervals, eg, every 3 months as well as a final follow up at the end of the service.
Structured training or course—eg, six week full time training course	Medium/High	High	Medium/High	Before and after measures—taken before and after course. Consider following up in the long term.

Step 4: Use the JET framework to select measures

Once you have considered the type of intervention you deliver, use the JET framework to search the measures available for the outcomes of your project. To decide on the best measure for your project you should:

- Read the questions or statements in the questionnaire
- Check if the statements reflect the outcomes your programme aims to achieve
- Ensure it is the right length for your project
- Confirm it has been tested with the right age group
- See if the language is appropriate

Making changes to scales

We generally recommend that you use a full scale as it appears (ie, use all the questions that are included in a questionnaire). This is important because these scales have been rigorously tested to measure certain concepts (eg, a self esteem scale) and changing the questions or not using the full scale affects the robustness of the questionnaire. However, we recognise that not all scales will have the right language and may include statements that are irrelevant. If you need to change the wording, we recommend you keep this to a minimum, changing certain words to make it more meaningful to the group but not altering the overall statements. If you choose to amend a questionnaire, please tell us about the changes you have made and why.

Finalising your questionnaire

Once you have identified the scales and questions you want to use from the JET framework, you need to pull these questions into one questionnaire. To do this, you will need to think about a few different issues:

- **Length:** you may be tempted to measure many different outcomes—however, this may mean that your questionnaire becomes quite lengthy. We generally recommend that a

questionnaire is no longer than 20-25 questions or statements long (ie, one scale may include 5 statements so 4 scales should be sufficient). This is to ensure that young people answer all questions in the questionnaire. You should also consider the length and intensity of your programme when finalising your questionnaire. If your service is a short one-off event your questionnaire should not exceed one page. You can consider a longer questionnaire if your service works with people in a more intense way and over a longer time period.

- **Online versus paper questionnaires:** depending on your access to the internet, you may want to consider putting your questionnaire online for young people to answer. Online survey tools like Survey Monkey are a great way of speeding up the measurement process and means your data can be analysed automatically and you do not have spend time inputting data. However, depending on your service and who you work with you may have to rely on paper questionnaires.
- **Matching before and after questionnaires:** if you give a person a questionnaire when you start working with them and then give them a follow-up questionnaire at a later point in time, you will need to be able to match the two questionnaires in order to tell if things have changed for that person. To do this, you will need to make use of unique ID numbers: these could be codes ascribed to each individual or could make use of anonymous personal information such as initials and date or birth. The use of ID numbers is crucial if you choose to do a follow up questionnaire as it allows you to track each person, whilst also guaranteeing anonymity.
- **Other questions to include:** you should also consider adding basic questions on demographics to your questionnaire. Information like gender, age, ethnicity and post-codes can help you understand the characteristics of the people you are working with. This information can also help you to match your group to other data sources—for example, the National pupil database if this is needed.

What to do if there is no relevant measure

Our framework has included measures for the core outcomes in the youth employability sector and you should be able to use at least one, if not most, of the measures listed for your work. However, there will be unique outcomes of projects that organisations may want to measure that are not included in the JET framework. We are keen to add to the measurement options available and encourage organisations to develop their own good quality measure if necessary. If you do develop your own measure, please get in touch as we would like to list it in the options available to other organisations. To develop your own questionnaire, try and follow these simple principles:

- **Be brief:** avoid going over 20 words, removing any unnecessary words.
- **Be simple:** avoid complicated words and confusing language.
- **Be specific:** avoid words such as ‘often’ or ‘usually’, use more specific words like ‘weekly’ or ‘monthly’.
- **Be objective:** avoid leading questions. For example: ‘do you agree that this service has improved your confidence’ leads someone to agree with this statement. Following the

format of the questions included in JET should help you avoid leading questions. You should also include a range of answers and consider a 'don't know' option.

- **Use your common sense:** ask yourself, 'will the respondent understand the question?'

Test questions with respondents where possible: before finalising your questionnaire, it is worth sitting down with two or three people you work with and make sure they interpret your questions in the way you want them to. It is very important to make sure that the questions you have used make sense to the people you plan on giving the questionnaire to. Testing the questions in this way will ensure you get meaningful information.

About psychometric scales and questionnaires in the JET framework

The JET framework mainly recommends psychometric scales and other standardised questionnaires (government surveys, for example) to measure outcomes related to youth employability. Psychometric scales are questionnaires designed by psychologists and sociologists to measure soft outcomes. These questionnaires have been rigorously tested to be meaningful and robust measures of change, and will have been published in an academic journal. These questionnaires usually only work when they are completed anonymously and are analysed at a group level. This is because people are likely to respond in a socially desirable way if the questionnaire is not anonymous. These tools are very useful for providing robust evidence that an intervention has helped a group of people (eg, improved self-esteem) but are not designed to use on an individual basis, either to understand needs or track progress of one person. You should not look at an individual's answers when using these measures—instead it is more important to understand how things have changed for the group of people you worked with overall.

Step 5: Choose a research design

This section gives an overview of some of the practicalities to do with using different tools. This includes the timing of measurement, how to use the tools in ongoing programmes or rolling interventions, and how to sample with a smaller group of people you work with.

Timing of measurement

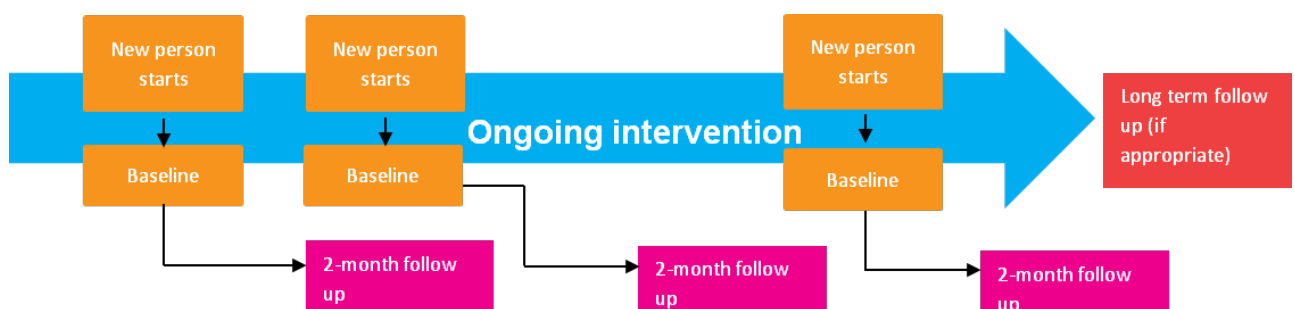
When collecting data, timing is critical to ensuring it is good quality and useful. You need to consider when is the best time to take a baseline measure, and when to take a follow-up measure to see how things have changed.

Baseline data is information gathered prior to a programme beginning—to capture the situation before you start any new project or activity. This provides a point of comparison for assessing your programme's impact. If you do not collect good baseline data you will not be able to make a reliable comparison, and will risk underplaying your impact.

You should then use a post-questionnaire to see how things have changed for the people you work with. Depending on your service and the kind of outcomes you are working towards, it may also be worth following up with people in the long term—to see if any improvements have been sustained or to track long term outcomes like employment and education.



Where programmes involve participants joining at different times of the year or in small groups, like a lot of youth work activities, for example, you will need to gather data over a continued period. In this case, individual surveys can be administered whenever someone starts using a service for the first time, and then followed up after a set time, eg, two or three months later. This is known as a rolling survey.



Different research designs

As we have mentioned before, whether you carry out a before and after research design or whether you follow up with people in the long term depends on the length, frequency and intensity of your service. The table below indicates the type of design you may want to consider depending on the kind of intervention you deliver.

Type of project	Intensity	Frequency	Duration	Type of design
One off—eg, career guidance workshop, taster sessions, advice	Low	Low	Low	Measure once after the course
Ongoing—drop in, eg, informal course, advice, group activities	Low	Low/Medium	Medium	Before and after measure—measure when someone starts in your service and follow up at regular intervals—eg, 3 months after you start seeing someone
Ongoing—regular, eg, mentoring, counselling, structured training or course	Medium/High	High	Medium/High	Before and after measures—taken before and after course. Consider following up in the long term.

Who should you measure with

Generally, you should give your questionnaire to everyone you work with. However, sometimes you may not want to or it may not be feasible to measure everyone, mainly if you do not have the resources. For example, this might be the case if you need to give paper questionnaires to your beneficiaries and do not have enough resource to input data from these. You may also want to measure with a smaller group of people if you want to follow up with them in the long term. It is worth doing this with a smaller group so you can concentrate your efforts on making sure these people respond to your questions, rather than concentrating on a larger group and only getting a low response rate.

Selecting a smaller group to measure with is called sampling. Sampling is an efficient way to conduct research because it allows you to make claims about your impact based on a sample of beneficiaries, not all of them. If you decide to measure with a sample, it is important to select a group that reflects the characteristics of the people you work with overall. For example, if you are carrying out a survey of young people signing up to your mentoring programme, and two-thirds of young people come from a deprived area, and one-third from a wealthy area, you would want the same proportions to be present in your sample. If you decide to give your questionnaire to a smaller sample of young people, a good idea is to do this randomly, eg, give every third young person a questionnaire. This way you know that you have not deliberately chosen or cherry-picked the group you measure with.

Step 6: Start measuring

This section gives you an overview of some of the practicalities in giving out measures, answering questions and thinking about staff skills.

Giving out measures

You should explain the details of the evaluation to the individuals involved in a language appropriate to their age and understanding.

- Inform them that they do not have to take part, can stop at any time and do not have to answer any questions they do not want to.
- Tell participants why you are asking them to complete the questionnaire (eg, to make your project even better!)
- Explain how you will use the data
- Reassure them that all answers will be anonymous and confidential
- That the data will be used for research and no other purpose

Answering questions

The golden rule is to try not to influence the way young people answer.

- If a young person does not understand a question, read it to them. If they still do not understand, rephrase the question using simpler language. And if they continue to struggle, tell them to skip the question.
- If the young people you work with cannot read the questions, read the questionnaire aloud to them. However, try to position yourself so you cannot see their answers. This will reduce the risk that they answer in a way that they think will impress you.
- It is worth quickly scanning the questionnaires you get back from young people to make sure that they are answering all the questions and not just ticking boxes at random.

Staff skills and training needs

Implementing or changing a performance/impact monitoring system will require training for staff who input data or interpret the outputs. Without training, you risk not being able to understand your results and so implement changes to your projects. Whether you need to bring in an external trainer will depend on your internal training capabilities, the existing skills and knowledge of your staff and the complexity of your system and what you do. We recommend that organisations consider going on a training course before developing a measurement approach.

Step 7: Analyse your data

This section provides guidance on how to use your data once you have collected it, including how to score measures, analyse the data and interpret and report on your results.

Scoring your measures and inputting data

When you have collected the baseline and follow-up questionnaires, you are ready to input your data. As part of the JET resources, we will make pre-formatted Excel answer sheets available upon request. Enter data from the questionnaires into the relevant tabs in the spreadsheet by selecting the appropriate responses from the drop down lists, or by entering the scores. Your organisation may have a bespoke software system that it uses to input data like this, so it is worth understanding what this might be before collecting your data.

Data protection and confidentiality

According to the UK Data Protection Act 1998, data must be processed in accordance with the respondent's rights and should be kept safe from unauthorised access, accidental loss or destruction. To ensure respondent's data is protected:

- Password protect any documents or data spreadsheets
- Destroy paper questionnaires after inputting
- Remove personal information (eg, name if you have asked for this) from before and after questionnaires once you have matched them
- Do not keep any unnecessary personal data

Analysing the data

The pre-formatted excel spreadsheet that we can provide will automatically calculate average differences between the baseline and follow-up questionnaires. It then performs further statistical analysis to check whether this difference is statistically significant—or greater than we would expect due to chance. It also calculates an effect size to tell you how meaningful your results are.

When you are analysing data you should look for evidence of change and review the statistical tests to help understand the level of confidence you can have in your results. If you are not making use of the data, review whether you are collecting the right data.

Attribution

Attribution is about whether a specific intervention or activity can be reasonably linked to an outcome. People’s lives are complicated, and many factors may influence the changes you observe. You therefore need to be careful about claiming attribution for impact. Academic guidance suggests that this is about demonstrating a case “beyond reasonable doubt” of a link between intervention and change, which is more than a simple association. To truly demonstrate that change occurred because of your intervention and nothing else, you may want to consider using a control group. JET alone cannot help you with this. To understand more about how to use a control group in your impact measurement, read these resources:

EEF’s DIY guide to evaluation has a useful section on comparison groups:

http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/uploads/pdf/EEF_DIY_Evaluation_Guide_2013.pdf

Randomise me is a website that explain the process of setting up a Randomised Control Trial in easy to understand steps. <http://www.randomiseme.org/>

Reporting

After running your service, collecting and assessing the evidence, and concluding that your service has (or has not) had an impact, you are now ready to report your findings. The following guidance briefly outlines a suggested format for evaluation reports, with recommended content for some of the sections.

Structuring impact reports

There are many ways to communicate your results, depending on the audience you are writing for and the purpose of the report. For whichever the audience, structuring your report around the questions below will help ensure you cover the key information:

- What is the problem you are trying to tackle?
- What are you going to do to address it? (your activities)
- What does that achieve? (your outcomes)
- How do you know? (your evidence)
- How are you learning and improving?

For more information on impact reporting, look at NPC’s 2010 publication, *Talking about results*.

Principles of impact reporting

We recommend organisations follow six general principles when reporting their impact:

1. Clarity

People should be able to quickly and easily understand what your organisation does through a coherent narrative that connects charitable aims, plans, activities and results.

2. Accessibility

Relevant information should be easily located by anyone who looks for it. The information should be in a range of formats suitable for different stakeholders.

3. Transparency

Reporting should be full, open and honest.

4. Accountability

Reporting should connect with stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries to tell them what they need to know, and provide reassurance.

5. Verifiability

Claims about impact should be backed up appropriately, and should be reviewed. This can range from informal stakeholder feedback to external audit.

6. Proportionality

The level and detail of reporting should reflect the size and complexity of your organisation, and the complexity of the changes you're trying to bring about.

Statistics

Statistics refers to the analysis and interpretation of data. Statistics are important when looking for evidence of impact because it allows us to describe the characteristics of groups and changes that may have occurred. Many statistical methods are straightforward and used in everyday life, while others are more complicated. Percentages are a common statistical method, often used for describing questionnaire results. Using statistics analysis brings rigour to your analysis and helps you understand what you can and cannot claim.

Reporting statistical results

If you are confident with statistics and wish to go into further detail with your reporting, there are a number of best practice rules to follow when reporting the results of any statistical analysis.

- You should say how many people the questionnaire was given out to, and how many responded.
- Always report the N value (number of people who responded) to a particular question.
- If a small number of people responded to the questionnaire, for example, lower than 50% of the people you work with, you need to be careful about extrapolating your findings to all the young people you worked with and making big claims. It is best to report results in a way that takes this into account; for example, '55% of young people who completed the questionnaire said...'
- You can combine 'strongly agree' and 'agree', and 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree', but it is best practice to say '70% of young people agree or strongly agree that...' and also to report the proportion that are unsure/strongly disagree or disagree.
- You should report the mean value (the sum of a collection of numbers divided by the number of numbers in the collection) and the standard deviation (how much variance there is around the mean) for both the before and after scores.
- If you are using statistical software, you should also report the p-value of your results. The p-value is the probability that your findings are not a result of chance and should be lower

than 5%, which is often expressed as 0.05. Having a p-value of less than 5% indicates that your results are statistically significant, that is, they did not occur due to chance.

- T-tests are also useful because they test the difference between two mean averages. When it comes to before and after measures, a t-test can show whether the difference between the two is statistically significant, or that there is a less than 5% chance that the change occurred due to chance.
- It is good practice to report the number of young people in the sample (N) and the effect size of the change (d). In statistics, d is known as Cohen's d and indicates the amount of difference between two groups or measures. In the case of the JET framework, it would determine the effect size of the change between the before and after measures. For example:

A paired sample t-test indicated that follow up scores for ten children on a measure of self esteem ($M = 6.4$, $SD = 2.22$) were significantly higher than before scores ($M = 7.4$, $SD = 1.51$), and had a large effect size ($p = .00229$, $d = 0.87$).

Resources for statistical analysis

If you would like more information on statistics, have a look at some of these resources:

Statistics without Tears: An Introduction for Non-Mathematicians by Derek Rowntree

SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS

Research Methods: The Basics

Impartiality

For your evaluation to be convincing, you will need to show your readers and stakeholders that you have been impartial in:

- Designing your research—the theory of change will help with this.
- Collecting evidence—this will derive from the quality of your evidence collection and triangulation of a wide range of data/evidence sources.
- Analysing evidence—this comes from the quality and rigour of your write up, in particular a full description of your methods and the inclusion of relevant data in your appendices.

An important principle when it comes to reporting, is to be honest about failure and negative results. Although it may be difficult, taking lessons from things that have not worked well is the best way to improve your service.

Interpreting the data

Now that you have the results, you should think about what this means in the context of your theory of change. Do the results show that the outcomes you identified are being achieved? The evidence

you have should allow you to re-examine your assumptions about the links between activities and outcomes, and review whether your theory of change reflects what is happening on the ground.

It is important to be honest about what you have and have not found, and not to over-claim what can be attributed to your project. That is where the theory of change can be useful—it allows you to assess outcomes that are directly linked to what you do and those that are several steps away. As you interpret your results it may be useful to refer to back to the JET Framework for an explanation of the outcomes.

During this process you should:

- Keep an open mind—it is important to be honest and not always expect to find what you want to find. Whatever your results say, they will tell an interesting story.
- Get a second opinion—it is always useful to have someone else to discuss your results with. If you can, get a colleague to help you.
- Ask the simple questions first—you do not want to miss anything obvious or get lost in the detail.
- Think about your results in context—you are usually best-placed to explain your results. However, there may also be external factors that you need to consider, for example whether there are availability of jobs in the local economy or not.
- Write down your observations—you do not want to forget them!

Using qualitative research to interpret your results

Qualitative research generally involved interviews, focus groups or observation to understand an issue in more detail. It generally does not quantify information but does group themes by coding and categorising topics that arise frequently. Qualitative research is much more concerned with the questions of why and how something has occurred rather than when and how much. Qualitative research is an important step to understanding why change may have occurred for the group of people you work with. It can be used the help understand and interpret quantitative results and can throw light on ambiguous or unexpected results. If you are planning on using qualitative interviews in your impact measurement you should:

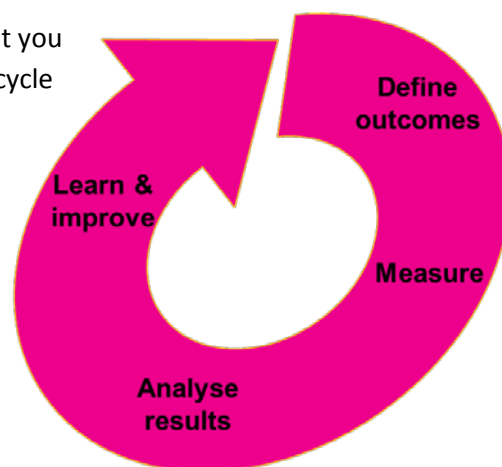
- prepare a topic guide rather than a questionnaire
- use open questions, starting with eg, How, Why, In what way?
- avoid suggesting answers or biasing responses
- approach sensitive topics carefully, taking into account impact on interviewers
- ensure all interviewees are asked the same question while allowing the interviewer to probe the interesting answers

Step 8: Learn and improve

Measuring your impact is not just about demonstrating what you have achieved. The final, crucial stage of the measurement cycle is to learn from the data you collect.

There are two key ways that you can use your results to help achieve better outcomes for beneficiaries:

1. Improving your **own services**;
2. Improving **the sector** through sharing your learning more widely.



Improving your services

In a nationwide survey NPC conducted in 2012, charities told us that the greatest benefit of measuring their impact was improved services.⁴ To make improvements, you need to critically reflect on the data you have collected and analysed. Two key questions to ask yourself are:

- What do your results say you are doing well?
- What do your results say about what you need to improve?

To think about practical ways to improve your work, consider:

- Are you delivering the right services?
- Are you targeting your services at the right people?
- Are there any gaps in your services?
- Are there any unintended consequences?
- Are some of your services more effective than others?
- Would it would make sense to allocate resources differently?

For example, if you find that a sports programme for disengaged young people is effective in improving the self-esteem of males but not females, think about why this might be happening and what you can do to address it.

Also, think about whether you have got sufficient data to allow you to answer these questions—are you measuring the right things? And, as you develop a better understanding of how your activities and outcomes link together, consider whether you can update your theory of change to more accurately reflect this.

Continuous improvement

Once you have made changes to your services, it is important to continue to assess your results to see if these changes are working. To help your organisation develop a culture of continuous learning

⁴ Making an Impact.

and improvement, it can often help to give a member of your board and/or senior management team responsibility for ensuring you regularly review and act on results data. It is also important to engage frontline staff and show them that the data they gather is put to good use—share results with them, and show how you are using results to improve services.

Improving the sector

As well as improving your own services, by sharing your results you can help the youth employability sector as a whole to become more effective. This is one of the key aims of shared measurement: by promoting a common understanding of what and how to measure, JET aims to help the sector gather more robust and comparable data—making it easier for organisations to learn from each other, and build the evidence base on what works in getting young people into quality, fulfilling work.

- **Sharing with partner organisations.** One of the easiest ways to start, is to share results with partner organisations. Look at your theory of change and think about which of your outcomes are reliant on working with partners. Discuss with them how you can share results to help understand how you can best support your beneficiaries. For example, can your combined results help you better understand whether referral processes are working and for whom?
- **Sharing more widely.** The aim of shared measurement approaches like JET is to enable whole sectors to share results to develop the evidence base on what works. Funder requirements are the main reason that charities measure their impact,⁵ and funders have a key role in collecting, analysing and sharing results. Working with your funders to use JET can help ensure that you measure what is important and useful to you, while at the same time generating data that is robust and comparable at a sector level. We are working with funders as well as charities to ensure that JET has maximum impact, so please let us know if we can support you or your funders in using it.

⁵ Making an Impact.

The future of JET

Shared measurement systems like JET can help to save people time and money in working out how to measure their impact. Shared measurement systems also help charities learn from each other, and can therefore help the sector as a whole to become more effective. Our hope is that JET will help the youth employability sector have more impact.

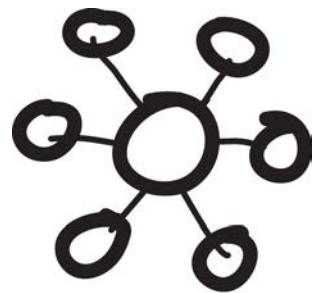
As identified in our *Blueprint for shared measurement* report^[1], the right technology is a crucial step for any shared measurement approach to be successful and scalable. The next months will see us exploring whether we can develop an online version of JET or an online platform to simplify the process of data collection for frontline organisations. This online tool should also make it easier for organisations to share results and learn from each other's efforts.

In part, this JET pack is a test of how the shared tools in JET can be used. We want to hear from all organisations who are using the JET pack and tools to see how they have found the experience and with suggestions for gaps and other measures that may need to be developed.

We are in the process of piloting the JET pack and tools with a number of youth organisations. This is providing us with invaluable information on what areas we need to develop and what we need to provide more guidance on. We plan on publishing a new and improved version of JET as a result of this piloting, along with case studies of how our pilot organisations used the JET tools.

Ultimately, we would like to see the right infrastructure in place to allow organisations working on youth employability issues to gather and share data on shared online platforms. We are not there yet, but as JET continues to be used and tested, we will think about how we can best do this. In the meantime, publishing impact data on your website, sharing it with your partners, and encouraging your funders to collate and share results data is a good starting point.

^[1] <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/blueprint-for-shared-measurement/>



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